

Rev. 25-35
Ford County Probation and Court Services
Facility Dog Policy and Procedure

Applicability:

Ford County Probation Officers and Staff of the Department

Purpose:

This policy and procedures address the process under which Ford County Probation and Court Services Officers, Staff and our Facility Dog (Emotional & Support) will be utilized within the Ford County Probation Department and within the Ford County Courthouse. Facility dogs are trained and certified and only qualified handlers can use the dogs for comfort and companion enrichment of others and may help assist other programs within the courthouse to provide a sense of calm, security, and non-judgmental support during legal proceedings when children and/or adults are involved.

Definition:

Our Facility Dog is a professionally trained assistance facility dog for Emotional and Support. They are trained and certified and are always escorted by qualified handlers. A facility dog does not have public access under the Americans with Disabilities Act. The Facility Dog is not trained to provide de-escalation or intervention during the emerging or immediate aftermath of a crisis or traumatic situation. The primary objective of a facility dog and handler is to provide comfort and companionship to others by sharing the dog with clients, facility employees, visitors, attorneys, victims, and people involved in court proceedings. This is done in a way that increases emotional well-being, decreases anxiety and stress, helps people cope and address prior trauma and improves the quality of life for the people visiting our department and/or courthouse.

Therapy Dog Requirements and Regulations:

1. The Facility Dog is only allowed in the Ford County Probation and Court Services Department, common areas of courthouse, courtroom and possibly in other specified areas with advanced approval.
2. The Facility Dog must be accompanied by one of the certified handlers at all times. At no time should the facility dog be left alone with a client or family member.
3. The rights of clients, visitors and staff not wishing to have contact with the dog will be respected.
4. Handlers must keep the dog on leash and under control at all times while wearing identifying badges and program uniform on Ford County Courthouse Property. The dog will not be allowed to run loose unless engaged in authorized training or exercise.
5. Handlers are responsible for providing water, food (if needed), bathroom breaks, exercise breaks during working hours.

6. Should an accident occur, it is the handler's responsibility to clean it up and properly dispose of the waste. The area will then be cleaned and disinfected immediately with provided cleaning supplies.
7. Any pet waste deposited on Ford County courthouse property shall be removed and properly disposed of by the handler.
8. If a high-risk situation happens in the dog's presence, it's the responsibility of one of the handlers to relocate the dog to a safe place within the Ford County Probation and Court Services Department to ensure the safety of the Facility Dog.
9. In the rare event an incident should occur (scratch, bite, allergic response, etc.), the handler will immediately notify the Director and document the incident.
10. The primary handler is personally responsible for the daily care and feeding of the facility dog to include:
 - Maintenance and cleaning of any kennel and yard area where the facility dog is housed.
 - Provide daily food, water and general diet maintenance as prescribed by the Facility Dog's Vet Clinic.
 - Groom on a daily basis or more often as required by weather, working conditions or other factors.
 - Daily exercise and general medical attention and maintenance of health care records.

When the primary handler is unable to perform these related duties due to illness, injury, leave or vacation, another handler will be assigned temporary care of the dog and the dog may be housed with the secondary handler.

11. The Primary Handler may take possession of his/her dog when the dog is retired from duty or retired due to injury or illness.

Complaints Involving the Use of the Facility Dog:

If any person within the Ford County Courthouse has a question about the certification of the Facility Dog or a dispute, disagreement or complaint as to an individual's use of such facility dog and/or it's handler/owner under this policy, or said person suspects or has observed animal abuse or neglect of an animal, they should contact Jennifer Harrison, CMO/Director of Ford County Probation and Court Services at 217-379-9450.