



PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT
300 N. San Antonio Road • Santa Barbara, CA 93110
(805) 681-5102 • FAX (805) 681-5191
www.countyofsb.org

P R E S S R E L E A S E

News Media Contact:

Michele Mickiewicz
Public Information Officer
(805) 681-5446
(805) 451-3497 (cell)
mmickie@sbcphd.org

April 29, 2011
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

A New View: Restaurants May Allow Dogs in Outdoor Patio Areas at Owner's Discretion

Santa Barbara County Environmental Health Services (EHS) has put in place a new policy which allows animals in outdoor patio areas under certain circumstances and at a restaurant owner's discretion.

For some time, there has been interest on the part of some restaurant owners and members of the community to allow dogs in outdoor dining areas. At issue was the interpretation of the California Health and Safety Code that governs all food facilities in the State, including Santa Barbara County restaurants. It states that "live animals may not be allowed in a food facility". The new EHS policy reassesses this issue by reviewing outdoor dining service operations and clarifies requirements for restaurants that want to allow dogs in outdoor dining areas.

EHS assessed the health risks that can be increased with dogs in outdoor dining areas. Through this assessment, EHS identified the types of outdoor dining settings that would present low, minimal or no risk to the public. In these settings, restaurant owners allowing dogs in outdoor dining areas would be required to follow practices to minimize potential risks.

New restaurant inspection criteria were put into place to guide restaurant owners and inspectors. The new policy governing animals in outdoor dining areas can be viewed at www.sbcphd.org/ehs.

There is no change for indoor dining areas. Under the Health and Safety Code, the only animals allowed inside restaurants are service animals accompanying persons with disabilities or service animals such as police dogs.

The Public Health Department is responsible for protecting the health and safety of all residents of our community. This is achieved in part by enforcing and interpreting state health codes following a science based process to diminish the potential for disease transmission and to promote food safety, and good health. The Public Health Department's Environmental Health Services division regulates all food facilities in Santa Barbara County.

###