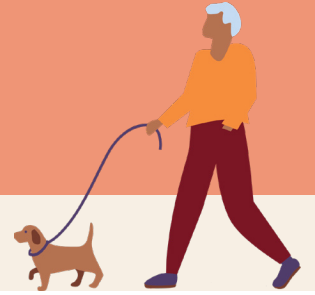




# Pet Policy

## Questions & Answers



### Our approach to pets in our communities

#### 1. Why does GEF allow pets?

GEF acknowledges the importance that pets have in the lives of seniors by providing social and emotional support and unconditional love. We recognize the importance of this relationship and its impact on a seniors' quality of life.

Since 2021, GEF is one of the only social housing operators for seniors that welcomes pets.

#### 2. What about clients who are uncomfortable around animals?

GEF recognizes that for various reasons (e.g. allergies, fear, etc.) not everyone is comfortable around animals. We have developed guidelines and regulations to balance the needs of all clients so that everyone can enjoy the community.



## Pets on GEF property

### 3. Where are pets allowed to be within a GEF building?

Pets are expected to stay inside their home unit, other than when they are being taken in or out of the building.

Common areas are for the enjoyment and socialization of all members of the community. Therefore, pets are not allowed in the common areas, unless they are walking through to enter or exit the building (with the exception of dining rooms). Common areas include:

- Lounges
- Laundry Rooms
- Food Preparation and Service Areas
- Lodge Dining Rooms

### 4. Are pets allowed to run around freely and unrestrained?

No, pets should be kept on a leash, in a pet carrier, or otherwise restrained whenever they are outside their unit or are outside on GEF property. Keeping pets under control when in public helps to prevent incidents with other people and animals.

### 5. Are service dogs allowed to be in common areas? What about emotional support and therapy animals?

Service dogs are specially trained and certified animals that support the various needs of their owners. Under Canadian legislation, service dogs are not considered pets and are allowed in any building. This means certified service dogs are allowed in common areas, including food service areas.

However, emotional support and therapy animals are not recognized as service animals, so they are **NOT** allowed in common areas.

### 6. If pets are not allowed in common areas, how will GEF handle programs like pet therapy?

For these types of programs, each community will have to consider their inside and outside layout. One possible option is for pet therapy programs to take place inside pet-friendly meeting rooms, where people have the choice on whether or not to attend.





# Pet owners' responsibilities

## 7. What is expected of me as a pet owner?

GEF supports responsible pet ownership, while fostering a peaceful and comfortable community for everyone. Pet owners must handle the emotional, physical, and financial needs of caring for a pet, such as managing a pet's regular toileting needs and cleaning up after them. As well, they must keep their pet documents up to date and current.

## 8. Can pet owners leave their pets in their unit alone and unattended?

Pets cannot be left alone in their unit for more than eight hours at a time. Being left alone for long periods is not good for the quality of life of a pet.

Pet owners should make arrangements for the care of their pets if they will be away for an extended period.

## 9. What happens if pet owners become sick or are not able to care for their pets properly?

Pet owners need to designate guardians for their pets. These guardians take over the care and needs of a pet, if a pet owner becomes unable to do so for whatever reason.

If a pet owner is not able to resume care or is not providing proper care, they will need to make arrangements to hand over the pet to an individual who can, such as the pet's guardian. Otherwise, the pet owner will have to surrender the pet to animal welfare authorities.

## 10. How will everything be kept clean with pets defecating on the property?

Pet owners must clean up pet messes and waste immediately. Pet waste should be placed in a plastic bag and disposed of properly in the garbage.

We ask that pet waste is not left in the garbage bins of indoor common areas. This will help prevent bad smells in the building.



## Pet behaviour expectations

### 11. What if pets are really noisy in their unit?

It is inevitable that a dog will bark, a cat will meow, and a bird will chirp, however, repeated and excessive noise is not acceptable. Pet owners should be respectful of their neighbours and try to keep noise from pets to a minimum.

### 12. What happens if pets are misbehaving around others, such as jumping or lunging?

Pet owners are solely responsible for handling their pet and ensuring it behaves appropriately around other people and animals. Pets should be kept restrained and under control whenever they are outside their unit to help prevent incidents.

### 13. What happens if GEF staff or contractors need to enter a pet's unit?

For everyone's safety, pet owners are required to secure pets whenever GEF staff and/or contractors are required to enter units.



## Pet visits

### 14. Can a pet visit me in my own unit?

Yes, pets can visit in other units, as long as everyone agrees to the visit. This is a private relationship between pet owners and their neighbours.

### 15. Can family or friends bring their own pets when they come to visit with me?

Yes, but handlers of visiting pets need to get permission from Site Management before they can visit in your unit. Pet handlers are responsible for all actions of their pets, such as ensuring pets behave appropriately and cleaning up after them properly.





## Dispute resolution involving pets

### 16. What happens if a pet bites or scratches someone or damages something?

Pet owners must notify Site Management immediately if their pets injure another person or pets or if they cause property damage. Site Management will investigate these incidents and determine the best course of action, as GEF takes the health and safety of our clients, staff, and visitors very seriously.

Pet owners are responsible for ensuring their pets are handled and behave appropriately. Pet owners are solely responsible for any claims, demands, actions, and costs resulting from any injury or damage their pets may cause. This means that GEF is not liable or responsible for any bodily or personal injury or property damage of any nature that may be suffered or sustained by clients, staff, or visitors.

### 17. What happens when there are complaints made about pets?

Site Management will investigate complaints regarding pets. They will determine the best course of action including, but not limited to:

- Requesting that the pet owner remove the pet from the premises.
- Surrendering the pet to their guardians and/or the animal welfare authorities.
- Reviewing the tenancy of the pet owner should multiple issues go unaddressed.

If a pet is not being cared for, the regulations are not being correctly followed, or a pet poses a danger to others, **GEF will withdraw permission for the pet.**

## Pet eligibility criteria

### 18. How many pets may a pet owner have living with them?

Because of unit sizes and what they can house comfortably, GEF allows only one cat, one dog, two birds, OR one aquarium (not exceeding 10 gallons) to be housed within a unit.

### 19. Do cats and dogs have to be a certain age?

Yes, cats and dogs must be at least three years old. This age ensures pets have reached full maturity and are out of their chewing, marking, and accidental toileting stage of life.

### 20. Do cats and dogs have to be spayed or neutered?

Yes, spaying or neutering cats and dogs is considered a trait of a responsible pet owner. This ensures a single pet doesn't increase in number. As well, there is an expectation that older pets are mature enough to be spayed or neutered.

### 21. Do cats and dogs have to be vaccinated?

Yes, up to date vaccinations are critical for the health of pets and for the people and animals who may come in contact with them. As well, up to date vaccinations are considered a trait of a responsible pet owner.

## **22. Do cats and dogs have to be licensed?**

Yes, the City of Edmonton requires cats and dogs to have the necessary pet license(s), and it is important for responsible pet owners to follow all applicable laws and bylaws relating to pet ownership.

## **23. Are all dog breeds allowed?**

GEF allows dogs that are under 50 centimetres (20 inches) in height at the shoulder and weigh less than 16 kg (35 pounds) at adult size.

As a general rule, specific height and weight restrictions rule out having certain types of dogs in the building – usually larger breeds. Smaller dog breeds are generally more appropriate for communal environments and smaller living spaces.

## **24. Are there any pets that are not allowed to live in GEF buildings?**

Yes, there are some pets that we do not permit. Our discretion in this matter is absolute. These include, but are not limited to:

- Ferrets
- Rodents
- Excessively noisy or loud birds
- Large reptiles
- Snakes
- Spiders
- Insects
- Any other animals deemed to be dangerous or vicious in nature

## **25. How many pets are allowed in a building at the same time?**

While each community may accept pets, the number may vary, especially as some units may not be suitable for a pet.

## **Pet fees**

### **26. Are there fees or charges for having a pet?**

Yes, there is a \$250 non-refundable fee upon the approval of a pet application for all pets and an additional ongoing charge of \$20 per month for cats and dogs.

### **27. What do these pet fees cover?**

GEF is a non-profit organization, and these fees help cover the initial and ongoing administration, maintenance, and housekeeping costs. Having pets in our communities requires more frequent unit inspections and added maintenance and housekeeping expenses, such as when we turn over units after pet owners move.

There is an expectation that responsible pet owners will have budgeted for the ongoing costs and financial responsibilities of having pets.



# Pet applications

## 28. How do I apply for a pet?

Clients must submit a Pet Application Form and other required pet documents to GEF for approval. The application should include a recent photo of the potential pet. GEF will assess pets for housing approval, and we may request that pets (particularly dogs) attend an interview.

In addition, clients must read and agree to follow GEF's pet rules and regulations.

## 29. What are the requirements for me to become a pet owner?

Clients must be able to handle the emotional, physical, and financial needs of caring for a pet, such as managing a pet's regular toileting needs and cleaning up after them. In addition, their unit must be suitable for a pet and designated as pet friendly.

Current clients applying to have a pet must be in good standing with their tenancy, which includes, but is not limited to, having no arrears and maintaining their unit.

## 30. How does GEF define a pet-friendly unit?

All units are technically pet friendly; however, at some buildings, there is a preference for the unit to have appropriate flooring (e.g. vinyl) and finishes that are suitable for pets.

## 31. What if I want to transfer to another unit or GEF building with my pet?

When pet owners transfer units with pets, they can only move to another unit that meets the pet friendly designation.

## 32. What if my pet passes away and I want to get a new pet?

Clients may submit a new Pet Application Form if they are wanting to house a new pet. The new pet will have to meet all the requirements outlined in the pet application.

If you have further questions, speak with your Site Management or contact our Housing Team at [housing@gef.org](mailto:housing@gef.org).



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