



## Service Animals and Restaurants

The following points are taken from the U.S. Department of Justice websites addressing the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance:

- *Service animals are defined as dogs that are individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities. 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, or performing other duties. Service animals are working animals, not pets. The work or task a dog has been trained to provide must be directly related to the person's disability. Dogs whose sole function is to provide comfort or emotional support do not qualify as service animals under the ADA.*
- *Under the ADA, State and local governments, businesses, and nonprofit organizations that serve the public generally must allow service animals to accompany people with disabilities in all areas of the facility where the public is normally allowed to go.*
- *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.*

### Staff may ask two questions:

1. Is the dog a service animal required because of a disability? **Animals whose sole function is to provide comfort or emotional support do not qualify as service animals under ADA.**
2. What work or task has the dog been trained to perform? Common tasks service animals may be trained to perform include but are not limited to:
  - 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

**Staff cannot ask about the person's disability, or require any documentation or identification.**

### Staff may ask that a service animal be removed if:

- The animal's behavior poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others. For example if the animal displays vicious behavior.
- If the animal is disruptive to the business — this does not include fears of allergies or fear of dogs.
- If the animal does not meet the definition of a service animal as described above.
- When there is a legitimate reason to ask that a service animal be removed, staff must offer the person with the disability the opportunity to obtain goods or services without the animal's presence.
- People with disabilities who use service animals cannot be isolated from other patrons, treated less favorably than other patrons, or charged fees that are not charged to other patrons without animals.
- Staff are not required to provide care or food for service animals.

**For more information or to print the ADA requirements, visit [ada.gov/service\\_animals\\_2010.htm](http://ada.gov/service_animals_2010.htm)**

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