

Halton Region Health Department

Special Events

Guidelines for Operators of Petting Zoos,
Animal Rides, Animal Exhibits, and Open Farms



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April 2008

Dear Owner/Operator

Re: Health Department guidelines for operators of petting zoos, animal rides, animal exhibits, and open farms

The Halton Region Health Department has been notified that you will be operating an animal attraction in Halton region.

Please review the guidelines and complete the enclosed information form and mail or fax it to the Health Department for review **at least four weeks before the event**. If not received, you may not be approved to participate in the event.

Petting zoos, animal rides, animal exhibits, and open farms are common attractions throughout Ontario. These types of attractions are greatly enjoyed by Ontarians of all ages. However, there are public health concerns that need to be addressed. The Halton Region Health Department has developed a set of guidelines for you to follow when holding an animal attraction in Halton. The guidelines are designed to help you to reduce the risk of illness resulting from your event.

The main public health concern with animal attractions is the spread of infectious diseases, such as rabies and E. coli O157, to humans. Rabies is a fatal disease, but it can be prevented if vaccinations are administered promptly after exposure. It is caused by a virus that is carried in the saliva of an infected animal, and it is usually transmitted to another animal or human by a bite or scratch. E. coli O157 can lead to serious disease and is not easily treated. It is caused by bacteria found in the feces of an infected animal and transmitted to humans by contact with animals or their feces. The animal may itself not be affected by the bacteria and therefore appear perfectly well.

Food services should be well separated from any animal areas and hand wash stations should be placed between animal areas and food services.

If you have any questions, please contact the Halton Region Health Department at 905-825-6000, Toll free: 1-866-4HALTON (1-866-442-5866), TTY: 905-827-9833
Fax: 905-825-8797, www.halton.ca

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Public Health Inspector

For operators of petting zoos, animal rides, animal exhibits, and open farms in Halton region

The purpose of these guidelines is to make owners/operators aware of the risks of animal attractions and how to prevent the spread of diseases, which can be spread through the bite of an animal or through other contact with the animal or their excrement.



Protect your health

- All animal handlers should be vaccinated against rabies.

Animal health

- Have all animals examined by a veterinarian annually. Proof of examination must be supplied to the Health Department.
- At least three months prior to the event, unvaccinated animals should be vaccinated against rabies where such vaccination is proven to work, for example, horses. Proof of vaccination is to be supplied to the Health Department prior to the event.
- Animals that are sick and those that test positive for an infectious disease must not take part in the attraction.
- Monitor animals daily for signs of illness. If an animal becomes sick or dies during the attraction, it must be removed and isolated from all other animals and humans. The Health Department must be notified of this immediately.

Protecting the public

- Locate the attraction in an area and manner that does not adversely affect the local water sources/supplies or environment. Supply the Health Department with a site plan indicating the types of water supply to be used (for example, public, private, treated, untreated), general landscape, and layout of the attraction.
- House animals to minimize stress and overcrowding.
- Provide sufficient hand-washing stations with potable running water (hot and cold or warm) with liquid pump soap and paper towels in dispensers. In cases where a petting zoo is part of a larger attraction, at least one hand-washing station should be located at the exit of the petting zoo area. The hand-washing stations are to be kept clean and fully stocked at all times. Post signs to encourage hand washing.
- Ensure that food is not fed to the animals in containers that can be consumed by humans, such as ice cream cones.
- Do not allow the public to milk animals or drink unpasteurized milk.
- Ensure that adequate barriers and signs are provided to prevent people from coming into contact with animals they should not touch.
- If an animal birth occurs, ensure that the public has no contact with animals involved in birth or the area they are in.
- The Centre for Disease Control in Atlanta, Georgia, recommends that children under the age of 5 should not have direct contact with baby chicks, ducks, reptiles or ferrets.
- Incidents such as bites and scratches where human skin is broken due to contact with an animal must, by law, be reported to the Health Department immediately.

Signage

Post two signs at the entrance, exit, and other prominent locations within the attraction stating the following:

1. Wash your hands with soap and water after touching the animals and before eating or drinking or touching your face.
2. If bitten or scratched, immediately report the incident to the owner/operator and the Halton Region Health Department at 905-825-6000, ext. 7362, Toll free: 1-866-4HALTON (1-866-442-5866), TTY 905-827-9833, and seek medical attention.

Cleaning

- Clean and disinfect the railings in the attraction regularly throughout the day.
- Clean the floor/ground in the attraction area regularly throughout the day.
- Keep animals clean and ensure that their waste is adequately collected, stored, and disposed. Avoid agitating soiled bedding and manure, which could disperse bacteria.
- If an animal birth occurs, the area must be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected after each birth and the waste product properly disposed.

Note:

Visitors should be discouraged from taking strollers, baby bottles, pacifiers, food and beverages into areas where animal contact may occur.



Reporting to the Health Department

- Notify Halton Region Health Department if you plan to operate an animal attraction that is being held in Halton. Send the animal exhibit information sheet to the Health Department four weeks before the event (see page 7).
- Send a site plan indicating the types of water supply to be used (for example, public, private, treated, untreated), general landscape, and layout of the attraction.
- Supply proof of veterinarian examination of animals and proof of rabies examination.
- Notify the Health Department if an animal becomes sick or dies during the attraction.
- If you operate a travelling attraction, supply a list to the Halton Region Health Department of locations where you will be for a 30-day period after leaving Halton region.
- Incidents such as bites and scratches where human skin is broken due to contact with an animal must, by law, be reported to the Health Department immediately. The report should include:

Person whose skin is broken

- name/ parent/ guardian if applicable
- age (if available)
- address
- phone
- date of incident

Animal information

- type of animal
- name of owner
- address of owner
- telephone number where the owner can be reached

Note: The person who was bitten or scratched should be advised to seek medical attention, and the animal must be isolated from all other animals and humans. All reported incidents will be investigated by a Public Health Inspector and appropriate actions taken as a result.



For more information, contact

Halton Region

905-825-6000

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TTY: 905-827-9833

Fax: 905-825-8797

www.halton.ca



Health Department

Promoting and Protecting Health.
Preventing Disease. Providing EMS.