



Love dogs? Don't forget about employees' safety!

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The Ohio health department has been reminding restaurants that current Ohio law prohibits dogs on restaurant patios. However, the growing movement to change the law has support from Representative Laura Lanese and Senator Bill Coley who have both introduced bills to allow businesses to decide whether they want dogs on their patios or not. The bills have yet to be voted on, but there is support from the Ohio Restaurant Association, which cited, among other things, the need to stay competitive with online ordering and home delivery.

If business owners are granted the right to decide whether or not to permit dogs on their patios, it's important to understand both the benefits and the risks. Dogs not only bring happy customers but also present hazards for employees. It's easy to imagine a server tripping over a leash or a hungry dog jumping on a server carrying a plate of food. Even worse, an aggressive dog could bite an employee leading to stitches, infections or other complications. Any of these scenarios could lead to a workers' compensation claim.

Remember, if you decide to permit dogs on your patio, remind employees to be careful when navigating their tables and don't hesitate to ask a patron to leave if his or her dog is out of control, and the owner does not take effective action to control it, or if the dog is not housebroken.



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