

Animals

If you're a food business, assistance animals must be allowed in areas open to customers. It's up to you to decide if you let pet dogs in outdoor dining areas and under what circumstances.



SAFE FOOD AUSTRALIA
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What are the requirements?

Under Standard 3.2.2 - Food Safety Practices and General Requirements, only certain animals are allowed in food premises:

- assistance animals must be allowed in customer-accessed areas
- pet dogs may be allowed in outdoor dining areas
- live animals (except for seafood, other fish and shellfish) are not permitted in areas where food is handled.

Businesses must maintain high standards of food safety and hygiene to ensure animals do not contaminate food.

Which animals are allowed and where?

- Assistance animals must be allowed into dining and drinking areas and any other areas used by customers, but they are not allowed in non-public areas, such as the kitchen. An assistance animal is a guide dog or other animal trained to help a person with a disability (in Section 9 of the Disability Discrimination Act 1992).
- Fish, seafood and shellfish are the only live animals allowed in areas where food is handled. This means you can keep decorative fish in tanks and keep and sell live seafood, fish and shellfish on your premises. However, you must protect all food from becoming contaminated by these animals. For example, when cleaning fish tanks you must not contaminate any food or food handling areas (e.g. kitchen sinks and benches).
- Pet dogs may be permitted, but only in outdoor dining areas that are not enclosed. If you enclose an outdoor open dining area, even for a short time (for example if in winter you use café blinds and a retractable awning), then dogs are not allowed in it while it is enclosed.

Do I have to allow pet dogs?

It is up to you as the business owner to decide whether or not you let customers have their dogs in outdoor dining areas. You can also say under what circumstances the dogs are allowed. For example, you could tell customers their dogs must be kept on the ground and on a lead.

What if I'm a home-based business?

The same rules apply to home-based businesses. Pets (other than fish) are not allowed in any food handling areas such as the kitchen and food storage areas.

To keep food safe from animals you could, for example:

- put up physical barriers to stop animals entering food handling areas (e.g. self-closing screen doors, child safety gates)
- store food in secure rooms or cupboards
- when transporting food, make sure no pets are in the vehicle or that there is a suitable physical barrier to protect the food from contamination by pets.

Need more information?

Safe Food Australia is a guide to the food safety standards in Chapter 3 of the Food Standards Code. Animals are covered under Standard 3.2.2 clause 24 and in Appendix 7.

Copies of the guide, some translated fact sheets and other information is available at www.foodstandards.gov.au/safefood or by emailing information@foodstandards.gov.au.