



## Service Animals in Public Places

### What is a service animal under the ADA?

Service animals or psychiatric service animals are defined as dogs that are individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities. (This definition of service animals applies only in the context of taking an animal into certain types of public spaces and is not the definition for other places, like housing.) Although this definition is limited to dogs, federal regulations provide that under the ADA, miniature horses must be allowed as service animals. A service animal does what the person cannot: guides the person around town, lets the person know when the phone or alarms ring, provides support for a person who loses their balance, and so on. A service animal has special training and performs special jobs. A service animal is not a pet. A service animal works.

### Where can my service animals go?

Public and private businesses that service the public must allow people with disabilities to bring their service animals with them when using those businesses, even if there is a no-pet policy. Allergies and fear of dogs are not valid reasons for denying access or refusing service to people using service animals.

### What can staff ask me about my service animal?

If it is not obvious what a service animal provides, staff may only ask two questions:

- 1) Is the dog a service animal because of a disability; and,
- 2) What work or task has the dog been trained to perform?

Staff cannot ask about the person's disability, require medical document, or require a special identification card or documentation for the dog. Remember, federal law does not require **any** identification or special gear, such as a vest, for a service animal.

### Is there anywhere my service animal cannot go?

Yes, in some limited instances.

- (1) When its presence would fundamentally alter the program, benefit, service, etc.; or,
- (2) When the dog poses a direct threat to the health and safety of others.

For instance, service animals may be excluded from limited access areas of a hospital that employ general infection-control measures, such as operating rooms and burn units.

### Does my service animal need to be on a leash?

Yes. Under the ADA service animals must be harnessed, leashed, or tethered, unless these devices interfere with the service animal's work or the individual's disability prevents using these devices. In that case, the individual must maintain control of the animal through voice, signal, or other effective controls or the dog may be asked to leave.



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