



Animals in Public Settings • Guidelines for Disease Prevention

Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Frederick County Health Department

2013 Compendium of Measures to Prevent Disease Associated with Animals in Public Settings was used to create the recommendations in this document.

Public Setting Venues may include fairs, educational farms, petting zoos, schools, child-care facilities, animal displays, pet stores, circuses, carnivals, feed stores, zoological institutions, nature parks, agricultural fairs, rodeos, camps, agritourism venues, public stables, livestock-birthing exhibits, pumpkin patches, pony rides, and wildlife photo opportunities, etc.

During 1996 through 2012, approximately 200 human infections disease outbreaks involving animals in public settings were reported to the CDC. Infectious disease, rabies exposures, injuries, and other health problems are commonly reported among visitors, especially children < 5 years of age, in these settings. Although eliminating all risk from animal contacts is not possible, these guidelines provide recommendations for minimizing associated disease and injury.

Staff and visitor education, attention to hygiene, and appropriately designed facilities as well as proper care and monitoring of animals and their enclosures are essential for reduction for risks associated with animal contact in public settings.

Venue Operators Should:

- Be knowledgeable about disease and injury associated with animals
- Explain risk-reduction measures to visitors
- Provide educational information to visitors on how to be safe around animals
- Ensure information provided is in a simple and easy-to-understand format that is age and language appropriate
- Encourage compliance by the public with risk-reduction recommendations, especially compliance with hand-washing procedures as visitors exit animal areas

**Verbal reminders combined with staff actively offering hand sanitizer have been shown to improve hand hygiene compliance*

- Only allow public to feed animals if contact is controlled.
- Prevent children from sitting or playing on the ground in animal areas

Facility Design:

- Should limit direct contact with manure and soiled bedding, while encouraging hand washing
- Clean all surfaces regularly and thoroughly to remove organic matter. Disinfect with a 1:32 dilution of bleach for > 10 minutes.
- Venues should be divided into Non-animal areas, Animal areas, and Transitional areas in between
- Do not permit animals in non-animal areas
- Provide hand washing facilities and display hand washing signs where food/drinks are served
- Visitors should not eat, drink, smoke, use bottles/pacifiers or place hands in their mouth while in the animal areas
- Provide storage/holding area for strollers, etc. outside the animal areas

To decrease shedding of pathogens, animals should be housed in a manner to minimize stress and overcrowding.

Minimize the use of animal areas for public activities (e.g. weddings and dances). If areas previously used for animals must be used for public events, they should be cleaned and disinfected, particularly if food and beverages are to be served.