**Service Animals and Emotional Support Animals**

**ADA, National Network, 2014**

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**II. Service Animal Defined by Title II and Title III of the ADA**

A service animal means 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. Tasks performed can include, among other things, pulling a wheelchair, retrieving dropped items, alerting a person to a sound, reminding a person to take medication, or pressing an elevator button.

Emotional support animals, comfort animals, and therapy dogs are not service animals under Title II and Title III of the ADA. Other species of animals, whether wild or domestic, trained or untrained, are not considered service animals either. The work or tasks performed by a service animal must be directly related to the individual’s disability. It does not matter if a person has a note from a doctor that states that the person has a disability and needs to have the animal for emotional support. A doctor’s letter does not turn an animal into a service animal.

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:

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Guide Dog or Seeing Eye® Dog1 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 Title II and III of the ADA, service animals are limited to dogs. However, entities must make reasonable modifications in policies to allow individuals with disabilities to use miniature horses if they have been individually trained to do work or perform tasks for individuals with disabilities…

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**V. Handler’s Rights**

a) Public Facilities and Accommodations

Titles II and III of the ADA makes it clear that service animals are allowed in public facilities and accommodations. A service animal must be allowed to accompany the handler to any place in the building or facility where members of the public, program participants, customers, or clients are allowed. Even if the business or public program has a “no pets” policy, it may not deny entry to a person with a service animal. Service animals are not pets. So, although a “no pets” policy is perfectly legal, it does not allow a business to exclude service animals.

When a person with a service animal enters a public facility or place of public accommodation, the person cannot be asked about the nature or extent of his disability. Only two questions may be asked:

1. Is the animal required because of a disability?

2. What work or task has the animal been trained to perform?

These questions should not be asked, however, if the animal’s service tasks are obvious. For example, the questions may not be asked if the dog is observed guiding an individual who is blind or has low vision, pulling a person’s wheelchair, or providing assistance with stability or balance to an individual with an observable mobility disability.4

A public accommodation or facility is not allowed to ask for documentation or proof that the animal has been certified, trained, or licensed as a service animal. Local laws that prohibit specific breeds of dogs do not apply to service animals.5

A place of public accommodation or public entity may not ask an individual with a disability to pay a surcharge, even if people accompanied by pets are required to pay fees. Entities cannot require anything of people with service animals that they do not require of individuals in general, with or without pets. If a public accommodation 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.”

Service Animals and Emotional Support Animals, ADA, National Network, 2014, Pages 1, 2, 4, 5, August 17, 2022, <https://www.ok.gov/odc/documents/service-animals-and-emotional-support-animals.pdf>

**\*\*\*\*Restrictions on Emotional Support Animals**\*\*\*\*

“Emotional support animals are not allowed in public accommodations that restrict animals. These businesses are required to allow service animals without proof, but not emotional support animals. Since emotional support animals do not require training, they are considered unreliable to act properly in a place of business.”

https://usserviceanimals.org/blog/emotional-support-animal-oklahoma/