



EASTERN CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY

83 WINDHAM STREET • WILLIMANTIC, CONNECTICUT 06226 • 860-465-5000

The Office of AccessAbility Services

Assistance Animal Protocol

Eastern Connecticut State University (“Eastern” or “University”) recognizes the importance of “Assistance Animals,” defined as “Service Animals,” under the Americans with Disabilities and Amendments Act (“ADAAA”) and “Support Animals,” under the Fair Housing Act (“FHA”). Eastern is committed to ensuring students’ equal access to the University’s programs and activities and supports student use of necessary assistance animals on campus. This Protocol defines the two types of assistance animals and explains requirements relating to the use of assistance animals on campus. Eastern reserves the right to amend this Protocol as needed.

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I. Definitions

A. Pets

A “pet” is any domesticated animal that is kept solely for companionship. Assistance animals (service and support animals), as defined below, are not considered pets. Pets are not permitted in university housing, except for fish in 10 gallon tanks or less.

B. Assistance Animals

The term “assistance animal” is the overarching term that refers to both service animals as well as support animals, defined below.

- **Service Animal:** A trained dog that works, provides assistance, or performs tasks for the benefit of a person with a disability.
- **Support Animal:** An animal that provides emotional or another type of support that alleviates one or more identified symptoms or effects of a person's disability. It is important to note that a support animal may be identified by various names. For example, an individual might identify the animal as a therapy animal, companion animal, or emotional support animal.

C. Owner

The “Owner” is the individual or student with a disability who requires the use of an assistance animal.

D. Office of AccessAbility Services

The Office of AccessAbility Services (“OAS”) collaborates with students with disabilities and Eastern faculty and staff to ensure that students have equal access to all programs and activities at Eastern.

II. Service Animals at Eastern

A. Expanded Definition of a Service Animal

According to the ADAAA, “Service animals are defined as dogs that are individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities. Examples of such work or tasks include guiding people who are blind, alerting people who are deaf, pulling a wheelchair, alerting and protecting a person who is having a seizure, reminding a person with mental illness to take prescribed medications, calming a person with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) during an anxiety attack, or performing other duties. Service animals are working animals, not pets. The work or task a dog has been trained to provide must be directly related to the person’s disability. Dogs whose sole function is to provide comfort or emotional support do not qualify as service animals under the ADA.”



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B. Examples of a Service Animal

- Guide Dog, or Seeing Eye Dog, is a carefully trained dog that serves as a travel tool for persons with severe visual impairments or who are blind.
- Hearing or Signal Dog is a dog that has been trained to alert a person with significant hearing loss or who is deaf when a sound, e.g., knock on the door, occurs.
- Psychiatric Service Dog can be trained to perform a variety of tasks that assist individuals with disabilities to detect the onset of psychiatric episodes and lessen their effects. Tasks performed by psychiatric service animals may include reminding the handler to take medicine; providing safety checks, or room searches, or turning on lights for persons with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder; interrupting self-mutilation by persons with dissociative identity disorders; and keeping disoriented individuals from danger.
- SSigDOG (sensory signal dogs or social signal dog) is a dog trained to assist a person with autism. The dog alerts the handler to distracting repetitive movements common among those with autism, allowing the person to stop the movement (e.g., hand flapping).
- Seizure Response Dog is a dog trained to assist a person with a seizure disorder. How the dog serves the person depends on the person's needs. The dog may stand guard over the person during a seizure or the dog may go for help. A few dogs have learned to predict a seizure and warn the person in advance to sit down or move to a safe place.

C. Use of a Service Animal in Eastern's Facilities

Service animals will be permitted to accompany people with disabilities in all areas of Eastern's facilities, including university housing, where students, members of the public, and other participants in services, programs or activities are allowed to go.

D. Service Animal Use: Two Questions for Documentation

Eastern does not require documentation for service animals, such as proof that the animal has been certified, trained, or licensed as a service animal. Individuals accompanied by a service animal on campus but who do not need any disability-related accommodations are not required to register with the OAS, nor is such individual required to submit a request for a reasonable accommodation to receive access of his or her service animal. However, students who require the use of a service animal in University housing should alert the OAS of the animal's presence and should schedule a meeting with OAS staff to discuss expectations relating to the use and care of the animal in housing.

Additionally, Eastern cannot ask about the nature or extent of a person's disability to determine whether a person's animal qualifies as a service animal. However, when it is not readily apparent that a dog is a service animal, OAS staff may make two inquiries to determine whether the dog qualifies as a service animal, which are:

1. Is the dog required because of a disability?
2. What work or task has the dog been trained to perform?



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E. Behavior & Control of Service Animals

Service animals must be under the control of the Owner at all times. The animal must be harnessed or leashed when the animal is in a public area (classroom, library, common area of a residence hall, outdoors on campus, etc.), unless these devices interfere with the service animal's ability to perform a task that it could not accomplish while on a leash. In this case, the owner must maintain control over the animal through voice, signal, or other control. The owner does not need to keep the service animal on a leash in private areas assigned to the owner (e.g., the owner's residence hall room). A service animal may be removed from campus temporarily or permanently if the animal is uncontrollable and/or disruptive (e.g. barking, off its leash, aggressive toward others (people or animals), in poor health, or consistently unclean or unhealthy to the extent that the animal's behavior or condition poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others).

F. Licensing, Vaccination, ID Tag

The Owner must abide by current city, county, and state ordinances, laws, and/or regulations pertaining to licensing, vaccination, and other requirements for animals. It is the Owner's responsibility to know and understand these ordinances, laws, and regulations. Animals on campus must have an annual clean bill of health (including vaccinations and immunity shots against rabies and/or other diseases common to the type of animal) that is signed by a licensed veterinarian. All vaccinations must be current and dogs must wear a rabies tag at all times. The University reserves the right to require documentation of compliance with such ordinances, laws, and/or regulations, which may include a vaccination certificate. The University reserves the right to request documentation showing that the animal has been licensed. The animal must wear an owner identification tag (owner name and contact information) any time the animal is on campus. The Owner needs to ensure that the animal is kept as clean as possible. Regular bathing/grooming and pest control measures need to be performed by the Owner.

G. Miniature Horses

The OAS will assess requests for the use of trained miniature horses by people with disabilities on a case-by-case basis. Requests should be submitted to the OAS and, consistent with applicable laws, the OAS may make modifications in its policies to permit their use if they meet certain criteria and have been individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of people with disabilities.



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III. Support Animals at Eastern

A. Expanded Definition of a Support Animal

A support animal is defined as an animal that provides emotional or another type of support that alleviates one or more identified symptoms or effects of a person's disability. Support animals are not considered service animals. These animals are not required to undergo specialized training and do not provide assistance to individuals in the activities of daily living. A request to have a support animal in campus housing is considered a request for an accommodation and will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

B. Requesting a Support Animal in University Housing

If an Eastern student requires the use of a support animal due to a disability, the student must register with the Office of AccessAbility Services (OAS). Please refer to the OAS website for information about registering: <http://www1.easternct.edu/accessability>. The OAS requires documentation from a licensed physician or mental health provider, including a qualified psychiatrist, social worker, or other mental health professional, to provide sufficient information for the OAS to determine:

- 1) That the individual qualifies as a person with a disability (i.e., has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities); and
- 2) That the support animal may be necessary to afford the person with a disability an equal opportunity to use and enjoy university housing (i.e. that the animal would provide emotional support or other assistance that would ameliorate one or more symptoms or effects of the disability).

C. Approval of a Support Animal in University Housing

The Office of AccessAbility Services will consult with Housing & Residential Life in making a determination on a case-by-case basis of whether the request for a support animal is reasonable.

A request for a support animal may be denied if the presence of the animal:

- Imposes an undue financial and/or administrative burden
- Fundamentally alters University housing policies
- Poses a direct threat to the health and safety of others

The University will not ask for or require an individual with a disability to pay an advanced fee or surcharge for a support animal (please note that this fee is different from a fee charged to a student due to damage to University property by the support animal). Eastern will work with each individual with a support animal to ensure that they have an appropriate housing assignment



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consistent with other students who apply for University housing. After approval, the support animal is permitted in University housing only as long as it is necessary due to the Owner's disability. The Owner must notify the OAS in writing if the support animal is no longer needed or is no longer in residence. If an Owner wants to replace the support animal, the Owner must request the approval of the new support animal through the OAS.

The Owner must provide written consent for OAS to disclose information regarding the request for an presence of the support animal to those individuals who may be impacted by the presence of the animal including, but not limited to, Housing & Residential Life staff and potential and/or current roommates, suite-mates, or neighbors. Such information shall be limited to information pertaining to the support animal and shall not include information relating to the individual's disability.

Current and sufficient documentation must be on file at the OAS in order for a student to have the ability to continue to utilize the support animal accommodation. Students should note that documentation for psychological disabilities expires after 6 months and documentation for chronic health disabilities expires after 3 years. Owners must renew their request for a support animal accommodation each academic year by submitting a Housing Accommodations Application (available on the OAS website: <http://www1.easternct.edu/accessability>).

D. Conflicting Disabilities

Students who have asthma, allergies, or other medical conditions affected by the presence of animals are asked to contact the OAS. The students impacted by the presence of the animal must provide current and sufficient documentation to support his or her disability. The needs of both parties are considered in resolving an issue involving conflicting disabilities.

E. Use of a Support Animal in Eastern's Facilities

Support animals are generally not allowed to accompany persons with disabilities in all public areas of Eastern as a service animal is allowed to do. A support animal must be contained within the Owner's privately assigned individual living accommodations (room or suite) except when the Owner needs to bring the animal outside for natural relief and exercise.

F. Behavior & Control of Support Animals

Support animals must be under the control of the Owner at all times. When a support animal is taken outside of the Owner's private living accommodations, the animal must be in a carrier or controlled by a leash or harness. The support animal may not be placed on or come in direct contact with campus furniture such as chairs, couches, tables, or desks outside of the Owner's private living accommodations.



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A support animal may be removed from campus temporarily or permanently if the animal is uncontrollable and/or disruptive (e.g. barking or excessive meowing, off its leash, aggressive toward others (people or animals), in poor health, or consistently unclean or unhealthy to the extent that the animal's behavior or condition poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others). The support animal must be house-broken prior to its arrival to campus. The Owner is financially responsible for the property damage done by the support animal, including, but not limited to, cost of repairs, replacement or cleaning of facilities or furnishings, and any bodily or personal injury caused to other persons by the support animal.

G. Licensing, Vaccination, ID Tag

The Owner must abide by current city, county, and state ordinances, laws, and/or regulations pertaining to licensing, vaccination, and other requirements for animals. It is the Owner's responsibility to know and understand these ordinances, laws, and regulations. Animals on campus must have an annual clean bill of health (including vaccinations and immunity shots against rabies and/or other diseases common to the type of animal) that is signed by a licensed veterinarian. All vaccinations must be current and dogs must wear a rabies tag at all times. The University reserves the right to require documentation of compliance with such ordinances, laws, and/or regulations, which may include a vaccination certificate. The University reserves the right to request documentation showing that the animal has been licensed. The animal must wear an owner identification tag (owner name and contact information) any time the animal is on campus. The Owner needs to ensure that the animal is kept as clean as possible. Regular bathing/grooming and pest control measures need to be performed by the Owner.

H. Leaving Support Animals Unattended

If the Owner is away from the support animal to attend class, etc., the support animal must be contained within the Owner's assigned room, not in the common area of a suite, unless the Owner has designated a roommate or another Eastern student as a substitute caregiver. Owners are strongly encouraged to designate a roommate or suite-mate as a substitute caregiver. The Owner may not lend out a room key or leave doors unlocked in order for a substitute caregiver to gain access to the support animal, as this is against University policy. If all roommates and suite-mates agree and if available, Housing staff are able to give substitute caregivers access to the Owner's room once per day. It is the Owner's responsibility to ensure that the substitute caregiver understands the guidelines in this Protocol prior to granting the ability to care for the support animal. The Owner is responsible for damages or violations of this Protocol that may occur while the support animal is in the care of a substitute caregiver. Please note that the substitute caregiver must be a resident in the Owner's building. In certain situations, Eastern may require that the animal is crated or caged when the Owner is not present.

Support animals must be removed from college premises during break periods (Thanksgiving break, winter break, spring break, summer break). Owners must check out their support animals with Housing staff prior to leaving campus for break periods. Support animals must be removed



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from college premises if the Owner is away from campus for 24 hours. If an Owner is ill, incapacitated, or unable to return to campus or continue to care for the animal, the Owner may designate an emergency caregiver to assume responsibility of removing the animal from the University. The emergency caregiver must be a person who does not live on Eastern's campus. If the support animal is not removed from campus during break periods or if the Owner is away from campus for 24 hours and the University is unable to reach the emergency caregiver, the animal will be considered abandoned and the University will assume responsibility for the support animal, including taking steps to have the animal boarded at a local animal facility. All costs incurred by the University upon assuming responsibility will be charged to the Owner's account.

I. Animal Waste

The support animal's cage/crate/litter box must be kept in the Owner's assigned room, not in the common area of a suite, unless there is agreement among the rest of the suitemates. Waste must be bagged and discarded immediately in an outdoor dumpster. Waste may not be flushed down toilets or discarded in interior waste bins. Litter boxes may not be cleaned in indoor facilities, such as a sink or shower. Persons who are not physically able to pick up and dispose of feces and/or clean litter boxes are responsible for making all necessary arrangements for assistance. The University is not responsible for these services.

J. Removal of a Support Animal

Failure to abide by all of the terms outlined herein may result in disciplinary action. An infraction may be treated as a conduct violation and handled within the campus conduct process with support or input as may be appropriate from OAS. If the animal poses a threat to the safety of others, campus police may be part of a collaborative team to determine the outcome of the behavior.

K. Non-retaliation Provision

Eastern will not retaliate against any person because that individual has requested or received a reasonable accommodation in University housing, including a request for a support animal.



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Acknowledgement of Responsibilities

By my signature on the agreement form, I verify that I have read, understand, and will abide by the requirements outlined here in the Assistance Animal Protocol. I understand that if I fail to meet the requirements set forth by this protocol, Eastern has the right to remove the support animal and I will nonetheless be required to fulfill my housing, academic, and other obligations for the remainder of the housing contract.

In accepting this accommodation and the responsibility of bringing a support animal to campus, I understand and agree that I am solely responsible for the well-being and actions of my animal. I further agree that Eastern Connecticut State University nor any of its employees are responsible for any loss, damage, injury, or death caused by my animal or sustained by my animal, even if such loss, damage, injury, or death is partly caused by the college or its employees. I understand that Eastern and Emergency personnel are not required to remove the support animal during an emergency evacuation and may not be held responsible for the care, damage to, or loss of the animal. I understand that current and sufficient documentation must be on file at the OAS in order for me to continue utilizing the support animal accommodation.

Consent

I consent to the release of my name as well as my accommodation of a support animal to Housing & Residential Life staff, roommates, suitemates, hall-mates, RAs, HDs, and other Eastern personnel, as needed. I understand that this information will be shared with the intent of preparing the presence of a support animal and/or resolving any potential issues associated with the presence of the support animal. I further recognize that the presence of the support animal may be noticed by others visiting or residing in University Housing and agree that Eastern staff may acknowledge the presence of the animal and explain that under certain circumstances, support animals are permitted for persons with disabilities.



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Handout: Animal Welfare Regulations, per the United States Department of Agriculture

Any evidence of mistreatment or abuse of a support animal may result in immediate removal of the animal and/or discipline for the Owner and/or other involved individuals.

The minimum floor space required by this section is exclusive of any food or water pans. The litter pan may be considered part of the floor space if properly cleaned and sanitized.

Cats

- A. The interior height of the primary enclosure must be at least 24 inches.
- B. Cats up to and including 8.8 pounds must be provided with at least 3 square feet of floor space.
- C. Cats over 8.8 pounds must be provided with at least 4 square feet of floor space.
- D. Cats must be fed at least once per day in a clean food receptacle. The food must be uncontaminated, wholesome, palatable, and of sufficient quantity and nutritive value to maintain the normal condition and weight of the animal. The diet must be appropriate for the individual animal's age and condition.
- E. It is recommended to have water available in a clean receptacle at all times, but not less than twice daily for at least 1 hour each time.
- F. Food and water receptacles must be sanitized at least once every 2 weeks

Dogs

- A. The interior height of the primary enclosure must be at least 6 inches higher than the dog's head when it is in a normal standing position.
- B. Calculation for required floor square footage: The mathematical square of the sum of the length of the dog in inches (measured from the tip of its nose to the base of its tail) plus 6 inches, divided by 144.
- C. The calculation is:
- D. $(\text{Length of dog in inches} + 6) \times (\text{Length of dog in inches} + 6) = \text{Required floor space in square inches}$. $\text{Required floor space in inches}/144 = \text{Required floor space in square feet}$.
- E. Dogs must be given the opportunity to exercise regularly if the primary enclosure provides less than two times the required floor space for the dog.
- F. Dogs must be fed at least once per day in a clean food receptacle. The food must be uncontaminated, wholesome, palatable, and of sufficient quantity and nutritive value to maintain the normal condition and weight of the animal. The diet must be appropriate for the individual animal's age and condition.
- G. It is recommended to have water available in a clean receptacle at all times, but not less than twice daily for at least 1 hour each time.
- H. Food and water receptacles must be sanitized at least once every 2 weeks.



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Guinea Pigs and Hamsters

- A. Primary enclosures shall be structurally sound and maintained in good repair to protect the guinea pigs and hamsters from injury. Such enclosures, including their racks, shelving, and other accessories, shall be constructed of smooth material substantially impervious to liquids and moisture.
- B. Primary enclosures having a solid floor shall be provided with clean bedding material.
- C. Primary enclosures equipped with mesh or wire floors shall be so constructed as to allow feces to pass through the spaces of the mesh or wire: Provided, however, that such floors shall be constructed so as to protect the animals' feet and legs from injury.
- D. The interior height of the primary enclosure must be at least 7 inches for a guinea pig.
- E. Guinea pigs up to and including 350 grams must be provided with at least 60 square inches of floor space.
- F. Guinea pigs over 350 grams must be provided with at least 101 square inches of floor space.
- G. The interior height of the primary enclosure must be at least 6 inches for hamsters.
- H. Hamsters under 60 grams must be provided with at least 10 square inches of floor space.
- I. Hamsters who weigh 60-80 grams must be provided with at least 13 square inches of floor space.
- J. Hamsters who weigh 80-100 grams must be provided with 13 square inches of floor space.
- K. Hamsters who weigh over 100 grams must be provided with 19 square inches of floor space.
- L. Guinea pigs and hamsters must be fed at least once per day in a clean food receptacle. The food must be uncontaminated, wholesome, palatable, and of sufficient quantity and nutritive value to meet the normal daily requirements for the condition and size of the guinea pig or hamster.
- M. The diet must be appropriate for the individual animal's age and condition. Food comprising the basic diet shall be at least equivalent in quality and content to pelleted rations produced commercially and commonly available from feed suppliers. The basic diet of guinea pigs and hamsters may be supplemented with good quality fruits or vegetables consistent with their individual dietary requirements.
- N. Food receptacles, if used, shall be accessible to the guinea pig or hamster in a primary enclosure and shall be located so as to minimize contamination by waste. Food receptacles must be kept clean and be sanitized at least once every 2 weeks. If self-feeders are used for the feeding of pelleted feed, measures must be taken to prevent molding, deterioration or caking of the feed. Hamsters may be fed pelleted feed on the floor of a primary enclosure.
- O. Fruit or vegetable food supplements may be placed upon the bedding within the primary enclosure, provided, however, that the uneaten portion of such supplements and any bedding soiled as a result of such feeding practices shall be removed from the primary enclosure when such uneaten supplements accumulate or such bedding becomes soiled to a degree that might be harmful or uncomfortable to animals therein.
- P. Open containers used for dispensing water to a guinea pig or hamster shall be so placed in or attached to the primary enclosure as to minimize contamination from waste.
- Q. Food and water receptacles must be sanitized at least once every 2 weeks.
- R. Waste will be removed from the primary enclosure immediately. Enclosures shall be completely sanitized at least once every 2 weeks.



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- S. Primary enclosures for guinea pigs or hamsters shall be sanitized outside of University buildings by washing them with hot water (180 °F.) and soap or detergent as in a mechanical cage washer, or by washing all soiled surfaces with a detergent solution followed by a safe and effective disinfectant, or by cleaning all soiled surfaces with live steam.

Rabbits

- A. Primary enclosure shall be structurally sound and maintained in good repair to protect the rabbit from injury.
- B. The floors of the primary enclosures shall be constructed so as to protect the rabbit's feet and legs from injury. Litter must be provided in all primary enclosures having solid floors.
- C. The interior height of the primary enclosure must be at least 14 inches.
- D. Rabbits under 4.4 pounds must be provided with at least 1.5 square feet of floor space.
- E. Rabbits who weigh 4.4-8.8 pounds must be provided with at least 3 square feet of floor space.
- F. Rabbits who weigh 8.8-11.9 pounds must be provided with at least 4 square feet of floor space.
- G. Rabbits who weigh over 11.9 pounds must be provided with at least 5 square feet of floor space.
- H. The rabbit must be fed at least once per day in a clean food receptacle. The food must be uncontaminated, wholesome, palatable, and of sufficient quantity and nutritive value to meet the normal daily requirements for the condition and size of the rabbit.
- I. A food receptacle shall be accessible to the rabbit in a primary enclosure and shall be located so as to minimize contamination by excreta.
- J. The food and water receptacles shall be kept clean and sanitized at least once every 2 weeks. If self-feeders are used for the feeding of dry feed, measures must be taken to prevent molding, deterioration or caking of the feed.
 - a. Open containers used for dispensing water shall be so placed in or attached to the primary enclosure as to minimize contamination from waste.
- K. If the primary enclosure is equipped with solid floors, waste shall be removed immediately. The entirety of the litter shall be changed once per week.
- L. If the primary enclosure is equipped with wire or mesh floors, waste shall be removed immediately.
- M. Primary enclosure shall be completely sanitized at least once every 30 days.
- N. Primary enclosure for the rabbit shall be sanitized outside of University buildings by washing it with hot water (180 °F.) and soap or detergent as in a mechanical cage washer, or by washing all soiled surfaces with a detergent solution followed by a safe and effective disinfectant, or by cleaning all soiled surfaces with live steam.

Other Warm-blooded Animals

- A. Enclosures shall be constructed and maintained so as to provide sufficient space to allow the animal to make normal postural and social adjustments with adequate freedom of movement. Inadequate space may be indicated by evidence of malnutrition, poor condition, debility, stress, or abnormal behavior patterns.



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- B. The enclosure must be constructed of such material and of such strength as appropriate for the animal involved. The enclosure shall be structurally sound and shall be maintained in good repair to protect the animal from injury and to contain the animal.
- C. The food shall be wholesome, palatable, and free from contamination and of sufficient quantity and nutritive value to maintain the animal in good health. The diet shall be prepared with consideration for the age, species, condition, size, and type of the animal. The animal shall be fed at least once a day except as dictated by hibernation, veterinary treatment, normal fasts, or other professionally accepted practices.
- D. Food, and food receptacles, if used, shall be sufficient in quantity and located so as to be accessible to the animal in the enclosure and shall be placed so as to minimize contamination. Food receptacles shall be kept clean and sanitary at all times. If self-feeders are used, adequate measures shall be taken to prevent molding, contamination, and deterioration or caking of food.
- E. Water must be provided as often as necessary for the health and comfort of the animal. Frequency of watering shall consider age, species, condition, size, and type of the animal. All water receptacles shall be kept clean and sanitary.
- F. Waste shall be removed from the enclosure immediately. When enclosures are cleaned by hosing or flushing, adequate measures shall be taken to protect the animals confined in such enclosures from being directly sprayed with the stream of water or wetted involuntarily.
- G. Enclosure floors shall be sanitized either by washing with hot water (180 F. at source) and soap or detergent, as in a mechanical washer, or by washing all soiled surfaces with a detergent solution followed by a safe and effective disinfectant, or by cleaning all soiled surfaces with saturated live steam under pressure. Pens or runs using gravel, sand, or dirt, shall be sanitized when necessary, specific to the animal.