



Best Practices for a Dog Friendly Restaurant

The following are best practices and guidelines for restaurant owners that are considering a dog friendly patio and/or outside area.

Each city sets up Rules/Ordinances that restaurants must adhere to in order to be considered a "Dog Friendly Restaurant". These Code of Ordinances refer to "pets" specifically as dogs. Visit your city code of ordinances site to learn more. (Sample links for Knoxville and Nashville are listed below).

Common Rules/Ordinances in the state of Tennessee:

- Permit. The owner of any restaurant which has outdoor seating areas that wish to implement dog friendly regulations, must apply for a permit which states authorization of an approved dog friendly area. You can seek an application for this permit at the Business Tax Office of your city. Depending on the city, restaurant owners should expect to pay around \$20.00 for this permit.
- Current Tags. All dogs must display on collars a current license tag along with current rabies vaccination (or owner must have information available). Visible collars and identifiable tags should be worn at all times while visiting a dog friendly restaurant.
- Entrance & Exit. There should be no dogs present in the interior of any restaurant or in any area where food is prepared. Dogs should not be granted access of entry or exit of the interior of the restaurant. Make sure your restaurant has another entry/exit way for the outdoor patio area.
- Behavior. If the owner of the dog fails to exercise reasonable control over its dog or if their dog is behaving in a way that compromises or threatens the health or safety of any individual in the restaurant, the restaurant has authority to refuse service.
 - Dogs are not to be allowed on chairs, tables, or any other furnishings
 - Dog owners should be encouraged to keep their dogs on a non-retractable leash no longer than six feet during the duration of their visit and should hold their dog under reasonable control
 - Remind visitors to tie leashes to chairs, not tables
- Hygiene. All employees of the restaurant must wash their hands immediately after touching, petting or handling a dog and are prohibited from intentionally coming into contact with a dog while serving food, beverages or handling tableware.
 - All restaurant employees should be instructed that no dogs are to come into contact with serving dishes, utensils, tableware, linens, paper products or any other items involving the operation of food services
- Dog Waste. Dog owners are responsible for the cleanup of their dogs' waste immediately after the occurrence
 - Provide the approved products/kit for these accidents and keep supplies near the outdoor designated dog friendly areas
 - Service Dogs: No additional cleaning or maintenance fees can be charged to the customer

Best Practices:

- We recommend that you add to your current business insurance a policy on dogs. This will better prepare you for any dog related accident on your property.
- Creating a small space in your outdoor area for dogs to do their business and a place to properly get rid of it will save you from many accidents near the dining area. However, most responsible dog owners plan visits appropriately.
- Although not required, supplying water bowls is a plus. This will relieve Guests from worrying for their dogs' hydration.
- A sign or signs should be displayed in the outdoor patio/and or outside area of a restaurant reminding all employees and Guests of the above rules.
- Be sure to fill out our "Include Your Business" form found on our site. This will allow both visitors and residents of the state to find your place in our "Locations" page. After we review your inquiry we will ship you a window decal to showcase your new pet friendly business.

Sources:

1. [Knoxville Code of Ordinances: Sec. 5-80. - Pet dogs in outdoor dining areas at restaurants.](#)
2. [Nashville Code of Ordinances: 8.04.190 - Pet dogs in outdoor dining areas at restaurants.](#)
3. [Restaurant Business: How to Train Employees for Dog-Friendly Restaurants](#)
4. [Toast: 5 Perks of Being a Pet-Friendly Restaurant](#)