

# Preventing human disease from animals:

## GUIDELINES FOR PETTING ZOOS AND FARMS AND OTHER PUBLIC PLACES WITH ANIMALS

### How to use this guide

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This resource is intended to be used by owners, managers, and staff to guide facility design and operations to reduce the risk of disease spread from animals to people.

In this guide you will find tips and tools for:

- Animal care and management
- Disease prevention information for visitors
- Staff training
- Facility design and use

The following recommendations are adapted from:

- [\*Compendium of Measures to Prevent Disease Associated with Animals in Public Settings, 2017\*](#)
- [\*Washington Administrative Code \(WAC\) 246-100-192: Animals in public settings – Measures to prevent human disease\*](#)

Throughout this document, items that are requirements of WAC 100-246-192 are noted with an asterisk (\*).

If you have questions about these materials, contact Public Health – Seattle & King County, Public Health Veterinarian, at 206-263-9566.

## Animal care and management

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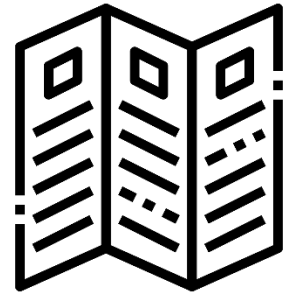
**Animals that appear clean and healthy can pass on harmful germs to people.** Take steps to minimize disease spread from animals to visitors and staff.



- ✓ Make sure all animals get preventive care from a veterinarian.
- ✓ Keep rabies vaccinations up to date as recommended by your veterinarian.
- ✓ Deworm animals routinely as recommended by your veterinarian.
- ✓ Minimize stress and overcrowding in animal housing as these conditions can increase the shedding of harmful germs.
- ✓ Observe animals daily for signs of illness.
- ✓ Isolate sick and injured animals from the public and other animals immediately, especially if they have diarrhea/scours.
  - Have only limited, designated staff/volunteers enter isolation areas.
  - Use separate coveralls or other full clothing coverage, gloves, boots or shoe covers in isolation area.
  - Use separate cleaning, feeding and treatment supplies.
  - Attend to the isolation area last for cleaning and animal care, after taking care of healthy animals.
- ✓ Prevent public contact with sick animals.
- ✓ Prevent public access to birthing animals or birthing products.
- ✓ Quarantine new individual animals or groups of animals from established animals for at least 30 days.

## Disease prevention information for visitors

Provide visitors with information about risks associated with animals and how to prevent disease spread. Share important health messages through posters, signs, stickers, handouts, and verbal reminders.



- ✓ Post a sign for visitors to see before they enter the animal exhibit area. The sign needs to include the following information: (WAC 246-100-192 requirement)\*

**NOTICE TO VISITORS**

- Even animals that appear healthy can carry germs that make people sick
- Do not eat, drink, or put things in your mouth while in animal areas
- Young children, older adults, pregnant women, and people with weakened immune systems are more likely to become ill from contact with animals
- Supervise children and individuals with intellectual disabilities in animal areas
- Keep baby bottles, pacifiers, and toys out of animal areas

- ✓ Post a sign at each animal exhibit exit **reminding visitors to wash their hands.** (WAC 246-100-192 requirement)\*
  - Encourage visitors to wash hands immediately after leaving animal areas and before eating or drinking.
  - Make signs about locations of handwashing facilities easy to see.

- ✓ Inform caregivers of young children that:
  - Young children should not have direct contact with certain animals or their manure or bedding. This includes young calves, live poultry, reptiles, amphibians, lambs and baby goats.
  - Young children should be supervised at all times to discourage hand-to-mouth activities (e.g. nail biting, thumb sucking).



Hand washing is the most important step toward preventing disease. Remind caregivers to supervise young children while washing hands. Hand sanitizer should also be available in multiple locations.

#### How to wash hands properly:

- Wet hands with clean, running water
- Apply soap
- Rub hands together to make a lather and scrub well – make sure to include backs of hands, between fingers, and under fingernails
- Rub hands at least 20 seconds, about the time it takes to sing the “Happy Birthday” song twice through
- Rinse hands thoroughly
- Dry hands using a clean paper towel or air dry them; do not dry hands on clothing



## Staff training & education

Train anyone who works near animals so that they are aware of risks associated with animals and how to prevent disease spread.

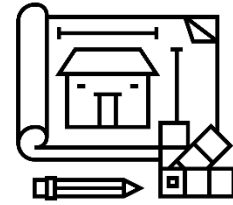
- ✓ Provide specific training for new staff and annual training for all staff that includes the following topics:
  - Their role in keeping people safe and healthy while interacting with animals
  - How to respond to reports of animal scratches, bites, and kicks
  - How to properly handle and remove waste and contaminated bedding
  - How to clean and disinfect animal enclosures and all contact surfaces, such as gates, handles, railings and fencing
  - Requirements of [WAC 246-100-192: Animals in public settings – Measures to prevent human disease](#)
  - Recommendations from the *Compendium of Measures to Prevent Disease Associated with Animals in Public Setting, 2017 Appendices 2 & 3*
  - The most important steps to take to keep people safe and healthy around animals (*see “Tips for keeping people healthy at petting zoos and farms”*)



Pass this fact sheet out to all staff and volunteers. To download and print, go to [kingcounty.gov/pettingfarms](http://kingcounty.gov/pettingfarms).

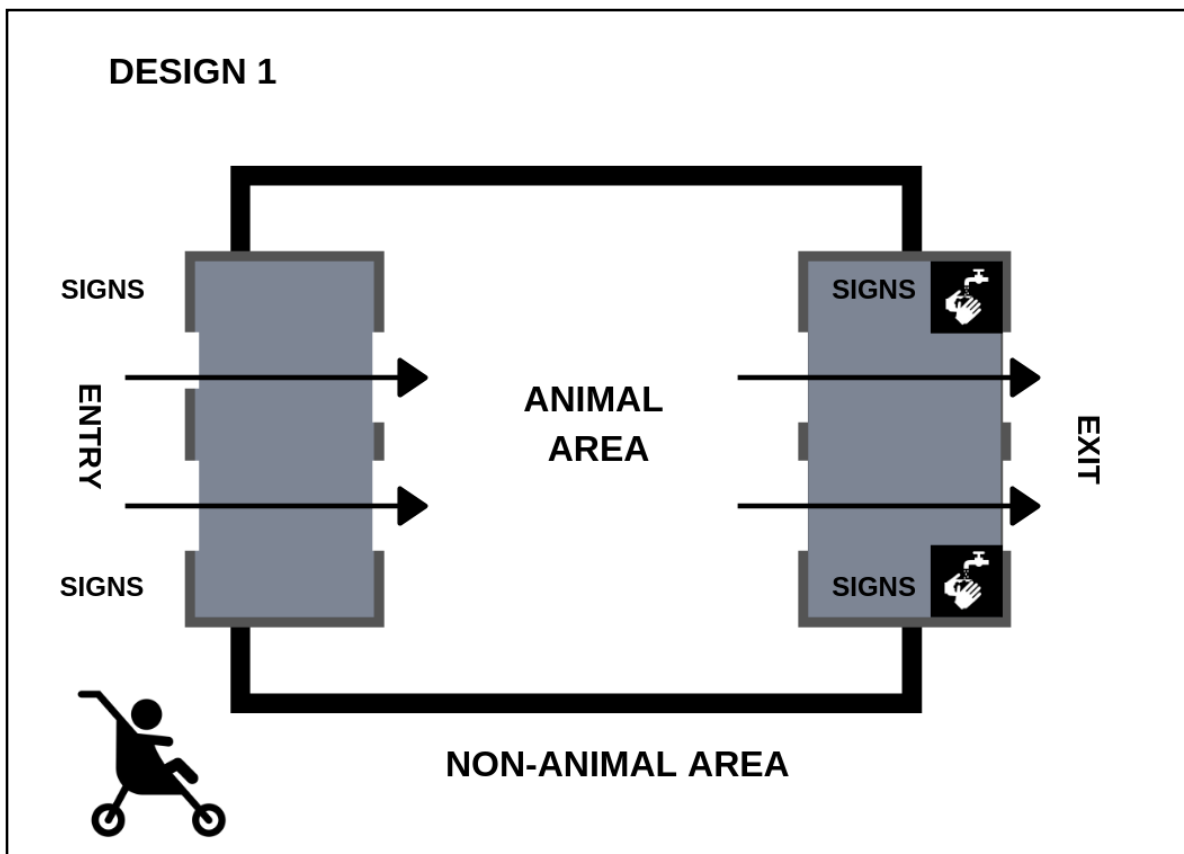
## Facility design and use

A well-designed facility will help minimize disease spread from animals.

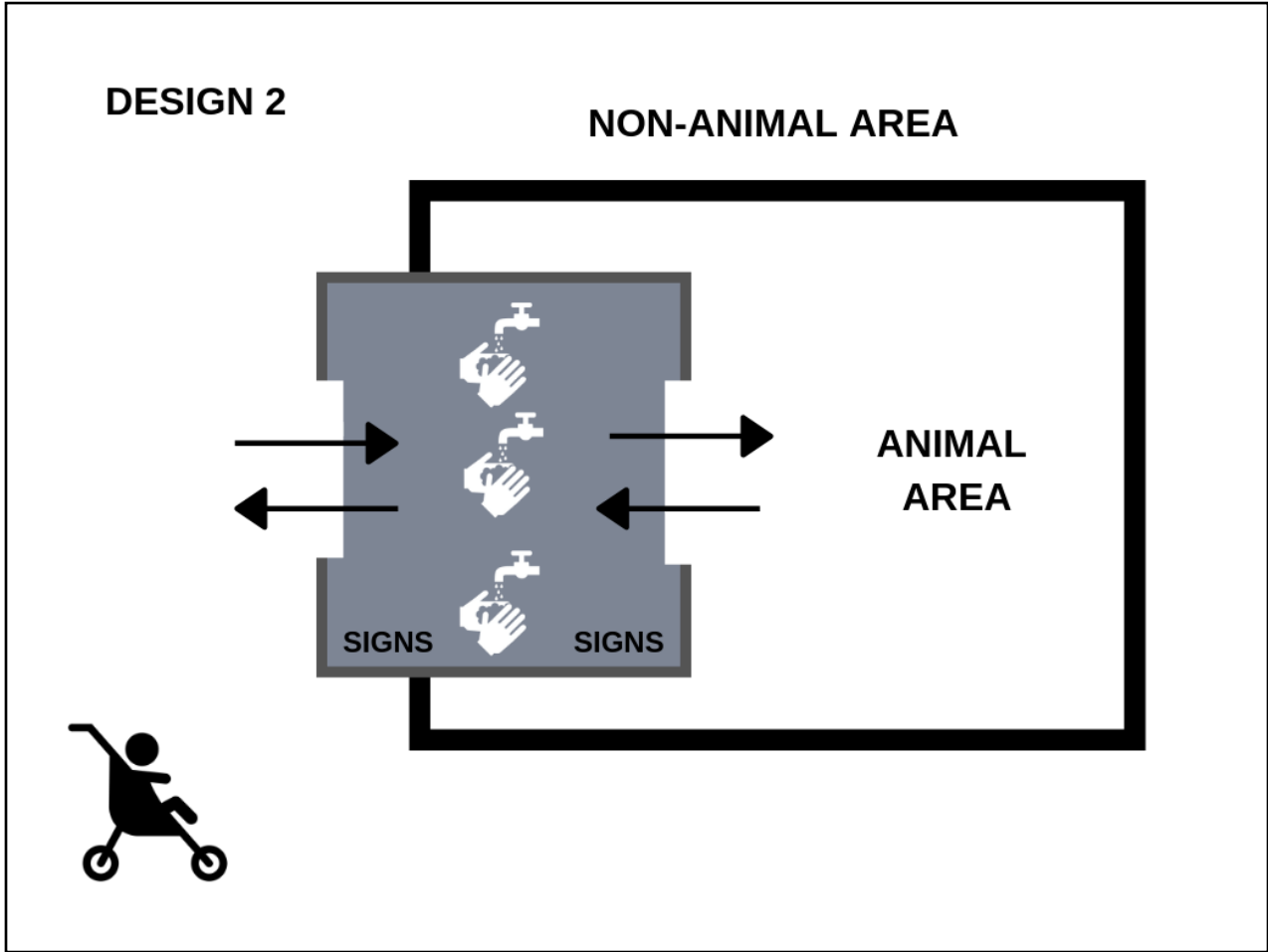


- ✓ A facility should have 3 types of areas:
  - **Non-animal areas** – where animals are not permitted
  - **Transition areas** – located at entrances and exits to animal areas
  - **Animal areas** – where animal contact is possible

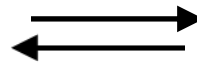
Here are two options for design. Note the three area types in both arrangements.



(See design legend on page 7)



**TRANSITION INTO OR OUT OF ANIMAL AREA** (single entry and exit shown in design 2)



**FLOW OF VISITORS**



**DESIGNATED STORAGE FOR STROLLERS AND OTHER PERSONAL ITEMS**



**HAND-WASHING STATION LOCATION**

**SIGNS**

**ENSURE SIGNS MEET WAC 246-100-192 REQUIREMENTS** (see page 3 for more information)

## **Additional design recommendations/requirements include:**

- ✓ Provide an accessible handwashing station. (WAC 246-100-192 requirement)\*

### **Handwashing stations should:**

- Have running water and soap.
  - Be accessible for children and persons with disabilities.
  - Have an adequate cleaning and restocking schedule.
  - Be near animal area exits.
- ✓ Make hand sanitizer available in addition to a handwashing station.

### **Effective use of hand sanitizer should include:**

- A product that contains at least 60% alcohol.
  - Removal of visible dirt on hands before using hand sanitizer.
  - Washing hands with soap and water as soon as possible after leaving animal areas, even when hand sanitizer is used.
- ✓ Provide an area where strollers, wagons and other items can be stored outside animal areas.
  - ✓ Design animal areas so that public contact with animal waste is minimized.
  - ✓ Avoid transporting animal waste through public areas and store waste removal tools in areas that are restricted from public access.
  - ✓ Monitor animal contact areas to ensure that visitors:
    - Remain safe when interacting with animals.
    - Do not bring in food or drink, pacifiers, strollers, or bottles.
    - Do not play on the ground.
    - Wash their hands when leaving the animal area.



- ✓ Keep eating areas separate from animal areas and provide handwashing facilities where food and beverages are prepared and consumed.
- ✓ Regularly clean and disinfect surfaces, including gates, handles, railings, and fencing.
- ✓ Only allow certain personal animals (e.g. service dogs and service miniature horses) in non-animal areas, and do not allow any personal animals in any animal areas.
- ✓ Keep buildings well ventilated, but avoid creating dust (e.g. through use of fans, vacuuming, leaf-blowing) which might distribute germs.

### Resources:

Washington State Department of Health, Animals in Public Settings — includes posters/signs and the details of WAC 246-100-192:

<https://www.doh.wa.gov/YouandYourFamily/IllnessandDisease/AnimalTransmittedDiseases/RulesandGuidelines/AnimalVenueOperator>

*Compendium of Measures to Prevent Disease Associated with Animals in Public Settings, 2017* — includes a toolkit of posters and signs:

<http://www.nasphv.org/documentsCompendiumAnimals.html>

Center for Food Security of Public Health disinfection site — includes information on available disinfectants and how to use them:

<http://www.cfsph.iastate.edu/Disinfection/index.php>