

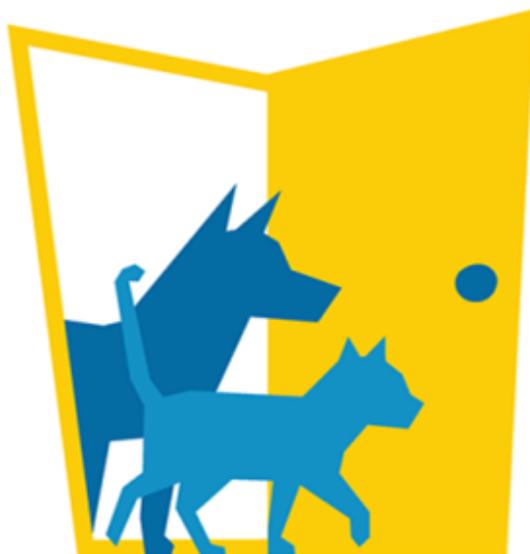


Regina  
Humane  
Society

*Pet Friendly Housing*

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# Strata Council Guide



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**MORE** than a Shelter

Box 3143 Highway #6 North & Armour Road Regina, SK S4P 3G7  
Phone: (306) 543-6363 • [www.reginahumanesociety.ca](http://www.reginahumanesociety.ca)

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*Special thanks to the **BCSPCA** for making their Pet Friendly Housing handbooks available for our adaptation and use in creating this manual.*

## Introduction

The Regina Humane Society (RHS) believes that if more unit owners in co-ops and condominiums were aware of the significant benefits of pet-friendly housing, they would be more inclined to allow it. Multi-unit or strata housing that welcomes all pets, regardless of breed or size, is extremely scarce in our community. Pet friendly properties often exclude certain breeds, and may set strict limits on a pet's weight and size. We believe that people should never have to choose between their home and their pet and local sheltering organizations shouldn't bear the burden of unfounded or overly restrictive pet policies. While "pet friendly" policies are a good start, we would like to see these eventually evolve into "pets are welcome" policies, regardless of breed or size.

The decision to allow pets, and what types of pets, is a complex process with many players including property owners, managers, residents and co-op or condo boards. Many have accepted the industry definition of "pet friendly" and believe that restrictive or no pet policies are necessary for a safe, profitable property.

The RHS recognizes both the need for pet-friendly housing and for responsible pet owners who acknowledge the privilege of having pets in their homes. By working cooperatively to increase pet friendly housing options, we can increase the number of people who adopt and retain pets - and move one step closer to becoming a lifesaving community. This will stop the flow of animals being surrendered or abandoned due to housing related issues. To assist with this, we have created a toolkit to help strata councils prepare for residents who have or want to have pets, discuss options with them, and better understand the complexities of this issue.



## Pet Friendly Housing Overview

### The Problem

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Each year in Canada it is estimated that hundreds of thousands of companion animals enter shelters. More than 1/3 of animals surrendered to shelters were surrendered due to housing issues including rental agreements, landlord conflicts, pet restrictions and moving. In Regina, approximately 20% of surrenders are due to these issues. These numbers do not account for the hundreds of pets, often cats, which are abandoned in the streets or left behind by their previous owners who were unable to find suitable pet-friendly housing.

Truly pet-friendly housing is considerably limited in Regina. Many landlords and strata (owner's corporations) can choose whether they will permit pets. They can also restrict the sizes, kinds or number of pets. Pet friendly housing with restrictions can often be so limiting that it can exclude half of the pet population very easily. Pet guardians may also face heavy competition for housing due to low vacancy rates.

The Regina Humane Society frequently receives calls from frustrated condo owners or co-op residents unable to bring a pet into their home. We recognize both the need for pet-friendly housing and for responsible residents who acknowledge the privilege of having pets in their homes. Many stratas are understandably nervous about allowing pet owners. After all, there are people who allow their pets to damage property, disturb neighbors and generally give pet-owning residents a bad name. But as it turns out, these residents are the exception. This resource will help multi-family housing groups to see that the overwhelming majority of pet owners are respectful of property and ensure their pets never become a nuisance – and they may be missing out on some really great neighbors!

Use the resources on these pages to prepare for residents who have or want to have pets, discuss options with them and better understand the complexities of this issue.



**\*Note:** When dealing with any housing issue, seek professional legal assistance. The materials provided here are for informational purposes only and do not constitute legal advice.

## **Benefits of Pet Friendly Housing**

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Pet ownership continues to rise and so do the number of residents with pets. This means the pool of condo buyers who own pets is going to continue to increase and properties that arbitrarily restrict pet ownership will be missing out on the majority of highly qualified buyers.

Another direct benefit is increased security, as pet guardians are the eyes and ears of the neighborhood during late-night and early-morning dog walks. A dog often stays behind to protect the home when his or her guardian isn't there.

Companion animals have even greater benefits to society at large. The human-animal bond is a mutually beneficial and dynamic relationship between people and animals that is influenced by behaviors that are essential to the health and well-being of both. This includes, but is not limited to, emotional, psychological, and physical interactions of people, animals and the environment. Human-animal interactions also have profound physiological consequences including a decrease in blood pressure, reduced anxiety and a general sense of well-being. They assist children with development of language skills, empathy, responsibility and self-esteem. Studies have also shown that companion animals help reduce feelings of loneliness, anxiety and stress. People in the presence of animals are often perceived to be more happy and healthy.

## **Challenges**

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Strata councils volunteer their time to take on a sizable workload. In some cases, one animal guardian who is unaware or doesn't care about fellow residents will cause conflict for all the residents, creating unnecessary repair costs or discomfort due to noise. Although there are owners who will not respect policies, a preventative approach can be taken to create a culture of respect before problems occur. The RHS has provided guidelines below that will help to mitigate this conflict and ensure all residents have peaceable enjoyment of their property. Thank you for doing your part to realize the positive benefits of pets and ensure their place in your community!



## **Pet Restrictions**

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While many pet-friendly multi-family units are wonderful, some impose pet restrictions on breed and/or size which sometimes are not very “friendly”. Our goal is to change how the general public as a whole views restrictive pet policies and convince property owners that it’s not only in their financial interest to change, but in the community’s best interest as well.

For example, it is estimated that 50% of all owned dogs weigh more than 25 lbs., and the majority are mixed breeds. Typical breed and size restrictions can immediately exclude half of the dog-owning population from consideration as potential residents.

There is no scientific basis that any breed of dog is more “dangerous” or “aggressive” than another and policies that restrict dogs based on appearance do nothing to reduce bites or enhance safety.

There is no such thing as an “apartment-sized dog”. Some large dogs are quiet couch potatoes, while some small dogs are high energy and vocal. This makes size restrictions arbitrary and counter-productive. It makes more sense to make a decision based on each pet individually, based upon the pet’s energy level, exercise requirements, age and temperament. Larger pets don’t cause more damage, and in fact, pet owners do no more damage than those without pets.

A common myth is that allowing more than one pet will create problems. In some cases, a second pet may make life easier all around. Most companion animals are social beings and companionship is one of their highest priorities. A playmate helps to alleviate boredom and separation anxiety.



## Sample Pet Policy

1. The owner must submit a pet registration form for each pet. Should the owner, tenant, occupant or visitor acquire a new or additional pet, the owner must complete a new form.
2. All dogs and cats must be spayed or neutered. If there is a reason the pet(s) cannot be neutered or spayed, please provide explanation in writing.
3. All pet(s) must be licensed or registered annually in accordance with any existing municipal bylaw.
4. All dogs and cats must have permanent identification in the form of a tattoo or microchip.
5. The owner, tenant, occupant or visitor will pick up the pets' waste immediately from any area on the residential property.
6. The owner, tenant, occupant or visitor will maintain a regular parasite control and vaccination program appropriate to the type of pet. Should flea infestation from these pet(s) occur on the residential property, the Strata Council may require all owners who use the space to have the carpets shampooed and de-fleaed.
7. If the owner, tenant, occupant or visitor's pet is disturbing the quiet enjoyment of others, the owner, tenant, occupant or visitor will remediate the problem through work with a pet trainer, behaviorist, daycare or sitter/walker.
8. The owner must ensure that all pet(s) are kept well-groomed, in particular that the nails of dogs and cats are kept trimmed to limit potential noise and damage related to pacing and scratching.
9. The pet(s) must not be left in the unit if the owner, tenant, occupant or visitor will be absent from the unit for an extended period of time. If the pet(s) are left in the care of an alternate caregiver in the unit, the name and telephone number for the caregiver must be provided to the Strata Council.
10. Prohibited or restricted exotic animals, as defined by the Saskatchewan Captive Wildlife Regulations are not permitted as pets.

*\*\*Note. This Pet Policy is intended as a general guide to assist landlords and tenants develop and implement rules regarding pets in rental housing. Although this policy will accommodate the needs and concerns of most parties, we encourage you to expand or modify it to fit your individual circumstances.*

# Pet Registration Form (Complete Separate Form for Each Pet)

## **Tenant Information**

Tenant(s) Name *(First/Last)*: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Mobile Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E- mail: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Pet Information**

Type of pet: Dog  Cat  Other (specify): \_\_\_\_\_

Pet is \*spayed/neutered: Yes  No  \* documentation may be requested

Pet is up to date on \*vaccinations: Yes  No  \* documentation may be requested

Pet License # \_\_\_\_\_ Pet Tattoo #: \_\_\_\_\_ Pet Microchip #: \_\_\_\_\_

Pet's physical description *(age, weight, breed, color, special markings, tail or ear type etc.)*:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## **Emergency Contact**

Emergency Contact Name *(First/Last)*: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Mobile Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E- mail: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Veterinarian**

Veterinary Clinic/Veterinarian: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Declarations**

*Tenant(s) declare the above information to be correct and agree to abide by the established Pet Policy.*

Tenant Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

*Strata grants approval to keep pet(s) described above.*

Signature (Strata Council) \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



**Regina  
Humane  
Society**

Dear Strata Corporation,

Each year at the Regina Humane Society, approximately 20% of pets are surrendered due to a lack of available pet-friendly housing. These numbers do not account for the thousands of pets, often cats, which are abandoned into the streets or left in the apartment by their previous owners who were unable to find more affordable pet friendly housing.

Pets have proven physiological, psychological and social benefits to humans. A review of the benefits produced by Paws SF in 2007 shows that dog ownership slows heart rates, decreases risk for cardiovascular disease, and decreases blood pressure. Studies also found increased dopamine and endorphins and decreased cortisol (a stress hormone) following time spent with a dog. Children who are introduced to pets at an early age have fewer allergies, asthma, and wheezing and less frequent illnesses.

Subjects recovering from grieving who had pets reported lower medication use and less depression. Female pet-owners who have suffered physical abuse reported pets as an important source of emotional support.

These benefits affect people of all ages and from all walks of life, demonstrated by the reality that over 50% of the population has pets. Discriminating against a possible owner or tenant based on their positive relationship with their pet creates additional stress for all involved. Conversely, when housing and community environments are supportive of animal ownership, it has been found that the human-animal relationship is strengthened (O'Haire, 2009).

Will you adopt a strata bylaw that demonstrates compassion and humanity? Good, fair policies restrict unwanted behavior rather than prohibiting the "enjoyment of property" outright. Think of policies written to regulate liquor, enjoyment of parks, transit; each of these ensures that the unwanted behaviors are curbed while still allowing for shared enjoyment of the associated benefits.

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**MORE** than a Shelter

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We recommend that strata or rental building bylaws:

- Permit the same amount of pets as regulated by the municipality.
- Mandate a registry of owned and frequently cared for animals in the building so that any reported issues can be easily resolved.
- Encourage pet guardians to spay or neuter their pets, as evidence has shown that this can reduce conflict and aggression.
- Mandate annual licensing with the municipality.
- Mandate permanent identification for cats and dogs.
- Mandate all waste in common areas be immediately removed and the area cleaned.
- Mandate vaccination and flea control program appropriate to the type of pet.
- Provide owners and tenants with information about their rights and responsibilities related to noise.
- Encourage pet guardians to provide their pets with regular exercise and use dog walkers or daycares for dogs who experience anxiety being left alone during the day.
- Mandate regular grooming and nail trimming to limit the sound of scratching on the floors.
- Ensure the information of a caregiver is available to the strata council should the guardian be away for an extended period of time.
- Prohibit exotic animals in line with Saskatchewan Captive Wildlife Regulations.

A sample pet policy is available at [www.reginahumanesociety.ca](http://www.reginahumanesociety.ca).

Animals in Regina and area shelters are relying on you to make the housing stock available so that they can have a long-lasting place to call home.

Please do not hesitate to contact us directly with any questions or concerns or to access our resources to make housing pets a positive experience for all involved. Thank you for doing your part to realize the positive benefits of pets and ensure their place in your community!

Kind regards,



Lisa Koch  
Executive Director,  
Regina Humane Society

## Resources

### **Office of Residential Tenancies (the ORT)**

An office of Saskatchewan's Ministry of Justice that works to prevent and resolve disputes between landlords and tenants.

[www.saskatchewan.ca/ORT](http://www.saskatchewan.ca/ORT)

Regina: 120 – 2151 Scarth Street, Regina, SK S4P 2H8

Toll-free: 1-888-215-2222 (within Saskatchewan)

Email: [ORT@gov.sk.ca](mailto:ORT@gov.sk.ca)

### **Information for Landlords and Tenants**

A guide to the essentials of landlord and tenant legislation in the province.

[www.saskatchewan.ca/government/government-structure/boards-commissions-and-agencies/office-of-residential-tenancies#information-you-might-be-looking-for](http://www.saskatchewan.ca/government/government-structure/boards-commissions-and-agencies/office-of-residential-tenancies#information-you-might-be-looking-for)

### **Security Deposit**

Answers basic questions about security deposits; the information is very similar to the Landlord and Tenant FAQs page.

[www.saskatchewan.ca/residents/housing-and-renting/renting-and-leasing/security-deposits](http://www.saskatchewan.ca/residents/housing-and-renting/renting-and-leasing/security-deposits)

<https://www.saskatchewan.ca/residents/housing-and-renting/renting-and-leasing/security-deposits/pet-fees-or-deposits>

### **Public Legal Education Association of Saskatchewan (PLEA)**

A legal education organization that provides guides on a number of topics, including housing.

[www.plea.org/](http://www.plea.org/)

PLEA's online guide to rental housing in Saskatchewan; covers the topics of entering into residential rental agreements, rights and responsibilities, rent increases, ending a rental agreement, security deposits, resolving disputes and enforcing orders.

[www.plea.org/legal\\_resources/?a=55&searchTxt=renting+a+home+&cat=1&pcat=1](http://www.plea.org/legal_resources/?a=55&searchTxt=renting+a+home+&cat=1&pcat=1)

### **Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC)**

CMHC Saskatoon Office

Suite 200, 119, 4th Avenue S., Saskatoon, SK S7K 5X2

Phone: 306-975-4900

TTY: 1-800-309-3388

<https://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/index.cfm>

General inquiries call 1-800-668-2642 or email [contactcentre@cmhc.ca](mailto:contactcentre@cmhc.ca)

### **Canadian Condominium Institute, South Saskatchewan Chapter**

An independent organization that deals exclusively with condominium issues and represents all participants in the condominium community.

<http://cci-southsaskatchewan.ca/>

### **Canadian Condominium Institute, Northern Saskatchewan Chapter**

An independent organization that deals exclusively with condominium issues and represents all participants in the condominium community.

<http://cci-northsaskatchewan.ca/>

### Helpful Links

- 1) [http://www.humanesociety.org/animals/resources/tips/pets-housing-renter-tips.html?credit=web\\_id625421016](http://www.humanesociety.org/animals/resources/tips/pets-housing-renter-tips.html?credit=web_id625421016)
- 2) <https://www.animalsheltering.org/find-or-keep>
- 3) <http://www.firepaw.org/CompanionAnimalRentersPetFriendly.pdf>
- 4) <https://www.petfinder.com/dogs/living-with-your-dog/pet-friendly-housing-study/>