

Service Animals

Frequently Asked Questions



- ***What is a service animal?***

Under the ADA, a service animal is defined as a dog that has been individually trained to do work or perform tasks for an individual with a disability. The task(s) performed by the dog must be directly related to the person's disability.

- ***Are emotional support, therapy, comfort, or companion animals considered service animals under the ADA?***

No. These terms are used to describe animals that provide comfort just by being with a person. Because they have not been trained to perform a specific job or task, they do not qualify as service animals under the ADA.

- ***What questions can a covered entity's employees ask to determine if a dog is a service animal?***

You may ask only two specific questions:

- Is the dog a service animal required because of a disability?
- What work or task has the dog been trained to perform?

- ***Can a person bring a service animal with them as they go through a salad bar or other self-service food lines?***

Yes. Service animals must be allowed to accompany their handlers to and through self-service food lines.

- ***Does the ADA require that service animals be certified as service animals?***

No. Covered entities may not require documentation, such as proof that the animal has been certified, trained, or licensed as a service animal, as a condition for entry.

- ***Can service animals be any breed of dog?***

Yes. The ADA does not restrict the type of dog breeds that can be service animals.

- ***What can my staff do when a service animal is being disruptive?***

If a service animal is out of control and the handler does not take effective action to control it, staff may request that the animal be removed from the premises.

- ***Are stores required to allow service animals to be placed in a shopping cart?***

Generally, the dog must stay on the floor, or the person must carry the dog. For example, if a person with diabetes has a glucose alert dog, he may carry the dog in a chest pack so it can be close to his face to allow the dog to smell his breath to alert him of a change in glucose levels.

- ***Are restaurants, bars, and other places that serve food or drink required to allow service animals to be seated on chairs or allow the animal to be fed at the table?***

No. Seating, food, and drink are provided for customer use only. The ADA gives a person with a disability the right to be accompanied by his or her service animal, but covered entities are not required to allow an animal to sit or be fed at the table.

This information is sourced from the ADA and for further information visit the ADA website at https://www.ada.gov/regs2010/service_animal_qa.html.

