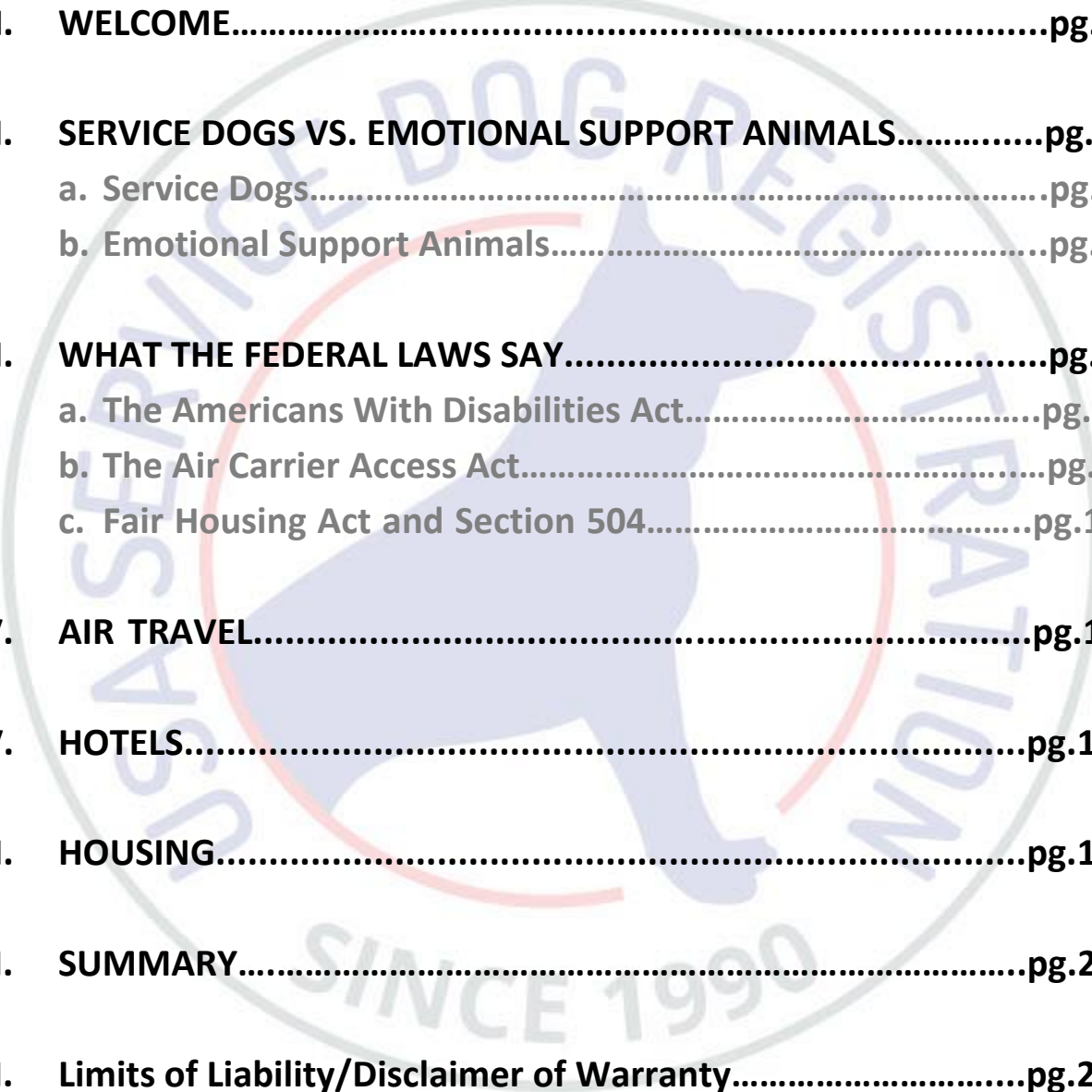


THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO SERVICE DOGS & EMOTIONAL SUPPORT ANIMALS



www.USAServiceDogRegistration.com

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WELCOME

Thank you for requesting The Complete Guide To Service Dogs & Emotional Support Animals.

USA Service Dog Registration created this guide to educate you about the differences between service dogs and emotional support animals (ESA) as well as the various federal and state laws surrounding service dogs and emotional support animals.

Since the general public is mostly uninformed about the rights of people with service dogs and emotional support animals, it's important for you to know your rights.

Our mission is to provide the awareness, services, and products to eliminate potential conflicts and to ensure you're not wrongly denied entry or access to public establishments, airplanes, hotels, and housing.



SERVICE DOGS VS. EMOTIONAL SUPPORT ANIMALS (ESA)

Service dogs and emotional support animals have very different jobs from each other and the terms are not interchangeable.

SERVICE DOGS



The US government defines a “service animal” as a dog that has been individually trained to do work or perform tasks for an individual with a disability, such as visual impairment, hearing impairments, mental illnesses (such as post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)), seizure disorder, mobility impairment, and diabetes.

The task(s) performed by the dog must be directly related to the person’s disability. The dog **must be trained to take a specific action** when needed to assist the person with a disability.

For example, a person with diabetes may have a dog that is trained to alert him when his blood sugar reaches high or low levels. A person with depression may have a dog that is trained to remind her to take her medication. Or, a person who has epilepsy may have a dog that is trained to detect the onset of a seizure and then help the person remain safe during the seizure.

Examples of such work or tasks include:

- guiding people who are blind
- alerting people who are deaf
- pulling a wheelchair
- alerting and protecting a person who is having a seizure
- reminding a person with mental illness to take prescribed medications
- calming a person with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) during an anxiety attack

Contrary to popular belief a service dog **DOES NOT** have to be trained by a professional service dog trainer and CAN be trained by you according to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Under the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) service dogs in training are not considered service dogs and cannot be taken into public places. However, some State and local laws cover animals that are still in training.

EMOTIONAL SUPPORT ANIMALS



An emotional support animal (ESA) is a companion animal which has been prescribed by a person's licensed mental health professional (therapist, psychologist, or psychiatrist). The animal is part of the treatment program for this person and provides a therapeutic benefit, such as alleviating or mitigating some symptoms of the disability, to an individual with an emotional/psychological disability.

Examples of such work or task include:

- Age-Related Cognitive Decline
- Any Psychiatric Condition (*see exclusions below)
- Autism
- Depression
- Dyslexia
- Bipolar Disorder
- Emotionally Overwhelmed
- Panic Attacks

- Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
- Separation Anxiety
- Social Phobia
- Stress Problems

*** Exclusions to the Qualified Disability Definition**

Neither deviant behavior (e.g., political, religious, or sexual) nor conflicts that are primarily between the individual and society are mental disorders unless the deviance or conflict is a symptom of a dysfunction in the individual. According to Title II of the American with Disabilities Act of 1990, current or future interpretation of psychological disabilities excludes common personality traits such as poor judgment or a quick temper.

Emotional support animals are typically dogs and cats, but may include other animals. In order to be prescribed an emotional support animal by a physician or other medical professional, the person seeking such an animal must have a verifiable disability. To be afforded protection under United States federal law, a person must meet the federal definition of disability and must have a note from a physician or other medical professional stating that the person has that disability and that the emotional support animal provides a benefit for the individual with the disability. An animal does not need any specific training to become an emotional support animal.

[Click here to get your emotional support animal letter from a mental health professional.](#)

WHAT THE FEDERAL LAWS SAY

This section provides an overview of how three major Federal laws govern the rights of a person requiring a service dog or Emotional Support Animal (ESA). In addition, many states also have laws that provide a different definition of “service animal”. You should check your state’s law and follow the law that offers the most protection for service animals. The rules and allowances related to access with service animals will vary according to the law applied and the setting.

The Americans with Disabilities Act

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) defines a service animal as any dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability. Other species of animals, whether wild or domestic, trained or untrained, are not considered service animals. If they meet this definition, dogs are considered service animals under the ADA regardless of whether they have been licensed or certified by a state or local government.

Examples of animals that fit the ADA’s definition of “service animal” because they have been specifically trained to perform a task for the person with a disability:

- Guide Dog or Seeing Eye® Dog is a carefully trained dog that serves as a travel tool for persons who have severe visual impairments or are blind.
- Hearing or Signal Dog is a dog that has been trained to alert a person who has a significant hearing loss or is deaf when a sound occurs, such as a knock on the door.
- Psychiatric Service Dog is a dog that has been trained to perform tasks that assist individuals with disabilities to detect the onset of psychiatric episodes and lessen their effects. Tasks performed by psychiatric service animals may include reminding the handler to take medicine, providing safety checks or room searches, or turning on lights for persons with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, interrupting self-mutilation by persons with dissociative identity disorders, and keeping disoriented individuals from danger.
- SSigDOG (sensory signal dogs or social signal dog) is a dog trained to assist a person with autism. The dog alerts the handler to distracting repetitive movements common among those with autism, allowing the person to stop the movement (e.g., hand flapping).
- Seizure Response Dog is a dog trained to assist a person with a seizure disorder. How the dog serves the person depends on the person’s needs. The dog may stand guard over the person during a seizure or the dog may go for help. A few dogs have learned to predict a seizure and warn the person in advance to sit down or move to a safe place.

Under the ADA, covered entities include State and local governments, nonprofit organizations, and privately owned commercial facilities (factories, warehouses, office buildings, etc...) and privately owned businesses (restaurants, grocery stores, hotels, retail stores, shopping malls, taxicabs, theaters, concert halls, sports facilities, doctors' offices, etc...) that serve the public.

Entities controlled by religious organizations including churches, synagogues and mosques are not covered. However, there may be State laws that apply to religious organizations. In addition private clubs are not covered, except to the extent that the facilities of the private club are made available to customers of a place of public accommodation.

A covered entity that serves the public generally must allow service dogs to accompany people with disabilities in all areas of the facility where the public is normally allowed to go. An individual with a service dog may not be segregated from other customers. Though some service dogs wear special collars and harnesses and some are licensed or certified and have identification papers, covered entities may not require documentation, such as proof that the dog has been certified, trained, or licensed as a service dog, as a condition for entry.

To determine if a dog is a service dog, a covered entity may only ask two questions:

1. Is this animal required because of a disability?
2. What work or task has this animal been trained to perform?

These questions may not be asked if the need for the service dog is obvious (e.g., the dog is guiding an individual who is blind or is pulling a person's wheelchair). A covered entity may not ask about the nature or extent of an individual's disability or require documentation, such as proof that the dog has been certified, trained or licensed as a service dog, or require the dog to wear an identifying vest. In addition, a covered entity cannot require that the dog demonstrate its task.

Further it does not matter if a person has a note from a doctor that states the person has a disability and needs to have the animal for emotional support. A doctor's letter can prescribe an emotional support animal (ESA), but a doctor's letter does not turn an animal into a service animal. Only a dog that is individually trained (professionally OR by the handler) to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability is a service animal.

The ADA does not require covered entities to modify policies, practices, or procedures if it would "fundamentally alter" the nature of the goods, services, programs, or activities provided

to the public. Nor does it overrule legitimate safety requirements. If admitting service animals would fundamentally alter the nature of a service or program, service animals may be prohibited. In addition, if a particular service animal is out of control and the handler does not take effective action to control it, or if it is not housebroken, that animal may be excluded.

In most settings, the presence of a service animal will not result in a fundamental alteration. However, there are some exceptions. For example, at a boarding school, service animals could be restricted from a specific area of a dormitory reserved specifically for students with allergies to dog dander. At a zoo, service animals can be restricted from areas where the animals on display are the natural prey or natural predators of dogs, where the presence of a dog would be disruptive, causing the displayed animals to behave aggressively or become agitated. They cannot be restricted from other areas of the zoo.

The ADA does not restrict the type of dog breeds that can be service dogs. A service dog may not be excluded based on assumptions or stereotypes about the dog's breed or how the dog might behave. However, if a particular service dog behaves in a way that poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others, has a history of such behavior, or is not under the control of the handler, that dog may be excluded. If a dog is excluded for such reasons, staff must still offer their goods or services to the person without the dog present.

Municipalities that prohibit specific breeds of dogs must make an exception for a service dog of a prohibited breed, unless the dog poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others. Under the "direct threat" provisions of the ADA, local jurisdictions need to determine, on a case-by-case basis, whether a particular service dog can be excluded based on that particular dog's actual behavior or history, but they may not exclude a service dog because of fears or generalizations about how a dog or breed might behave.

Mandatory registration of service dogs by a city or state is not permissible under the ADA. However, service dogs are subject to the same licensing and vaccination rules that are applied to all dogs.

Service dogs are working dogs, not pets. The work or tasks a dog has been trained to provide must be directly related to the person's disability. Examples of work or tasks include, but are not limited to:

- assisting individuals who are blind or have low vision with navigation and other tasks
- alerting individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing to the presence of people or sounds
- providing non-violent protection or rescue work
- pulling a wheelchair

- assisting an individual during a seizure
- alerting individuals to the presence of allergens
- retrieving items such as medicine or the telephone
- providing physical support and assistance with balance and stability to individuals with mobility disabilities
- helping individuals with psychiatric and neurological disabilities by preventing or interrupting impulsive or destructive behaviors

The ADA makes a distinction between psychiatric service dogs and emotional support animals. If the dog has been trained to sense that an anxiety attack is about to happen and take a specific action to help avoid the attack or lessen its impact, that would qualify as a service dog. However, if the dog's mere presence provides comfort, that would not be considered a service animal under the ADA.

Service-dogs-in-training are not considered service dogs under the ADA. The dog must already be trained before it can be taken into public places. However, some State or local laws cover animals that are still in training.

The crime deterrent effects of a dog's presence and the provision of emotional support, well-being, comfort, or companionship are not considered work or tasks for purposes of the definition of a service dog and do not qualify as service dogs under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Other Provisions

- A public entity or private business is not responsible for the care and supervision of a service animal.
- A public entity or private business shall not ask nor require an individual with a disability to pay a surcharge or deposit, even if people accompanied by pets are required to pay such fees.
- If a public entity or private business normally charges individuals for the damage they cause, an individual with a disability may be charged for damage caused by his or her service animal.

Individuals who believe that they have been illegally denied access or service because they use service animals may file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Justice. Individuals also have the right to file a private lawsuit in Federal court charging the entity with discrimination under the ADA.

While the ADA has a narrow definition of service animals that are permitted to be in places of public accommodation, other laws still provide broader definitions in other areas.

The Fair Housing Act (FHA) covers service animal provisions for residential housing situations, and the Air Carrier Access Act (ACAA) covers service animal provisions for airline travel. The definition of a service animal under each of these laws is different than the definition under the ADA. Some State and local laws also define service animal more broadly than the ADA does. Information about such laws can be obtained from the State Attorney General's office.

Air Carrier Access Act

The Department of Transportation's Air Carrier Access Act (ACAA) has a broader definition of "service animal" than the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) does. The ACAA definition includes guide dogs, signal dogs, psychiatric service animals and emotional support animals or what we sometimes call comfort animals.

The ACAA applies to persons with disabilities on aircraft and prohibits discrimination because of disability in air travel. It applies to all domestic airlines. Although there are some differences it also applies to foreign airlines that fly into or out of the United States. Airports themselves are generally covered under the ADA.

An important note: the ACAA applies to persons with disabilities with a service animal OR with an emotional support animal. It only applies to persons with disabilities, and not to all persons with mental illness.

Air carriers are required to allow service animals traveling with people with disabilities to sit with them in the cabin of the aircraft. When you have a service dog or emotional support animal (ESA), the airlines are NOT allowed to charge you additional fees when your service animal or ESA accompanies you. Though not required most airlines strongly recommend that you have ID cards and a service vest with patches.

[Click here to get your ID card and service vest with patches.](#)

Persons traveling with pets, as opposed to service animals or emotional support animals, do not have any rights under the ACAA. Air carrier personnel may ask questions and request documentations in certain circumstances to determine whether the person is entitled to travel with the service animal.

It's a common misconception among airline passengers that questions and documentation are not allowed once you claim a disability. Depending on the person's disability and the type of service animal, the questions that may be asked and the level of documentation that may be required vary.

The variation is because many people with disabilities who travel do not have obvious disabilities and the need for a service animal is not apparent. The need for a service animal may not be apparent even for some individuals with obvious disabilities.

The airline should permit a service animal to accompany a person on the plane if the person has an obvious disability and the animal is wearing a harness, tags, vest or a backpack, or the person provides identification cards or other written documentation, or the person provides what the law calls credible, verbal assurances that the animal is a service animal.

If airline personnel are not certain of the animal's status, even after being told that it's a service animal, then personnel can ask things like, "What tasks or function does your animal perform for you?"; "What has the animal been trained to do for you?"; or "Would you describe how the animal performs this task or function for you?"

The rules are a little different for emotional support or psychiatric service animals. The airlines may request very specific documentation to be provided 48 hours in advance of the flight. The documentation must be not more than one year old. It has to be on letterhead from a licensed mental health professional or medical doctor who is treating the individual's mental health-related disability stating:

- 1) The customer has a mental or emotional disability recognized in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders - Fourth Edition (DSM-IV). The documentation **DOES NOT** need to state the person's diagnosis.
- 2) The customer needs the emotional support of psychiatric service animal as an accommodation for air travel and/or for activity at the passenger's destination
- 3) The individual providing the assessment is a licensed mental health professional or medical doctor, and the Passenger is under his or her professional care **AND**
- 4) The date and type of mental health professional's or medical doctor's license and the state or other jurisdiction in which it was issued

[Click here to get your emotional support animal letter from a mental health professional.](#)

The purpose of the documentation is to prevent abuse by passengers that do not have a medical need for an emotional support animal and to ensure that passengers who have a legitimate need for emotional support animals are permitted to travel with their service animals on the aircraft.

Unusual animals like miniature horses, pigs, monkeys, etc... may be allowed to travel as service animals. It depends on a couple of different factors. The airline may take in to account the animal's size, the animal's weight, and whether the animal would pose a direct threat to the health and safety of others or cause a significant disruption in cabin service. Also, if there are restrictions on the animal at the final destination (i.e. going to another country) then the service animal may be denied passage.

Snakes, other reptiles, ferrets, rodents and spiders will be denied boarding the plane, as they may pose other safety and public health concerns. Foreign carriers are required to transport only dogs as service animals. If a service animal barks, growls, jumps on people, or misbehaves in ways that indicate that the animal has not been properly trained and has not been trained to behave properly in public settings, or poses a direct threat to the health and safety of others, or poses a significant risk of disruption in airline service, the animal may be denied boarding.

Therapy animals, which are pets that have been trained and registered by a therapy organization in order to visit nursing homes, hospitals, schools and other facilities, are not considered to be service animals. When traveling with a therapy animal, standard pet-related regulations and restrictions will apply.

Service animals cannot be denied passage because other customers are allergic to, annoyed by, or afraid of animals. The airlines will make accommodations to assure that other passengers are comfortable. If a passenger with a severe allergy that rises to the level of a disability cannot travel in the same cabin as the animal, a carrier may rebook one of the passengers on another flight.

Passengers with the service animal may request pre-boarding and ask for a bulkhead seat or a seat that better suits their needs. A person traveling with a service animal may request any seat unless it blocks an aisle or an area designated for emergency evacuation. If the person cannot be accommodated in a requested seat, then the person must be given the opportunity to move to another seat within the same class of service. The airline does not have to ask other passengers to give up all or most of the space in front of their seats to accommodate space for a service animal. The airline may try to find someone willing to do that, however.

The airline can voluntarily upgrade a person traveling with a service animal to a business or first-class seat to accommodate a service animal, but it is not required to do so. In-flight services and facilities do not have to be provided for service animals. Owners traveling with animals must provide for the animal's food, care, and supervision. In the airline terminal, though, airlines must provide animal-relief areas and must provide escort service to individuals traveling with service animals to those areas when requested. Airlines are not required to make modifications for service animals that would constitute an undue burden or would fundamentally alter their programs.

FAIR HOUSING ACT and SECTION 504 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973

The Department of Housing and Urban Development's Fair Housing Act (FHA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504) have a broader definition of "service animal" than the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) does. To avoid confusion with the revised ADA "service animal" definition, the FHA uses the term "assistance animal" rather than "service animal" to ensure that housing providers have a clear understanding of their obligations under the FHA and Section 504.

An assistance animal is not a pet. It is an animal that works, provides assistance, or performs tasks for the benefit of a person with a disability, or provides emotional support that alleviates one or more identified symptoms or effects of a person's disability. Assistance animals perform many disability-related functions, including but not limited to, guiding individuals who are blind or have low vision, alerting individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing to sounds, providing protection or rescue assistance, pulling a wheelchair, fetching items, alerting persons to impending seizures, or providing emotional support to persons with disabilities who have a disability-related need for such support.

The ADA limits the definition of "service animal" under the ADA to include only dogs, and further defines "service animal" to exclude emotional support animals. This definition, however, does not limit housing providers' obligations to make reasonable accommodations for assistance animals under the FHA or Section 504. Persons with disabilities may request a reasonable accommodation for any assistance animal, including an emotional support animal, under both the FHA and Section 504.

In situations where the ADA and the FHA/Section 504 apply simultaneously (e.g., a public housing agency, sales or leasing offices, or housing associated with a university or other place

of education), housing providers must meet their obligations under both the reasonable accommodation standard of the FHA/Section 504 and the service animal provisions of the ADA.

The reasonable accommodation provisions of both laws must be considered in situations where persons with disabilities use (or seek to use) assistance animals in housing where the provider forbids residents from having pets or otherwise imposes restrictions or conditions relating to pets and other animals.

For purposes of reasonable accommodation requests, neither the FHA nor Section 504 requires an assistance animal to be individually trained or certified. While dogs are the most common type of assistance animal, other animals can also be assistance animals.

Housing providers are to evaluate a request for a reasonable accommodation to possess an assistance animal in a dwelling using the general principles applicable to all reasonable accommodation requests. After receiving such a request, the housing provider must consider the following:

1. Does the person seeking to use and live with the animal have a disability — i.e., a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities?
2. Does the person making the request have a disability-related need for an assistance animal? In other words, does the animal work, provide assistance, perform tasks or services for the benefit of a person with a disability, or provide emotional support that alleviates one or more of the identified symptoms or effects of a person's existing disability?

If the answer to question (1) OR (2) is "no," then the FHA and Section 504 do not require a modification to a provider's "no pets" policy, and the reasonable accommodation request may be denied.

Where the answers to questions (1) AND (2) are "yes," the FHA and Section 504 require the housing provider to modify or provide an exception to a "no pets" rule or policy to permit a person with a disability to live with and use an assistance animal(s) in all areas of the premises where persons are normally allowed to go, unless doing so would impose an undue financial and administrative burden or would fundamentally alter the nature of the housing provider's services.

[Click here to get your emotional support animal letter from a mental health professional.](#)

Breed, size, and weight limitations may not be applied to an assistance animal.

The request may also be denied if: (1) the specific assistance animal in question poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others that cannot be reduced or eliminated by another reasonable accommodation, or (2) the specific assistance animal in question would cause substantial physical damage to the property of others that cannot be reduced or eliminated by another reasonable accommodation.

A determination that an assistance animal poses a direct threat of harm to others or would cause substantial physical damage to the property of others must be based on an individualized assessment that relies on objective evidence about the specific animal's actual conduct — not on mere speculation or fear about the types of harm or damage an animal may cause and not on evidence about harm or damage that other animals have caused.

Conditions and restrictions that housing providers apply to pets may not be applied to assistance animals. For example, while housing providers may require applicants or residents to pay a pet deposit, they may not require applicants and residents to pay a deposit for an assistance animal. A housing provider may require a tenant to cover the costs of repairs for damage the animal causes to the tenant's dwelling unit or the common areas, reasonable wear and tear excepted, if it is the provider's practice to assess tenants for any damage they cause to the premises.

A housing provider may not deny a reasonable accommodation request because he or she is uncertain whether or not the person seeking the accommodation has a disability or a disability-related need for an assistance animal. Housing providers may ask individuals who have disabilities that are not readily apparent or known to the provider to submit reliable documentation of a disability and their disability-related need for an assistance animal.

If the disability is readily apparent or known but the disability-related need for the assistance animal is not, the housing provider may ask the individual to provide documentation of the disability-related need for an assistance animal. For example, the housing provider may ask persons who are seeking a reasonable accommodation for an assistance animal that provides emotional support to provide documentation from a physician, psychiatrist, social worker, or other mental health professional that the animal provides emotional support that alleviates one or more of the identified symptoms or effects of an existing disability. Such documentation is sufficient if it establishes that an individual has a disability and that the animal in question will provide some type of disability-related assistance or emotional support.

However, a housing provider may not ask a tenant or applicant to provide documentation showing the disability or disability-related need for an assistance animal if the disability or disability-related need is readily apparent or already known to the provider. For example, persons who are blind or have low vision may not be asked to provide documentation of their disability or their disability-related need for a guide dog.

A housing provider also may not ask an applicant or tenant to provide access to medical records or medical providers or provide detailed or extensive information or documentation of a person's physical or mental impairments.

Like all reasonable accommodation requests, the determination of whether a person has a disability-related need for an assistance animal involves an individualized assessment. A request for a reasonable accommodation may not be unreasonably denied, or conditioned on payment of a fee or deposit or other terms and conditions applied to applicants or residents with pets, and a response may not be unreasonably delayed.

Persons with disabilities who believe a request for a reasonable accommodation has been improperly denied may file a complaint with HUD.

AIR TRAVEL

10 Things To Think About Before Traveling With Your Service Dog or Emotional Support Animal

1. **Airline Policies** – Most airlines require advance notification when traveling with a service dog/emotional support animal because the airline may need to make advance preparations. Always confirm your airline’s travel policies.
2. **Schedule a direct flight when possible** – This simplifies your travel experience and avoids potential delays.
3. **Seat selection** – A service animal should sit in the floor space in front of the customer's assigned seat but cannot protrude into the aisles. Avoid booking a seat in the first row because it offers less space for your animal to be stowed safely and comfortably beneath the seat in front of you. Windows seats are better, as your animal will not be near the aisle where they could be disturbed or trampled. Exit row seating is prohibited.
4. **Hygiene** – To be courteous to other passengers it is strongly recommended you bathe your service dog/emotional support animal a day or two before you travel.
5. **Fitness and Nutrition** – If possible exercise your service dog/emotional support animal before heading to the airport. This will minimize excess energy and stress. On the day of travel consider giving your dog/animal smaller portions of food and water as this will reduce the likelihood of them having to do their “business”. As a disclaimer, you know your dog/animal best.
6. **Items To Remember** – Prior to leaving for the airport make sure to have these essential items; pet waste bags, collapsible water bowl, treats, ID card and necessary documentation, and anything else you may think of.
7. **Checking In** – Plan on arriving to the airport an additional 30 minutes prior to the recommended check in time. For example, if the recommended time is to be at the airport 60 minutes prior to departure then arrive 90 minutes in advance. This helps alleviate any unforeseen complications.
8. **Passing Through Security** – Inform the TSA officer that you are traveling with a service animal. You and your service dog/emotional support animal will be screened by a walk-through metal detector. You will undergo a pat-down if you are not screened by the

walk-through metal detector. If the metal detector alarms, you and the service dog/emotional support animal will undergo additional screening, including a pat-down. It is important to not make contact with your dog (other than holding the leash) until the dog has been inspected by an officer. Service dog collars, harnesses, leashes, backpacks, vests and other items are subject to screening. Items that are necessary to maintain control of the service dog or indicate that the service dog is on duty do not require removal to be screened. If you need to relieve your service dog and must exit the security checkpoint, you and the service dog will need to go through the screening process again. You may request to move to the front of the line upon your return. Remember, TSA may not ask you to separate from your service dog/emotional support animal.

9. **Boarding The Plane** – Most airlines allow service dogs and their handlers to board the flight first.
10. **During The Flight** – Keep in mind your service dog/emotional support animal is working. Ideally they will sleep throughout the flight. It is important to keep your affection towards your animal to a minimum during this time.

Video Tips:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5X0OQLVjWdQ>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NE5gSTkqhCM>

Reminder – You and your service dog/emotional support animal must remain courteous and professional at all times.

HOTELS

American Disabilities Act (ADA) allows for service dogs and their handlers to check in to any hotel of their choosing, regardless if they have a “No Pet” policy. Be reminded not all employees of hotels are aware of your rights as a service dog owner. Ask to speak to the manager should any concern arise and realize the importance of knowing your rights.

Hotels cannot assign designated rooms (i.e. pet-friendly rooms) for guests with service animals. A guest with a disability who uses a service animal must be provided the same opportunity to reserve any available room at the hotel as other guests without disabilities.

Hotels cannot charge a cleaning fee for guests who have service animals. Hotels are not permitted to charge guests for cleaning the hair or dander shed by a service animal. However, if a guest's service animal causes damages to a guest room, a hotel is permitted to charge the same fee for damages as charged to other guests.

Hotel guests are not allowed to leave their service animals in their hotel room when they leave the hotel. The dog must be under the handler's control at all times. Hotel staff IS NOT required to provide care or food and water for a service animal.

Hotel staff should never inquire as to the extent of a person's disability. Nor may they require documentation, such as proof that the animal has been certified, trained, or licensed as a service animal. Hotel staff are not to pet, feed or distract a service animal.

If another guest complains or inquires about a service animal, hotel staff should inform them that the animal is not a pet, but is a service animal trained to assist a person with a disability and that the law requires accommodation to be made for such animals. For example, although guests may complain because of allergies or fear of dogs, the ADA does not recognize these as valid reasons for refusing accommodations to individuals with service animals.

HOUSING

Knowing and asserting your rights when dealing with landlords, property managers, or condominium associations is important because confusion may arise. The Fair Housing Act (FHA) is a civil rights law that protects the rights of individuals with disabilities in housing.

What landlords/property managers may or may not require:

- Require a tenant to pay a pet deposit in exchange for having a service dog or emotional support animal. **Please note** it is courteous to consider offering a deposit due to natural and often occurring wear and tear caused by the animal.
- It is not a requirement that an emotional support animal have any specific training.
- Inquiry regarding the extent of your disability is prohibited.
- The Fair Housing Act and the American Disabilities Act supersede any insurance policy restrictions that do not allow certain species, breeds, or weight of animal.
- You may be charged for damage caused to the property by your service dog or emotional support animal.
- You will be held accountable for the behavior or lack thereof.
- You can be evicted if your service dog/emotional support animal is unruly, destructive, aggressive, or generally misbehaved.

Failure to accommodate a physically or emotionally impaired person is a violation of federal law.

Here is an example of how Fair Housing laws apply to real life situations:

John has been diagnosed with severe depression and is disabled as defined by the Fair Housing Act. His doctor prescribes John a dog to help alleviate some of his symptoms. John asks his landlord if he can have a dog as a reasonable accommodation for his disability. His landlord says yes, but tells John he'll need to pay a \$250 pet deposit and must provide proof that the animal is trained.

Question: Did John's landlord correctly handle John's request under the Fair Housing Act?

What if John wanted a cat or a ferret instead?

Answer: No, John's landlord did not handle his request correctly. The landlord cannot charge John a pet deposit for his animal because it is not a pet, but rather a service/companion animal required for disability. Further, the landlord cannot ask for proof that the animal is trained. Lastly, service/companion animals do not have to be just dogs; they can also be other animals, such as cats or ferrets.

SUMMARY

Now that you are adequately informed about your rights as a handler you may realize the joy and comfort that traveling and living with your service dog/emotional support animal brings. Awareness is the first step to experiencing this freedom as per the American with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Fair Housing Act (FHA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504), and the Air Carrier Access Act (ACAA).

Every time you bring your service dog or emotional support animal to a public place you run the risk of being turned away from an establishment. Though not required by law many people with service dogs or emotional support animals find having an ID card, vest with patches, and other products identifying their dog as a service dog or ESA helps to avoid conflict.

If you need a service dog ID card, emotional support animal ID card, vest/harness, patches or any other products, please visit <http://www.USAServiceDogRegistration.com/shop/>.

For all other questions, send an email to support@USAServiceDogRegistration.com.

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