



Pittsfield Housing Authority
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State Public Housing Elderly/Disabled Developments Pet Policy & Rules

Purpose

This policy outlines the rules for owning and caring for *common household pets* in State-Aided Elderly/Disabled Public Housing. The goal is to allow responsible pet ownership while protecting the health, safety, and quiet enjoyment of all residents.

Service Animals and ESA animals are NOT pets and follow the Service / Assistance Animal Policy & Reasonable Accommodation process.

Eligibility

1. **Prior written approval** from the Housing Authority is required before bringing any pet into the unit.
 2. Tenants may have **one (1) common household pet** per unit unless otherwise approved.
 3. Allowed pets include:
 - o One (1) dog (**25 pounds or less**) at full maturity
 - o One (1) cat
 - o Small caged animals (hamsters, gerbils)
 - o Fish (aquariums not exceeding 20 gallons)
 4. Reptiles, exotic animals, wild animals, and dangerous breeds (if applicable per municipal ordinance) **are not permitted**.
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Pet Registration & Approval

Pets must be **registered and approved BEFORE** entering the unit. Annual updates occur during recertification.

Registration must include:

1. Completed Pet Registration Form
2. Veterinary certificate showing required vaccinations
3. Proof of **spay/neuter** (or vet verification for exception)
4. Recent **photo** of the pet
5. Proof of **city/town license** (dogs)
6. Emergency caregiver contact

The PHA will issue a written approval or denial within 10 business days.
Only **registered pets** are allowed.

Unregistered Pets

If it is determined that a tenant has an unapproved pet, a letter will be sent to the tenant. The tenant will have 2 options:

1. Register the pet, if the pet meets the allowable criteria
2. Re-home the pet

If the tenant fails register or re-home the pet, within 10 days of the notice, they will be in violation of their lease.

Pet Deposit

A pet deposit of up to \$160.00 is required for a dog or cat.

Under Massachusetts state regulations, the deposit:

- **May not exceed one month's tenant rent, and may not exceed \$160.00 total.**
 - **Deposit must be paid in full before the pet is brought into the unit.**
 - Deposits are **refundable** and may only be used to cover pet-related damages, extraordinary cleaning, or pest treatment caused by the pet.
 - Deposits will be returned to the tenant when the pet is removed, and any pet-related charges have been resolved.
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Area Restrictions

- Pets must stay inside the tenant's unit
- Dogs/cats must be **leashed or carried** when outside the unit
- Pets are **not allowed** in:
 - Lobbies
 - Community rooms
 - Laundry rooms
 - Offices
 - Other common areas (except when entering/exiting)

Pets other than dogs/cats must be in a **cage or carrier** when outside the unit.

Sanitation Standards

Requirements:

- Tenants are responsible for immediate cleanup of pet waste indoors and outdoors
- Litter boxes should be cleaned daily – **litter should never be flushed down the toilet**
- Pet waste must be bagged, tied, and disposed of immediately.
- Cages cleaned daily; dog crates disinfected monthly
- Tenants must maintain clean, odor-free pet areas.
- No pet doors, pens, or alterations to property

Behavior, Care, & Safety

- No aggressive pets or animals posing health/safety risks
 - No pet may be left alone for more than **12 hours**
 - No tethering or chaining indoors or outdoors
 - Noise must not disturb neighbors (barking, whining, etc.)
 - Animal cruelty or bite reports will be reported to animal control.
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Inspections & Repairs

- Maintenance will not enter a unit with a pet unless the tenant or designated responsible person is present
 - The tenant must restrain the pet during inspections
 - All pet-related damages, flea treatments, or pest elimination are charged to the tenant (not rent)
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Temporary or Visiting Pets

- Visiting pets are **not allowed**
 - Tenants may not feed or harbor stray animals
 - Temporary pet care requires **written approval** before bringing the animal on-site
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Nuisance, Neglect, or Emergency Situations

If a pet threatens health or safety, or if the owner dies, is incapacitated, neglects the pet or is deceased, the PHA may:

- Contact the emergency caregiver, **or**
- Contact animal control or another agency for removal

Immediate removal may be required for aggressive or severely ill pets.

Pet Policy Violations

If the PHA determines a violation:

1. Written Warning
 2. Mandatory Conference
 3. Removal of Pet
 4. Failure to remove a pet may result in **lease termination**
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