

DOGS AT WORK

A guide to creating a pet-friendly workplace

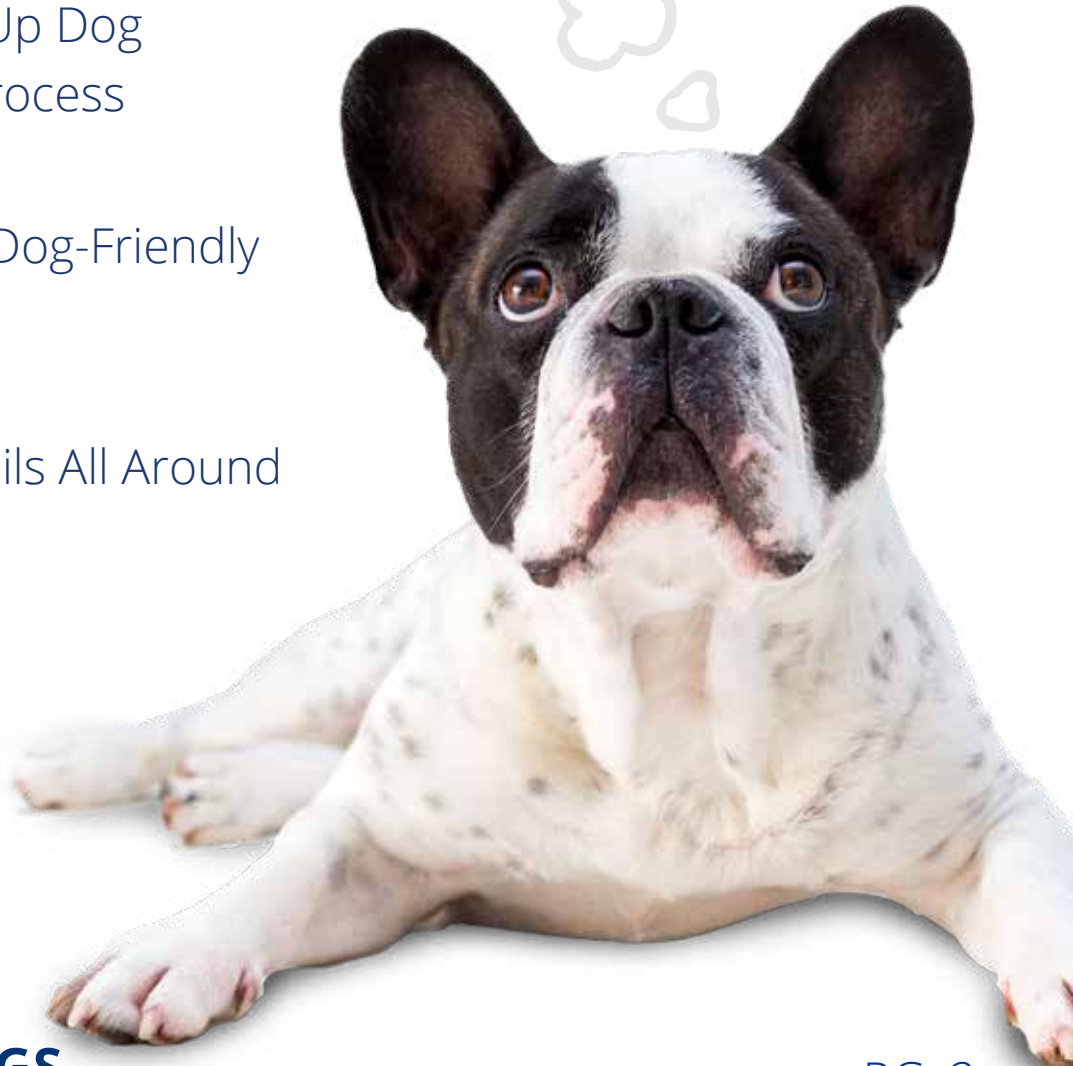


**PET
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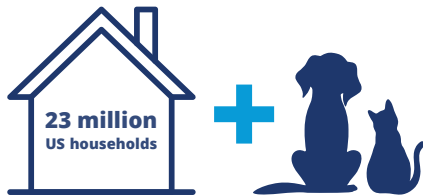
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More companies are becoming pet-friendly to recruit and retain talent, improve employee morale, and bring a wagging good time into the workplace.



new pets acquired during pandemic

59% of executives said that, "employee requests motivated them to allow pets in the office."

After being pet-friendly for over a decade, we've noticed a significant difference in our company

- ✓ Higher employee retention rate
- ✓ Positive shift in company culture
- ✓ Increase in number of applicants
- ✓ Less stress in and outside of the office
- ✓ More fun and laughter

We want to share this success with other companies. That's why we created **Dogs at Work**, a step-by-step guide to help employers make their workplace dog-friendly.

If you have questions or want additional information, send us an email at marketing@akcpetinsurance.com or give us a call at 866-725-2747



Company Benefits

Employees expect company benefits that go above and beyond medical coverage and retirement funds. A recent study showed **a pet-friendly office is the second most sought after benefit**, right behind remote work. Being a pet-friendly workplace is a cost-effective and great way to attract and retain top talent.

“...dogs are not only important as our companions at home, but as partners at work—helping to reduce stress, provide friendship..., and bring people together.”

- Stephen M. Colarelli, Department of Psychology,
Central Michigan University

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The Bark-down



71% of millennial pet owners would take a pay cut if it meant that they could bring their pets to work every day.¹



63% of employees said they would be more interested in interviewing for a new job if it had a pet-friendly policy.²



82% of employees say implementing pet-friendly policies would increase company loyalty.³



88% of employees believe pets improve morale.³



67% of employees agree that pets increased productivity.³



Less stress among all employees, even among those who do not own dogs.



Step 1: Get the Ball Rolling

A Good Fit for The Office?

While it would be wonderful if every office could be dog-friendly, in some cases it isn't feasible. The below checklist will help determine if becoming pet-friendly is right for your office.

Areas to Check

- Is your workplace free of heavy equipment and machinery?
- Does each employee have a personal workspace, such as an office or cubicle, where they can confine their dogs?
- If visitors come into the office, can you easily separate them from the dogs, if needed?
- Are there spaces you can easily designate as a "No Dogs Zone?"
- Are there employees that could and would help implement and oversee this program?

If you answered "No" to one or more of these questions, becoming a dog-friendly workspace may not be right for you.



Conduct an Employee Survey

Once you've decided your workplace is a good fit for four-legged friends, send out an anonymous survey to determine employee interest in the program. The survey provides an opportunity for in-office employees to express interest, identify concerns, and voice their opinion or provide alternative options. By allowing anonymity between co-workers, no one will feel compelled to cast a vote that goes along with the majority decision. Include a draft of office rules, the dog-approval process, and alternative options your office is considering to help employees make an informed decision.

Make Your Bark Heard -- Sample Survey

Would you bring your dog into the office if the option was given?

- Yes
- No
- I don't own a dog

Do you have any concerns about the office becoming dog-friendly?

Would you be interested in any of the alternate options being offered?

- Cleaning** – increased cleaning to reduce dirt and dander
- Air Purification Systems** – placed throughout the office to help with allergies
- Dog-Free Zones** – workspaces, conference rooms, and entrances/exits where dogs are not allowed
- Work from Home days** – scheduled days when dogs are allowed in the office and others can work from home if they prefer

Do you have any additional suggestions or thoughts you would like to share?

Step 2: Form a Dogs at Work Committee

Your employees have spoken, and they think allowing dogs at work is a furtastic idea.

Now, create a committee that will be responsible for establishing rules, handling approval paperwork, and keeping the office running smoothly. The committee should consist of those interested in bringing their dog to work and at least one person from Human Resources or the senior management team. Establish this committee as you see fit, keeping a focus on the following key items.



Establishing Rules

Dogs at Work provides a general list of rules as a guideline, and they are meant to be tailored to fit your office's needs. Ensure employees applying to bring their dog to work have a copy the company's rules to review.





Dog Dos and Don'ts



Getting the Landlord's Agreement

Gather the necessary information to take to your building's landlord and ask for their approval. This paperwork helps show your landlord that you have anticipated their concerns and will ensure the program runs smoothly.

Provide your landlord with the following to demonstrate how employees and the company will take responsibility for dogs in the workplace:

-  A copy of the Dogs at Work application process and rules, established procedures for emergencies, and cleaning plan.
-  A copy of the pest control plan, which should include what company and method you will use to remove pests.



Reviewing Applications and Issuing Approvals

Hand out applications and handle approval paperwork for new applications and renewals, while maintaining a list of approved dogs. Upon a dog's approval, the committee will place the Dog ID outside the employee's workspace.



Maintaining a Dog-Friendly Office

Oversee both the dog-friendly and dog-free spaces by posting the appropriate signage, ensuring no damage has occurred to the office, and keeping an eye on the outdoor dog walking area. More information on creating a dog-friendly office can be found [here](#).



Determining the Dogs Per Day Limit

Consider the size of the office space, layout, and landlord agreement to best determine the number of dogs allowed per day. If there are more approved dogs than the office limit, set up a schedule or a sign-up system to help determine when each eligible dog has access to the office.



Establish Emergency Protocols

Create an emergency and evacuation plan that is inclusive of the office dogs to keep every person and pet safe. Consider creating a plan for multiple emergency scenarios, including a fire or natural disaster, and coordinate with the on-site fire marshal as needed. Review the plan with approved dog owners and post the plan in the office. Practicing fire drills with dogs in the office can help to ensure safety in the event of a real emergency.

Additionally, keep a pet first-aid kit in the office and explore having someone certified in pet first aid onsite in case of an accident. Offering pet insurance, which provides reimbursement for covered accidents and illness, as a benefit to employees can also provide peace of mind for dog owners.

Step 3: Two Paws Up Approval Process



Creating an approval process will ensure employees and dogs are safe in the office and tails stay wagging. The below guide should be adjusted based on your office's needs and may need to be revisited over time.

Employee Application

Have employees fill out and sign an application with basic information about their dog and that confirms they understand the office rules and that they will be responsible for their dog's behavior. The application will also designate a "buddy" – someone who will watch and be responsible for the dog – should the dog owner need to go to a dog-free zone.

The application will also ask the employee to provide proof of the dog's AKC Canine Good Citizen certification, renter or homeowner insurance liability, and health records.

AKC Canine Good Citizen Test

The American Kennel Club's Canine Good Citizen (CGC) Certification will help to ensure the dog is well-trained and behaved.

Owners can prepare for CGC testing by teaching basic commands at home or enrolling their dog in a training class. Certified evaluators are also available throughout the United States. Use the [CGC Evaluator Directory](#) to find a testing location.

Proof of Insurance

Employees should provide proof of a renter's or homeowner's insurance liability policy with a minimum \$100,000 to cover damages. Although not at home, most insurance policies extend to other property, like places of employment, and may cover certain accidents. Check your policy for details.

Health Requirements

Having a sick dog at work is no fun, and employees should ensure their dog is healthy before coming into work. Dogs exhibiting any sign of illness, including fever, lethargy, vomiting, or diarrhea, should be sent home.

Additionally, employees should also provide proof of dog vaccinations, including: DDHP, Rabies, and Bordetella. All dogs must also be current in a parasite maintenance program, including flea and tick prevention. We recommend that dogs are at least 6 months old to allow for adequate training.



Step 4: Creating a Dog-Friendly Building

Great! The dogs have been approved and tails are wagging with excitement. Now, let's make sure the building is dog-friendly before welcoming in our new co-workers.

Preparing the Office Space

- **Entrances/Exits:** Designate entrances and exits for dogs to ensure they are in the approved areas of the building.
- **Stairs/Elevators:** If possible, designate elevators or stairs for dogs and keep at least one dog-free.
- **Exercise/Bathroom Areas:** Create an exercise/bathroom area outside the building for dogs to relieve themselves and stretch their legs. Purchase a dog waste station to keep the area clean.
- **Water Bowls and Toys:** Provide water bowls and toys throughout the office and encourage employees to bring in specific items for their dogs as needed.
- **Put Up Dog IDs:** Place the approved Dog IDs outside of employees' desks to notify co-workers of the dog's presence and any specific needs.
- **Pet Proofing:** Tuck wires out of reach or tape them to the floor where they can't be chewed.
- **Cleaning Supplies:** Place paper towels, trash bags, and pet-safe cleaning products around the office to help assist in clean up in case of an accident.
- **Dog Free Zones:** Hang up signage that establishes dog-free zones. This may be an entire floor in a larger workspace. In smaller offices, this may include conference rooms or specific sections.

Step 5: Have a Wagging Good Time!



Congratulations on implementing the Dogs at Work Program!

Welcome in your new co-workers with lots of pets and treats.

Looking for additional ideas to become an even more pet-friendly employer? Consider offering [pet insurance](#) for employees, plan dog-friendly outings, or include pet content in your internal communications.



Research Notes

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