

Bergen Community College

Guidelines for Animals Allowed on College Premises

General Animal Guidelines:

- Animals must always be under the control and supervision of their owners/handlers. Animals must be harnessed, leashed, or tethered unless these devices/restrictions interfere with the work of the animal, or the individual's disability or condition prevents using such devices. In that case the owner/handler must maintain control of the animal through voice, signal, or other effective controls.
- Animals are not allowed to wander unattended on campus grounds or in buildings.
- Animals must be housebroken, and owners/handlers are responsible for the upkeep of their animals. This includes being responsible for cleaning up after their animals and having disposable waste bags. Owners/handlers are responsible for knowing where designated receptacles are located on campus, or for requesting assistance in the proper disposal of their animals' waste.
- Owners/handlers are fully responsible for any damage that is done to the College's campus grounds, buildings, or building contents by their animals.
- The College assumes no responsibility for the care and comfort of an animal other than to provide a safe and secure environment.
- Any display of aggressive, unruly, or disruptive behavior by an animal may require the immediate removal of the animal from the College's campus by the owner/handler.
- Animals must not initiate contact with other permitted animals or with other college members unless agreed to by the owner/handler and the other college member.
- Owners/handlers are responsible for providing food, treats, and other necessities for their animals, which are not the College's responsibility. Toys or other objects provided to animals that produce loud sounds or squeaking are prohibited.
- Owners/handlers must provide proof of required annual municipal licensing and vaccinations for their animals as requested by the College to ensure adherence to public health and safety laws. Animals should be vaccinated in accordance with state and local laws. Failure to provide such proof may result in the disallowance of a permitted animal on the College's campus. See the below exception to this requirement for individuals with service animals.
- An animal may be prohibited from certain campus spaces or places if the animal's presence may compromise a sterile environment or create other significant safety or health concerns. It may be deemed unsafe for service animals to be present in certain areas of the College campus or during certain activities. Each area or activity will be considered as to its own risk potential by the appropriate college officials. However, reasonable accommodation will be arranged when it is determined unsafe for a service animal to accompany a disabled individual.
- Animals should be free of known illness and disease. Animals with an illness or disease that present a risk to the health and safety of other college members should not be brought on campus. The College reserves the right to require an animal with an apparent or known illness or disease to be removed from the campus, if it compromises the health and safety of the College community. See the below exception to this requirement for individuals with service animals.
- For individuals with allergies or those who are afraid of animals, the College will make other arrangements such as providing enough space for the individual to avoid getting close to the animal. If an individual is at risk of a significant allergic reaction or severe panic attack to an animal, the College will identify a way to accommodate both the individual with the allergy or phobia and the individual with the animal if possible. In rare instances the animal may be required to leave the College campus, except for service animals as discussed below.
- The College may designate certain areas or locations as animal free zones provided they do not infringe upon the access rights of disabled individuals who are accompanied by a service animal.
- The initial time a student, employee, or visitor appears on the College's campus with an approved animal per these guidelines and the College's Animal Policy, they must report to the Office of Specialized Services to address all logistical matters, requirements, issues, or concerns.

- The Office of Public Safety will assist with the adherence to and enforcement of these guidelines. This includes addressing all issues that arise from prohibited animals on the College's campus, owners/handlers that do not abide by the general and specific guidelines and requirements for their permitted animals, permitted animals which present a safety and security issue to the rest of the College community, and other related matters/issues.

Guidelines for Service Animals:

- Service animals are allowed to accompany their owner/handler to any part of the grounds, buildings, athletic facilities, etc. where other members of the College, public, or visitors are allowed. Although the ADA does not cover "service animals in training", Bergen allows "service animals in training" on campus who are being trained to assist their disabled owners/handlers with tasks. However, such animals in training must follow the general guidelines for behavior and for being housebroken.
- Local laws that may prohibit specific breeds of dogs do not apply to service animals.
- In accordance with ADA requirements, for any individual who is accompanied by a service animal, the College will not do the following:
 - Inquire about the nature or extent of the individual's disability
 - Request or require a medical document or proof of the individual's disability
 - Request or require a demonstration of the service animal's tasks.
 - Request or require the animal's certification or training documents which support their status as a service animal
- In situations where the need for a service animal by an individual is not obvious, the College can ask the following two questions, (1) is the animal required because of a disability? and (2) what work, or task has the animal been trained to perform? If the individual refuses to answer, the College must allow the individual and their service animal on campus regardless, as they have the right to access the premises with their service animal, even if the need is not obvious or the individual refuses to answer. Bergen will not ask the owner/handler these questions if the service animal's tasks are obvious such as a seeing eye dog who is guiding a blind person.
- For disabled individuals that are accompanied by service animals, the College encourages voluntary registration of the service animal with the Office of Specialized Services. Registration with the Office of Specialized Services is required for all other permitted animals (i.e., those which are not service animals) who will access any campus buildings.
- Individuals accompanied by service animals are not assessed additional fees solely because they have a service animal.
- Individuals with service animals are not denied access to public transportation (i.e., bus) to and from the College that are available to other members of the College community.
- Although owners/handlers are to provide proof of required annual municipal licensing and vaccinations for their animals when requested by the College as documented in the above general guidelines, such proof however is not a condition for allowing service animals on campus as stipulated by the ADA. If an owner/handler refuses or is unable to provide such proof, the College will discuss with them other ways to verify the animal's vaccination status and municipal licensing.
- Although the College cannot deny access to the College's campus due to a service animal's illness, when a service animal is sick which compromises the health and safety of other members of the College, Bergen will offer the disabled individual the option to be serviced without the animal present.
- Allergies and fear of animals are not valid reasons for denying access or refusing service to individuals with service animals. The College will not deny access to service animals because other members of the College community have allergies or have a fear of animals. In such cases the College will make accommodations which may include separating the disabled individual with the service animal from the individual(s) with allergies or fear of animals.
- Service animals of College members who participate in college-sponsored overnight events (e.g., field trips, athletic events, etc.) are allowed in hotels as required by the ADA. However, the College recommends that the hotel be contacted in advance to inform them of the service animal and if the hotel has any requirements.

Service animals will accompany their owners/handlers on any college arranged bus transportation to and from the event.

- Service animals that accompany student athletes at athletic events are afforded the same access rights and subject to the same regulations when accessing other public spaces. Service animals are permitted in all areas as their owners/handlers, provided the safety, security, and well-being of both student athletes and their service animals are assured. The following applies to student athletes who are accompanied by service animals:
 - Since presence on an athletic field or court could lead to injury for service animals, owners/handlers, and/or other athletes, service animals are not allowed on active fields or courts during games/matches.
 - Service animals are only allowed on the sidelines of sporting events if properly leashed or harnessed and under the control of their owners/handlers.
 - When owners/handlers are actively engaged in and playing at sporting events, they must arrange for other individuals (e.g. friends or family members) to manage and handle their service animals.
 - Other Bergen athletes, coaches, and trainers are not responsible for the handling and management of service animals during sporting events.
 - To ensure the safety, security, and well-being of all parties, student athletes who wish to bring their service animals to away games/matches must schedule a meeting and coordinate with the coaching staff all arrangements and logistics prior to the start of the playing season.
- As stipulated by the ADA, the College does not require service animals to wear a vest, patch, ID tag, or special harness which identifies them as such. However, many owners/handlers choose to have their service animals wear identifying gear as a courtesy to the public and to avoid confusion or being unnecessarily questioned. In such cases this is not mandated by the College.

Guidelines for Emotional Support Animals (ESAs):

- ESAs are limited to dogs and cats on the College's campus grounds only and are not allowed in college buildings.
- ESAs of student athletes, coaches, or spectators are not allowed on athletic playing surfaces (e.g., fields, courts, etc.) or on the sidelines of such playing surfaces.
- Since federal law does not require ESAs to be trained or certified, the College will not request proof that an ESA is professionally trained.
- Bergen may request or require proof of the evaluation of a licensed mental health professional (e.g., therapist, psychiatrist) which states that the individual has a mental or emotional disability and that the animal provides therapeutic benefit. The evaluation is in the form of a letter or prescription that includes the letterhead, licensure, and signature of the professional. Refusal or inability to provide an evaluation by the owner/handler when requested may result in the disallowance of their animal on the College's campus grounds.
- ESAs that meet the College's requirements and are permitted on the College's campus grounds must be registered by their owner/handler with the Office of Specialized Services.
- ESAs that are a distraction and/or disrupt the College's business and activities may be required to leave the College's campus grounds.
- Although ESAs are allowed on the College's campus grounds, they do not have the same access rights as afforded service animals by the ADA. Therefore, the College reserves the right to require an ESA to leave the College campus, if a college member has a phobia or an allergic reaction to the ESA.
- College members who have ESAs and participate in college-sponsored overnight events (e.g., field trips, athletic events, etc.) must abide by the animal policies and rules of the hotel. The hotel should be contacted in advance to determine if ESAs are allowed or not. If allowed, the owner/handler should provide an evaluation form of a licensed mental health professional that the ESA provides therapeutic benefit if required by the hotel. Other arrangements must be made by the owner/handler if the selected hotel does not allow ESAs with the assistance of the College.
- There is no requirement for emotional support animals to wear identification (e.g., vest, special harness, ID tag) which identifies them as such. Some owners will use identifying gear to signal their animal's role. However, the use of identifying gear is a personal choice of the owner/handler, not a legal requirement, and thus not mandated by the College.

Guidelines for Therapy Animals:

- Therapy animals are limited to dogs and cats on the College's campus grounds only and are not allowed in college buildings unless they are part of a College-sponsored program/event.
- Therapy animals of student athletes, coaches, or spectators are not allowed on athletic playing surfaces (e.g., fields, courts, etc.) or on the sidelines of such playing surfaces.
- Bergen may require at its discretion proof that a therapy animal has had specific training, evaluation, and certification by a certifying organization to ensure the animal has the right temperament for public work and access. The proof provided is documentation from the certifying organization (i.e., therapy animal organization) that the animal is registered with, such as a certificate or ID card. Refusal or inability to provide proof by the owner/handler as requested may result in the disallowance of their animal on the College campus.
- Therapy animals that meet the College's requirements and are permitted on the College's campus must be registered by their owner/handler with the Office of Specialized Services.
- Ownership of a therapy animal does not inherently require the evaluation of a licensed mental health professional, and therefore the College will not request or require such proof.
- Therapy animals must have a friendly, patient, and gentle temperament and must be trained to provide comfort in various settings. Therapy animals that do not exhibit such behavior and temperament and instead, are a distraction and/or disrupt the College's business and activities may be required to leave the College campus.
- Therapy animals that meet the College's requirements and are permitted on the College's campus must be registered by their owner/handler with the Office of Specialized Services.
- Although therapy animals are allowed on the College's campus, they do not have the same access rights as afforded service animals by the ADA. Therefore, the College reserves the right to require that a therapy animal leave the College's campus if a college member has a phobia or allergic reaction to the therapy animal, and the College is unable to make alternate accommodations.
- College members who have therapy animals and participate in college-sponsored overnight events (e.g., field trips, athletic events, etc.) must abide by the animal policies and rules of the hotel. The hotel should be contacted in advance to determine if therapy animals are allowed or not. If allowed, the owner/handler should provide proof from a certifying organization that the therapy animal has had specific training, evaluation, and certification if required by the hotel. Other arrangements must be made by the owner/handler if the hotel does not allow therapy animals with the College's assistance.
- There is no requirement for therapy animals to wear identification (e.g., vest, special harness, ID tag) which identifies them as such. Some owners will use identifying gear to signal their animal's role and some therapy animals may wear gear provided by certifying organizations or those they are registered with. However, the use of identifying gear is a personal choice of the owner/handler, not a legal requirement, and thus not mandated by the College.

Guidelines for Other Animals:

- Owners/handlers or those individuals responsible for animals brought on the College's campus used in the delivery of academic instruction, for animal-related College-sponsored events, or for working purposes are required to adhere to all general animal guidelines and have control of such animals at all times.
- When an owner/handler appears on the College's campus with an approved animal for the reasons cited in the preceding bullet, the owner/handler must report to the Public Safety Department to address all logistical matters, requirements, issues, or concerns.

Reference Policy: GADM 012-001.2026 Animal Policy

Established Guidelines: September 10, 2026

Reviewed: