

Infection Control Recommendations for Pet Shops offering Cats for Adoption

Cat litter boxes should be scooped daily or as needed during the day.

- Any parts of the cat cages that customers can touch (such as the doors and outside of the metal bars) should be wiped down daily with a diluted bleach solution (1/2 cup of bleach per gallon of cool water, mixed fresh each day) or other germicidal disinfectant*. Allow about 15 minutes of contact time after this cleaning, then wipe thoroughly with plain water and dry.
- Cat litter boxes should be emptied and disinfected at least once a week. A diluted bleach solution (1/2 cup bleach per gallon of cool water) is excellent for this chore, or other germicidal disinfectant* can be used. Litter, fecal material or other debris should first be scrubbed off, then the disinfectant applied to the litter box inside and out and allowed to sit for 15 minutes. Then rinse off well and dry before returning to the cat cage.
- Loose litter that is kicked out of the cage should be removed daily. Surfaces where loose litter accumulates should be cleaned and disinfected daily. For areas that are carpeted you should consider placing plastic sheeting or a plastic mat under the cages for easy cleaning.
- Cat cages (interior and exterior) and equipment (litter boxes, bowls, toys) should be thoroughly scrubbed with soap and water and then disinfected with bleach solution or other germicide solution* between cats.
- Bedding should be laundered in hot water and detergent at least weekly and between cats.
- Food and water dishes should be washed in hot soapy water and dried at least daily.

Employees should direct customers, especially children, to the restroom to wash hands after handling cats or putting their hands through the cage bars to pet the cats. As an alternative, you may provide an alcohol-based hand sanitizing gel or lotion such as Purell or similar brands. It is a very good idea to post a sign at the cage area with a friendly reminder to wash hands after handling pets on or near the cages.

- Employees should wear rubber gloves and a protective smock or apron when cleaning cat litter boxes, cages, and changing soiled bedding, and wash their hands thoroughly with soap and warm water afterwards. It is also advisable to wear a dust mask when scooping kitty litter if there is any dust produced (clumping kitty litter is less likely to produce dust).
- It is recommended that you use a weekly checklist to assign these cleaning tasks to designated staff members and have them mark the checklist when the tasks are completed.
- You should assure that all cats offered for adoption are de-wormed and are vaccinated against rabies if they are over 3 months of age. Rabies vaccination of dogs, cats and ferrets is legally required by King County Board of Health regulations.
- If an animal bite should occur in your shop (either from a customer's pet or one of the adoption cats), state law requires that the bite be reported to Public Health. Reports can be made at (206)296-4774. Public Health staff will provide information about wound management and rabies risk. By law, animals that bite a person must be quarantined for 10 days to be observed for signs of rabies.

**Do not use products containing phenols (such as Lysol) or pine oil (such as PineSol) because these products can be toxic to cats. Recommended disinfection products are bleach solutions and products containing the active ingredient benzalkonium chloride or dimethyl ammonium chloride, also known as quaternary ammonium or "quats".*