

This information highlights key points from the regulations governing kennels, pet shops, shelters, and pounds in New Jersey. This is an effort to address the potential misconceptions and misinterpretations being stated publicly.

NJSA 4:19-15.14, (the law) emphasizes the State Department of Health's role in promulgating rules to ensure the sanitary conduct and operation of such establishments, with enforcement responsibilities assigned to both the State Department of Health and local boards of health.

The highlighted points provided for consideration are crucial aspects of shelter operations and underscore the importance of adherence to regulations:

Public Access Hours: The requirement for a minimum of two hours each business day and two hours on weekends, excluding legal holidays, is a clear standard that shelters must meet. Certainly, the shelter does more than this, but I believe you run the risk that the shelter may adopt this part of the regulation to the letter of the regulation.

Animal Stress Reduction: The obligation to minimize stress factors, including excess noise, smells, and visual stimuli, ensuring the well-being of animals in shelters is also mandated in the regulations. Some animals may react very fearfully and become shy or shut down, while other animals may become overly exuberant and energetic. Stress also suppresses immune function and can make animals more susceptible to illnesses like kennel cough and upper respiratory infection.

Disease Control: Shelters are mandated to control the spread of diseases, emphasizing the importance of maintaining a healthy environment for both animals and visitors. This impacts the ability of people to just come to the shelter and wander around.

Missing Animal Procedures: The regulations outline specific procedures for individuals searching for their missing animals, emphasizing the provision of a written description and proof of ownership. Were these people looking for their missing animals?

A shelter is NOT a Petting Zoo. Clarifying that an animal shelter is not a petting zoo reinforces the serious purpose of shelters and discourages behavior that may be disruptive to the animals.