Considerations For Pet-Inclusive Rental Properties

Managing a property with pets doesn't require new management practices. Instead, it simply requires a clear set of parameters with actionable consequences for the residents to observe and be accountable for. This can easily be accomplished in a well written pet addendum to your existing lease.

How can property managers support animal welfare and the community?

- Reconsider pet restrictions and fees that currently:
  - Prevent tenants from adopting from shelters and rescues (via breed and weight restrictions)
  - Are a significant reason for pets being surrendered to shelters and rescues

- Encourage pet owners to include pets in emergency planning

  - Research potential boarding facilities to utilize in the event that pet boarding becomes necessary.
  - Have crates, food and extra supplies for pet on hand in case moving them becomes necessary or to reduce social exposure.
  - All animal vaccines should be up to date in the event boarding becomes necessary.
  - Ensure all medications are documented with dosages and administering instructions. Including the prescription from the prescribing veterinarian is also helpful.
  - Pets should have identification including a collar with current identification tags and a registered microchip.
  - Identify a trusted family member or friend to care for pets if someone in the household becomes ill or is hospitalized.

How do property managers protect themselves from liability for possible damages?

- Require tenants to carry renter's insurance to cover damages and personal injury
- Require the renter's policy to name the property manager as an additional insured party and include an indemnification clause in the lease (or pet addendum) relieves the property manager/owner of liability for damage to person or property

What about safety concerns?

- Create your own intake form with questions about the pet's known behaviors and an acknowledgement by the tenant that any aggressive behaviors demonstrated by the pet will need to be addressed immediately (e.g., through muzzling, or other proactive and protective measures including behavioral training)
- Establish and enforce clear policies and rules related to animal handling and waste disposal
  - Ex. Pets must either be contained in a closed container or be secured with a leash no longer than 6 feet at all times while in common areas; all pet waste must be immediately managed and properly disposed of in dedicated receptacles; no more than one pet (unless from same household) at one time may ride in the elevator; no tethering or leaving pets unattended in common areas.

What are the benefits for property managers?

- 83% say units can be filled faster
- 79% say that units are easier to fill
- Residents stay longer, averaging 4.6 years vs 3.8 years

Source: Pet Inclusive Housing Initiative - Michelson Found Animals Foundation and Human Animal Bond Research Institute