

NEEDHAM HOUSING AUTHORITY

STATEMENT OF POLICIES REGARDING PETS IN SENIOR/HANDICAPPED AND FAMILY HOUSING

I. BASIC POLICY

Elderly/Handicapped and family tenants living in housing under the jurisdiction of the Needham Housing Authority shall be permitted to own and keep common household pets in their dwelling units in accordance with the rules and regulations delineated in this Statement of Policy.

Some rules do not apply to service animals professionally trained to assist the handicapped.

II. DEFINITION OF ALLOWABLE PETS

Pets for the purpose of this policy shall be limited to caged birds, fish, caged rodents, domestic dogs and litter box-trained cats.

III. OWNERSHIP

Pets shall be owned by and be the responsibility of the lessee(s) of the assigned unit in which the pet is to live.

IV. POLICIES

1. Visiting pets are allowed and must be registered with housing for pre-approval and signed consent.
2. Management reserves the right to refuse entry and/or occupancy of a pet to any resident whose past occupancy history indicated that the resident would not be a responsible pet owner or any resident who, in the opinion of management, is not able to comply with the established pet policies and/or the rules and regulations promulgated as a part of those policies.
3. Prior to management's acceptance of a pet for occupancy in a Needham Housing Authority development, the following procedure must be followed:
 - a. Residents must submit to the Needham Housing Authority a "Request for Permission to Have a Pet" form.
 - b. Resident must meet with management to discuss the request. To be considered at that time will be resident's ability to properly care for the animal, resident's understanding of the rules and regulations governing within a Needham Housing Authority development, and any other matters pertinent to management's action on resident's request to have a pet.

4. Written proof from a veterinarian is required prior to move-in, and updated during recertification annually, stating that the pet is in good health, is free of ticks and fleas, is spayed or neutered and is current on all shots and vaccines.

5. All dogs are to be licensed by the Town of Needham at the time of move-in and annually thereafter.

6. No more than one pet shall be allowed per unit. Fish would be limited to one fish tank; birds would be limited to one bird cage. Aquariums shall be limited to a capacity of twenty (20) gallons. Bird cages shall be limited to a maximum of eight (8) cubic feet.

7. A pet's temperament may be considered as a factor in deciding whether the pet will conform to the rules.

8. Dogs will be limited in size and weight, measured and weighed using acceptable American Kennel Club standards, with exception of service dogs or verified emotional support dogs.

Pets shall weigh no more than forty (40) pounds of maturity nor stand higher than twenty (20) inches at the shoulder. Pets acquired as puppies shall be understood to mature at a height and weight not to exceed the above height and weight, not to exceed the above restrictions. American Kennel Club standards shall be used as the height and weight at maturity of the breed. A non-documented animal will be assumed to mature to that height and weight determined by management in consultation with a veterinarian acceptable to management.

9. Pet owners shall be responsible for any and all damage done to his/her unit and/or Needham Housing Authority property by the pet. Residents will also be liable for all damages resulting from any injury to person or property of others caused by resident's pet.

Any damages are to be repaired immediately if so requested by management or at such other time as directed by management. If repair is executed by management, the pet owner will be charged for the cost of repair. Any payment required shall be made within thirty (30) days following notification from management of the amount due.

10. Pet owners shall be responsible for the proper care of their animals including the following requirements:

a. Pet owners shall immediately clean up after exercising their dogs. All pet solid waste must go in small plastic bags and placed in barrel.

b. Animals are not to be allowed to run loose outside of their owner's dwelling unit.

c. Every dog and cat must wear a tag bearing the owner's name, address and telephone number.

d. All local regulations regarding animals must be adhered to.

e. Litter boxes must be lined with plastic bags or liners. The bag or liner must then be lifted out of the box and secured with a twist tie. Litter shall be changed at least twice a week. Never flush litter down the toilets.

f. Kitty litter shall be bagged, tied securely and disposed of in the same manner as other trash.

g. Dogs shall be on a leash at all times outside the confines of owner's unit. Cats shall be carried by owner at all times when outside the confines of owner's unit.

Dogs and cats must be housebroken. All other pets must be caged at all times.

Pet food and water may not be left outside a dwelling unit at any time.

h. Visiting pets are the responsibility of the tenant of which the pet is visiting after signed consent and approval from Housing.

Pets shall not be brought into the public lobbies, laundry rooms or other public gathering spaces except as necessary to enter/exit the building or to attend an activity at which pet's presence is specifically intended.

i. All pet owners must be able to control their pets at all times via leash, pet carrier or cage.

Tenant owner must be present at all times if pet is tied at any time to fixed objects outside a dwelling unit, 8 ft limit and not a tripped hazard.

j. Pet owners must provide management with a copy of an affidavit from the persons who have agreed to assume immediate responsibility for their pet in case of emergency or inability on the part of the pet owner to maintain his or her pet; said pet to be removed from the unit upon notice from management and to be maintained at per owner's expense until such time as pet owner is in a position to be able to care for the pet independently. More information available regarding emergency foster care upon request.

k. In an emergency where, despite reasonable effort, management is unable to reach the pet caretaker, the pet owner agrees to allow management to have the pet removed by the animal control officer, SPCA or other public or quasi-public authority. All fees and costs shall be born by the pet owner. If the resident has made arrangements with a boarding kennel, and provided management with this information, management will first try to have the pet relocated to the boarding kennel or foster home. Provide emergency info for pets for recerts info annually, name and address of pets vet and photo of the animal, name and phone numbers of caretakers.

In such an emergency, resident, his/her agent or estate, or family must within five days make arrangements with the holder of the pet as to its disposition and shall be responsible for all obligations, financial or other, involved in such disposition.

l. The pet owner must secure and keep in force personal liability or other insurance and indemnity Needham Housing Authority against pet-related litigation or attorney's fees as a condition of pet ownership.

m. Prior to vacating the dwelling unit, resident shall be responsible for cleaning, de-fleaing and deodorizing the unit or will be charged for costs incurred by management to prepare the unit to be reoccupied.

V. CONCERNS OF PET OWNERSHIP

Management may revoke approval of any given pet should the animal have created a disturbance or be guilty of interrupting the quiet enjoyment and comfort of other residents. Such a pet may no longer live in a Needham Housing Authority unit. If the pet owner does not comply with management's directive to remove the pet permanently from the premises, such noncompliance will be considered a violation of resident's lease and resident will be subject to eviction.

Sick or injured animals must be taken immediately for veterinarian care at pet owner's expense. No sick or injured pet will be accepted for occupancy without consultation and written acknowledgement of a veterinarian as to the condition of the pet and its ability to live in an apartment situation. Acceptance regardless of documentation and consultation is the prerogative of management.

VI. MANAGEMENT PREROGATIVES

Management reserves the right to make periodic inspections of any and all pet-occupied units to assure compliance with the Needham Housing Authority rules, regulations and policies. Management will give residents advance notice of such inspections.

Management reserves the right to prohibit entry into its building of pets not complying with any of the above policies, rules and regulations or any such policies, rules and regulations promulgated in the future (including guest pets).

Management will consider any violation of Needham Housing Authority Pet Policies to be reason for eviction.

VII. RULE ENFORCEMENT

Management shall make every effort to assure compliance with the rules and regulations set forth in this policy statement. To that end, management will at the first sign of a problem or concern contact the resident pet owner involved.

Failure on the part of the resident pet owner and/or his agent to take necessary and immediate steps to correct any problem involving the pet shall be considered a breach of the pet lease rider and grounds for removal of the pet.

These rules and regulations pertain only to approved resident pet owners and/or approved visiting pets. Residents shall continue to be responsible for the actions of their guests approved pets and shall not permit their guests to bring animals overnight onto Needham Housing Authority property.

VII. PET DEPOSIT AND FEES

A pet deposit of one hundred and fifty (\$150) or one month's rent, whichever is less, shall be required of each pet owner. The deposit may be paid over a period of time determined by the Executive Director. The deposit will be handled as a security deposit. The deposit will be refunded at the time the tenant vacated or no longer has ownership of the pet, provided that no pet-related damage has been done to the property. Sums necessary to repair such damage will be deducted from the deposit.

A fee of ten dollars (\$10.00) shall be charged to any pet owner each time the pet owner fails to clean up after his/her animal.

IX. LEASE PET RIDER

A Lease Pet Rider must be executed by the resident pet owner (all resident signers of the lease for the unit where the pet is to live) and management in such form as provided by management.