

**HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF  
CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA**

**PET OWNERSHIP POLICY  
(ELDERLY/DISABLED RESIDENTS)**

**Adopted by PHA Board of Commissioners**

**Resolution No.:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date of Adoption:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Effective Date of Implementation:** \_\_\_\_\_

## PET OWNERSHIP POLICY

Housing Authority residents who reside in developments specifically designated for elderly and/or disabled are permitted to own and keep pets in their dwelling units. The Housing Authority of the City of Charleston (hereinafter referred to as PHA) will notify eligible new and current residents of their right to own pets subject to the PHA's rules and will provide them copies of the PHA's Pet Ownership Rules. To obtain permission, pet owners must agree to abide by those Rules.

In consulting with residents currently living in the PHA's developments for the elderly or disabled, the PHA will notify all such residents that:

- A. Elderly or disabled residents are permitted to own common domesticated household pets, such as a cat, dog, bird, and fish, in their dwelling units, in accordance with PHA pet ownership rules;
- B. Animals that are used to assist support, or provide **assistance** to persons with disabilities (**assistance** animals) are excluded from the size, weight, and type requirements pertaining to ownership of **assistance animals**; however, they will be required to assure that proper licensing, inoculations, leash restraints, etc. in accordance with State or local laws;
- C. Residents may request a copy of the PHA's pet ownership rules or proposed amendments to the rules at any time; and,
- D. Residents needing a assistance animal must provide verification for this need and verification that the animal is considered to be an **assistance** animal.

## HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF CHARLESTON

### Pet Ownership Rules for Elderly/Disabled Residents

1. Common household pet means a domesticated cat, dog, bird and fish in aquariums. Reptiles of any kind are prohibited. These definitions do not include any wild animal, bird of prey, dangerous fish, snakes, spiders or other insects, or any farm animals.
2. Each household shall have only one pet. In the case of fish, residents may keep no more than can be maintained in a safe and healthy manner in a tank holding up to ten (10) gallons. Such a tank or aquarium will be counted as one (1) pet.
3. The pet owner shall have only a small cat or a dog. The animal's weight shall not exceed ten (10) pounds at full growth. Such limitations do not apply to an **assistance** animal used to assist support, or provide **assistance** to a disabled resident.
4. Pet owners shall license their pets (if required by state or local law) yearly with the City of Charleston (for those residents residing within that municipality only) or as required. The pet owner must show the PHA proof of rabies and distemper booster inoculations and licensing annually.
5. No pet owner shall keep a pet in violation of State or local health or humane laws or ordinances. Any failure of these pet ownership rules to contain other applicable State or local laws or ordinances does not relieve the pet owner of the responsibility for complying with such requirements.
6. The pet owner shall have his or her cat or dog spayed or neutered and shall pay the cost thereof. A veterinarian shall verify that the spaying or neutering has been accomplished. If the animal is less than six (6) months old, resident must agree to have the appropriate procedures performed when the animal reaches the age of six (6) months. Exceptions to this requirement shall be granted only upon certification from a veterinarian that permanent harm may result from this procedure due to the pet's age or illness.
7. The pet owner shall house the pet inside the pet owner's dwelling unit. The pet owner shall keep a cat or a dog on a leash and shall control the animal when it is taken out of the dwelling unit for any purpose. The owner of a bird shall confine them to a cage at all times. No pet owner shall allow his or her pet to be unleashed or loose outside the pet owner's dwelling unit.
8. No pet shall be permitted in any common area except as necessary to directly enter and exit the building. This restriction is not applicable to **assistance** animals.
9. No pet (other than birds or fish) shall be permitted to remain in an apartment overnight while the resident is away.
10. Management shall furnish to the household a pet sticker if the pet is a dog or cat which must be displayed on the front window of the unit.

11. Resident shall provide the PHA a color photograph of the pet(s).
12. All dogs and cats shall wear a collar at all times. Attached to the collar shall be an ID tag listing the pet owner's name and address.
13. Any resident having a dog or cat shall obtain some type of "scooper" to clean up after the pet outdoors. The resident is responsible for placing all waste in sealed plastic bags and disposing of such material in a trash container.
14. Resident is required to take whatever action necessary to insure that their pet does not bring any fleas or ticks into the building. This may include, but is not limited to, the use of flea collars and flea powder. The resident is responsible for the cost of flea/tick extermination.
15. No resident shall keep, raise, train, breed or maintain any pet of any kind at any location, either inside or outside the dwelling unit, for any commercial purpose.
16. No pet owner shall keep a vicious or intimidating pet on the premises (i.e. pit bulls, Rottweiler, chow, boxer or any other vicious or intimidating breeds). Any animal identified in local or State law or ordinance as dangerous or vicious will be prohibited. If the pet owner declines, delays or refuses to remove the pet from the premises, the PHA shall do so, in order to safeguard the health and welfare of other residents.
17. No pet owner shall permit his or her pet to disturb, interfere or diminish the peaceful enjoyment of the pet owner's neighbors or other residents. The terms, "disturb, interfere or diminish" shall include but not be limited to barking, howling, biting, scratching, chirping and other activities of a disturbing nature. If the pet owner declines, delays or refuses to remove the pet from the premises, the PHA shall do so.
18. The owner of a cat shall feed the animal at least once per day; provide a litter box inside the dwelling unit; clean the litter box at least every two (2) days; and take the animal to a veterinarian at least once per year. The pet owner shall not permit refuse from the litter box to accumulate or to become unsanitary or unsightly, and shall dispose of such droppings by placing them in a plastic tie sack in a designated trash container outside the building where the pet owner lives.
19. The owner of a dog shall feed the animal at least once per day; take the animal for a walk at least twice per day; remove the animal's droppings at least twice per day; and take the animal to a veterinarian at least once per year. The pet owner shall not permit dog droppings to accumulate or to become unsanitary or unsightly, and shall dispose of such droppings by placing them in a plastic tie sack in a designated trash container outside the building where the pet owner lives.
20. The pet owner shall take the precautions and measures necessary to eliminate pet odors within and around the dwelling unit, and shall maintain the dwelling unit in a sanitary condition at all times, as determined by the PHA.

21. The pet owner shall keep the pet, dwelling unit, and surrounding areas free of fleas, ticks and/or other vermin.
22. No pet owner shall alter the dwelling unit or the surrounding premises to create a space, hole, container or enclosure for any pet.
23. Resident agrees that the PHA shall have the right to remove any pet should the pet become vicious, display symptoms of severe illness or demonstrate other behavior that constitutes an immediate threat to the health or safety of the tenancy as a whole. If the PHA requests that the resident remove the pet from the premises and resident refuses to do so, or if the PHA is unable to contact the resident to make the request, the PHA may take such actions as deemed necessary, e.g. placing the pet in a facility that will provide the pet with care and shelter at the expense of the pet owner for a period not to exceed thirty (30) days. PHA staff shall enter a dwelling unit where a pet has been left untended for twenty-four (24) hours, remove the pet and transfer it to the proper local authorities, subject to any provisions of State or local law or ordinances in this regard. The PHA shall accept no responsibility for the pet under such circumstances.
24. The PHA will waive the requirement for a security deposit for an assistance animal as a reasonable accommodation. If the pet is not an assistance animal, each pet owner shall pay a non-refundable pet fee of \$10.00 and a refundable pet deposit of \$300.00. There will be no pet deposit charged for aquariums. The pet fee/deposit is not part of the rent payable by the pet owner, and is in addition to any other financial obligation generally imposed on residents of the development where the pet owner lives. The PHA shall use the non-refundable pet fee only to pay reasonable expenses directly attributable to the presence of the pet in the development, including, but not limited to the cost of repairs and replacements to, and the fumigation of, the pet owner's dwelling unit. The refundable deposit will be used, if appropriate, to correct damages directly attributable to the presence of the pet.
25. Should State or local law require that the pet deposit be placed in an interest bearing account, the PHA will provide for such deposit and will account for all interest individually by pet owner family.
26. All residents, including the elderly and disabled, are prohibited from feeding, housing or caring for stray animals or birds. Such action shall constitute having a pet without permission of the PHA.
27. Each pet owner shall identify an alternate custodian for his or her pet. If the pet owner is ill, absent from the dwelling unit, unable to care for his or her pet, or in the event of the death of the pet owner, the alternate custodian shall assume responsibility for the care and keeping of the pet, including, if necessary, the removal of the pet from PHA premises.
28. Should any pet housed in the PHA's facilities give birth to a litter, the residents shall remove from the premises all of said pets except one as soon as the baby's are able to survive on their own (a maximum of 6 weeks).

29. If the pet's health is threatened because of resident's inability to care for the pet due to illness, absence from the unit, or because of mistreatment of the pet, the PHA will notify the responsible person listed in the Pet Policy Addendum. If the individual is either unwilling or unable to care for the pet, or if the PHA is unable to contact the responsible part, the PHA will place the pet in a shelter for a maximum of thirty (30) days. If no responsible part is found, state or local authorities will be contacted.
30. The resident shall be responsible for arranging for burial or other disposal, off the premises, of pets in the event of the death of the pet.
31. The resident agrees to assume all personal financial responsibility for damages to any personal or PHA property caused by the pet and assumes personal responsibility for personal injury to any party caused by the pet.
32. Pet Violation Procedures: Resident agrees to comply with the following:
  - a. Notice of Pet Rule Violation: If the PHA determines on the basis of objective facts, supported by written statements, that a pet owner has violated a rule governing the keeping of pets, the PHA will serve a notice to the owner of pet rule violation. The notice of pet rule violation will be in writing and will:
    - (1) Contain a brief statement of the factual basis for the determination and the pet rule or rules alleged to be violated.
    - (2) State that the pet owner has ten (10) days from the effective date of service of the notice to correct the violation (including in appropriate circumstances, removal of the pet) or to make a written request for a meeting to discuss the violation.
    - (3) State that the pet owner is entitled to be accompanied by another person of his or her choice at the meeting.
    - (4) State that the pet owner's failure to correct the violation, to request a meeting, or to appear at a requested meeting may result in initiation of procedures to have the pet removed and/or terminate the pet owner's lease or both.
  - b. Pet Rule Violation Meeting: If the pet owner makes a request, within five (5) days of the notice of pet rule violation, for a meeting to discuss the alleged violation, the PHA will establish a mutually agreeable time and place for the meeting within fifteen (15) days from the effective date of service of the notice of pet rule violation. At the pet rule violation meeting, the pet owner and PHA shall discuss any alleged pet rule violation and attempt to correct it. The PHA, may as a result of the meeting, give the pet owner additional time to correct the violation.

- c. Notice for Pet Removal: If the PHA determines that the pet owner has failed to correct the pet rule violation within the time permitted by Paragraph b. of this section (including any additional time permitted by the PHA), or if the parties are unable to resolve the problem, the PHA may serve a notice to the pet owner requiring the pet owner to remove the pet. The notice will be in writing and will:
    - (1) Contain a brief statement of the factual basis for the determination and the pet rule or rules that has been violated.
    - (2) State that the pet owner must remove the pet within ten (10) days of the effective date of the notice of pet removal (or the meeting, if notice is served at the meeting).
    - (3) State that failure to remove the pet may result in initiation of the procedures to have the pet removed or terminate the pet owner's lease or both.
  - d. The procedure does not apply in cases where the pet in question presents an immediate threat to the health, safe, of others or if the pet is being treated in an inhumane manner. In such cases paragraph 16 shall apply.
- 33. The resident shall control the pet while maintenance personnel are in the unit performing requested maintenance.
  - 34. Non-emergency work orders will only be completed if the resident is home with the pet, the pet has been caged or the pet has been removed from the unit.
  - 35. The PHA will not be responsible for any pet which gets out of a unit when maintenance employees enter for the purpose of making repairs. The family is responsible for removing the pet when maintenance is scheduled or assuring that a responsible family member is present to control the pet, or have the pet caged.
  - 36. If the pet runs out of the unit, if left alone, when the maintenance staff enters the unit due to an emergency work order request.
  - 37. If a resident, including a pet owner, breaches any of the rules set forth above, the PHA may revoke the pet permit and evict the resident or pet owner.

**AGREEMENT FOR CARE OF PET**

In accordance with the Pet Ownership Policy of the Housing Authority of the City of Charleston and the Addendum to the Residential Dwelling Lease Agreement dated \_\_\_\_\_ between:

**THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF CHARLESON**  
**550 Meeting Street**  
**Charleston, South Carolina 29403**

AND, \_\_\_\_\_ (Resident's Name)

\_\_\_\_\_ (Resident's Address)

I hereby agree that should \_\_\_\_\_ become incapable

of caring for \_\_\_\_\_ a \_\_\_\_\_  
(Name of Pet) (Type of Pet)

for any reason whatsoever, I will assume full responsibility for removal of the pet from the premises and for the care and well being of the animal.

Further, the pet shall not be permitted to return to the premises until approval is given by the Housing Authority of the City of Charleston.

A copy of the Addendum to the Residential Dwelling Lease Agreement is attached.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

Sworn and subscribed before  
me this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Notary of Public

My Commission Expires: \_\_\_\_\_



**PET POLICY ADDENDUM**

I have read and understand the above pet ownership rules and agree to abide by them.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Resident's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
PHA Staff member's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Type of Assistance Animal and Breed

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Assistance Animal

\_\_\_\_\_  
Description of Assistance Animal (color, size, weight, sex, etc.)

The alternate custodian for my pet is:

Custodian's first, middle and last name; post office box; street address; zip code; area telephone code and telephone number:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Resident's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date