



## “Dining With Dogs” Rule: What Restaurants Need To Know

Restaurants may allow dogs in outdoor dining areas if certain rules are followed. “Outdoor dining areas” means any outdoor area where customers eat that is operated and controlled by the restaurant. Examples include unenclosed sidewalk cafés, backyards and patios. Here is what you need to know about the rule:

### **Restaurants do not have to allow pet dogs in outdoor dining areas.**

However, this does not change rules for service dogs. Regardless of whether you allow pet dogs in your outdoor dining area, you must allow service dogs — including guide and hearing dogs — to accompany their owners in all areas of the restaurant open to customers. For more information about accommodating service dogs, visit [nyc.gov/health/foodservice](http://nyc.gov/health/foodservice) and click on **Health Code / Regulations** in the navigation bar at left.

**If you do choose to allow pet dogs in your restaurant’s outdoor dining areas, you must follow the steps below.**

### **Dogs must enter the outdoor dining area directly from the outside.**

Dogs may not enter outdoor dining areas by going through the inside of the restaurant or anywhere else food is stored or prepared.

### **Place barriers or use other methods to limit contact between dogs in the dining area and people and dogs on the sidewalk.**

If the outdoor dining area is next to a sidewalk, you must place a barrier or have another way to limit contact between dogs in the restaurant and people on the sidewalk. Use a barrier or other method that limits a dog’s access and blocks the view of the sidewalk. For example, place a café barrier with stanchions (upright bar or post to limit motion) at the café border, or position large planters side by side at the outer edge of the outdoor dining area.



### **Prepare all food and store utensils indoors.**

If you allow dogs in outdoor dining areas, do not prepare food or drinks in these areas. Store utensils inside. However, workers may refill beverages from a pitcher or other container in outdoor dining areas.

### **Post a sign at the entrance of the outdoor dining area.**

The sign must state the following text in English:

- Companion dogs are only allowed in certain outdoor dining area(s) of this establishment.
- Only service dogs are allowed in other parts of this establishment.
- Your companion dog must be licensed and currently vaccinated against rabies to remain in the outdoor dining area with you.
- You are responsible for controlling your dog at all times.



Restaurants are responsible for creating and posting their own signs. Signs are not required at restaurants that choose not to allow pet dogs in outside dining areas.

**Make sure dog owners control their dogs within the outdoor dining area.**

Dogs must be within arm's length of their owners, and either in a carrier or on a leash held by the owner or tied to the table or chair leg.

**Make sure dogs stay on the ground and out of the aisles.**

Dogs are not allowed on chairs, benches, seats or other furniture. Dogs may not stand or sit in the aisles.

**If you provide food or water to dogs, serve them in single-use, disposable containers.**

Dogs may not eat from plates or bowls provided to customers. Dogs must eat and drink only from single-use, disposable containers.

**Do not let staff pet or play with dogs.**

Food workers may not touch the dogs, but if they do, they must wash their hands with soap and water right away.

**Ask customers to remove their threatening or aggressive dogs from the restaurant.**

The restaurant must stop serving the customer if they refuse to remove the dog.

**Call 911 right away if a dog bites or hurts someone.**

Dog bites must also be reported to the NYC Health Department within 24 hours. Call **311** or visit [nyc.gov/health/reportanimalbite](https://nyc.gov/health/reportanimalbite) to report a dog bite.

When reporting a dog bite, a restaurant must include the:

- Dog owner's name, address and phone number
- Dog's license number
- Bite victim's name, address and phone number

**Staff must clean up after dogs in outdoor dining areas.**

Restaurant workers who do not prepare or serve food must clean up dog urine, feces, vomit and any other fluids or solids, and must sanitize the areas right away.

**Other types of animals are not allowed in outdoor dining areas.**

Animals other than dogs may not be in the outdoor dining area, and only service dogs may enter the indoor area of the restaurant.

**Restaurants that do not follow these steps could receive a notice of violation, which carries a fine of up to \$250.** Depending on the type of inspection, the violation could also affect the restaurant's inspection grade.

Restaurants that allow pet dogs in outdoor dining areas can make additional rules. Additional rules could include the maximum number of dogs allowed at any one time, the size and breed of dogs allowed, and the sections of outdoor dining areas where customers with dogs can be seated.

To read the "dining with dogs" rule, visit [nyc.gov/health/foodservice](https://nyc.gov/health/foodservice).