**NOTE:** Check for allergens to animals before exposing a member to an animal.

**Applies To:**

* All Wisconsin Veterans Homes (WVH) Activity Staff, Family of WVH Members

**Definitions:**

* **Administration**: For the purpose of this policy “Administration” is defined to mean the Commandant of the Wisconsin Veterans Home or his/her designee.
* **Department**: For the purpose of this policy “Department” is defined to mean the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs.
* **Family members**: For the purpose of this policy “Family Member” is defined to mean a group of people who are closely related by birth, marriage, or adoption.
* **Member**: For purposes of this policy “Member” is defined to mean an individual who currently meets the requirements for residency and resides at one of the veterans’ home pursuant to Chapter 45.51, Wis. Stats.
* **Pets**: For the purpose of this policy “Pets” are defined to mean domesticated dogs and cats and the term “Animal” or “Animals” is used interchangeably.
* **Veterans’ Home**: For the purpose of this policy “Veterans Home” is defined to mean any facility located on the grounds of the Wisconsin Veterans Home at King or the Wisconsin Veterans Home at Union Grove.

### Policy:

**Approval Process:**

* Family members who wish to bring a pet to the facility must provide all proper documentation at least 72-hours in advance of the pet’s initial visit and each handler must sign a RELEASE AND WAIVER OF LIABILITY AND INDEMNITY AGREEMENT [WDVA 4035](file:///O%3A/Templates/WDVA_4035-Release-and-Waiver-of-Liability-and-Indemnity-Agreement-Family-Pet-Visits.dot) prior to every visit. Handlers must be at least eighteen (18) years of age. **Failure to sign this document shall be grounds for denial to admittance into the veterans’ home.** Administration reserves the right to approve or deny a pet for visit into the veteran’s home.
* All pets must be approved prior to the initial visit and annually following the initial visit. Approved pets will be issued a pet ID tag that must be worn by pet or presented by owner/handler. Pets without the approved pet ID tag may not enter buildings.
* To receive initial approval, veterinarian documentation must be provided to show that the animal is current for the appropriate vaccinations and following a parasite prevention program. The administration shall require such certification be filed for every animal approved and obtain re-certification for every animal approved within a twelve (12) month period of each certification or re-certification.
* No pet shall be allowed in a veterans’ home unless documentation is provided by the pet owner and/or handler indicating that the animal is current for the following vaccinations:
* DHLPP (Distemper, Hepatitis, Leptospirosis, Para-Influenza, Parvo Virus, Carona Virus);
* Rabies;
* Documentation must also be provided showing that the pet is following a regimen for flea prevention.
* Family pets shall be limited to two (2) pets per visit. Each pet shall have their own individually assigned handler.
* Pets shall be limited to ten (10) per floor during visiting hours.

**Guidelines:**

* Pet handlers must read these guidelines and sign the RELEASE AND WAIVER OF LIABILITY AND INDEMNITY AGREEMENT prior to admittance to the Veterans Home.
	+ Approved pets must have a tag to be worn on the collar or a card to be presented to staff by the handler. Unapproved pets or pets without the approval tag or card will not be allowed in any buildings.
* All approved pets must be appropriately secured, leashed, or caged and controlled at all times in a manner which protects the well-being of both members and pets.
	+ Pets are not allowed in areas while food is being prepared, served or stored.
	+ Pets are not allowed on furniture in common areas of the facility.
	+ Pets are allowed in member’s room if that member resides in a single room. If a member resides in a double room, the pet will only be allowed in the room after consent is secured from the other member residing in the room.
	+ All approved pets will be rested and relieved in an area designated by the administration.
	+ Pets must be housebroken or properly contained. Pet handlers will provide clean-up materials and dispose of waste in outdoor receptacles. The pet owner and/or handler shall notify housekeeping to properly disinfect the area, if housekeeping is unavailable, the pet owner and/or handler shall contact nursing staff.
	+ All approved pet visits are allowed during hours as designated by administration.
	+ Visitors and their pets are required to sign in and out as directed by the administration every time they visit the facility. Administration shall retain all signing logs and RELEASE AND WAIVER OF LIABILITY AND INDEMNITY AGREEMENTS for a minimum of three (3) years.
* If pets become stressed and/or unruly, or procedures are not being followed, the pet owner and/or handler will be asked to remove the pet from the veteran’s home grounds. No pet shall be allowed to become a nuisance or create any unreasonable disturbance. Examples of nuisance behavior for the purposes of this paragraph are:
* Pets whose unruly behavior causes personal injury or property damage.
* Pets who make noise continuously and/or incessantly for a period of ten minutes or intermittently for one-half hour or more to the disturbance of any person during the visiting period.
* Pets that are not under the complete physical control of a responsible human companion and on a hand-held leash or in a pet carrier.
* Pets that relieve themselves on walls or floors of common areas.
* Pets who exhibit aggressive or other dangerous or potentially dangerous behavior.
* Pets that are conspicuously unclean.
* Upon completion of pet visit, the pet owner and/or handler will assist member with hand washing and sanitation with staff supervision.

**Liability:**

* The pet handler shall be liable for the full amount of damages caused by the animal injuring or causing injury to a person, or property when visiting a Wisconsin Veterans Home facility. In case of a dog, the animal handler’s liability and penalties shall be those under Sec. 174.02, Wisconsin Statutes.
* The pet handler shall indemnify and hold harmless the State of Wisconsin, the Department of Veteran Affairs, and their respective officers, directors, employees and agents from and against any and all liabilities, damages or claims that may arise in connection with any pet visit at the veteran’s home.