

# Adam Sencenbaugh in HR Magazine: 'Supporting Workers and Their Pets Through the COVID-19 Crisis'

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PRACTICES Labor and Employment

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Haynes Boone Partner [Adam Sencenbaugh](#) talked with *HR Magazine* about how employers reopening their workplaces during the COVID-19 pandemic can ease the transition for their workers through incorporating pet-friendly options.

Here is an excerpt:

## Welcoming Pets at Work

As businesses reopen, employers may consider allowing employees to bring their pets to the worksite—either temporarily or permanently. Although pet-friendly policies won't work for every business, some may benefit from adding the perk.

Employers that want to allow pets in the office will need to carefully craft their policies.

"The employer should set clear ground rules about when and where the animal will be during the workday and how it will be cared for by the employee, with as little disruption to the office as possible," said Adam Sencenbaugh, an attorney with Haynes Boone in Austin, Texas, and San Antonio. "The employer should consider ensuring that the animals are housebroken and that the employee who brings the animal be responsible for supervising the animal during the workday."

## Reasonable Accommodations

Employers that don't have a broad pet-friendly policy should note that they may still need to consider allowing pets in the office as a reasonable accommodation for employees with disabilities.

Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires that service animals be allowed in all areas of public access. Title I—which covers employment—requires employers to make reasonable accommodations only for employees with disabilities. So employers should engage in an interactive dialogue with employees to determine the appropriate accommodation.

The ADA generally requires that service animals be allowed onto an employer's property. "These are different than comfort or emotional support animals, because service animals must be trained to take a specific action to assist a person with a disability," Sencenbaugh said. "The classic example is the service dog that is trained to alert a person with diabetes when their blood sugar is low."

To read the full article, click [here](#).