

HB 1281 - AS INTRODUCED

2026 SESSION

26-2857

08/09

HOUSE BILL **1281**

AN ACT establishing standards for the training of comfort dogs.

SPONSORS: Rep. Morton, Hills. 39; Rep. Cole, Hills. 26; Rep. Girard, Sull. 6; Rep. Korzen,
Coos 7; Rep. Labrie, Hills. 2; Rep. D. Mannion, Rock. 25; Rep. Wood, Merr. 13

COMMITTEE: Commerce and Consumer Affairs

ANALYSIS

This bill defines facility comfort dogs and requires training for facility comfort dogs to be certified as such.

Explanation: Matter added to current law appears in ***bold italics***.
Matter removed from current law appears ~~[in brackets and struckthrough.]~~
Matter which is either (a) all new or (b) repealed and reenacted appears in regular type.

HB 1281 - AS INTRODUCED

- Page 2 -

1 I. The agency owning the dog shall comply with all state and local ordinances regarding
2 licensing, vaccinations, and rabies certification under RSA 466:1 and RSA 466:1-a. The agency shall
3 also fully insure the dog for liability for the duration of its service career.

4 II. A facility comfort dog shall not be fed a raw diet in order to minimize foodborne diseases
5 that may be unintentionally transmitted to humans.

6 III. A facility comfort dog shall be altered at the veterinarian recommended age or by the
7 second birthday of the dog.

8 IV. Facility comfort dogs shall not be bred. In the case of an accidental litter, a facility
9 comfort dog shall not be deployed while pregnant.

10 V. A facility comfort dog shall be confined when traveling above 55 miles per hour.
11 Confinement may be a crate or tether attached to a harness but not to a collar. A remote
12 temperature sensor shall be placed in any vehicle in which the facility comfort dog will be left
13 unattended.

14 VI. Before owning a facility comfort dog, the agency and/or handler shall have a policy in
15 place for retirement, health issues, and ownership transfer of the dog if the facility comfort dog or
16 handler can no longer work or leaves the agency.

17 167-E:3 Facility Comfort Dog Minimum Training Standard.

18 I. The required training for a facility comfort dog shall consist of:

19 (a) Receiving the American Kennel Club Canine Good Citizen certificate before the dog
20 is 18 months old or within 4 months of acquiring the dog.

21 (b) Participating in structured ongoing training a minimum of 4 hours every 3 months.

22 II. No prong or electronic collars or head halters shall be used for American Kennel Club
23 testing, and no dog may wear prong or electronic collars or head halters while being deployed.

24 III. A facility comfort dog and handler shall engage in continuing education. The emergency
25 services or public safety agency owning the facility comfort dog shall maintain detailed training
26 records, which shall include:

27 (a) Dates and duration of training sessions.

28 (b) Type of training conducted.

29 (c) Progress and any corrective actions needed.

30 (d) Certification completion and renewal dates.

31 167-E:4 Facility Comfort Dog Handler Training; Minimum Standard.

32 I. The required training for a facility comfort dog handler shall consist of:

33 (a) American Kennel Club Canine Good Citizen certificate with the dog.

34 (b) Mental Health First Aid, including training on recognizing and responding to
35 individuals experiencing mental health crises.

36 (c) Emergency First Aid for Dogs, including training on providing basic emergency care
37 for canine partners.

HB 1281 - AS INTRODUCED

- Page 3 -

1 (d) American Kennel Club Advanced Canine Good Citizen certificate.

2 (e) American Kennel Club Urban Canine Good Citizen certificate.

3 (f) Participating in structured ongoing training a minimum of 4 hours every 3 months.

4 (g) Regular exposure to emergency/public safety environments to maintain proficiency.

5 II. Training shall focus on reinforcing American Kennel Club certification skills, handling
6 techniques, and scenario-based public interactions.

7 167-E:5 Facility Comfort Dog Trainer; Requirements.

8 The agency that owns a facility comfort dog shall make a letter of recommendation available to
9 the facility comfort dog trainer. The trainer shall only have access rights as given by the agency it is
10 representing while accompanied by an agency representative, including the facility comfort dog
11 handler. In order to attend a public or critical incident event with the facility comfort dog and the
12 handler, the trainer shall be certified with psychological first aid training. Trainers shall have no
13 privileges beyond that of the general public unless accompanied by an agency representative,
14 including the facility comfort dog handler.

15 167-E:6 Facility Comfort Dog Identification.

16 A facility comfort dog and its handler shall be clearly identified as such using a unique patch on
17 the dogs harness and on the handler's uniform. A central tracking system shall be established to
18 identify individual dogs and track deployment and care.

19 2 Effective Date. This act shall take effect 60 days after its passage.