

# ALL ABOUT SERVICE ANIMALS

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## **What are service animals and what do they do?**

A service animal is any animal that is trained to help a person with a disability. A service animal is NOT a pet. The most common service animals are dogs, but sometimes they are other kinds of animals, such as a cat or a bird.

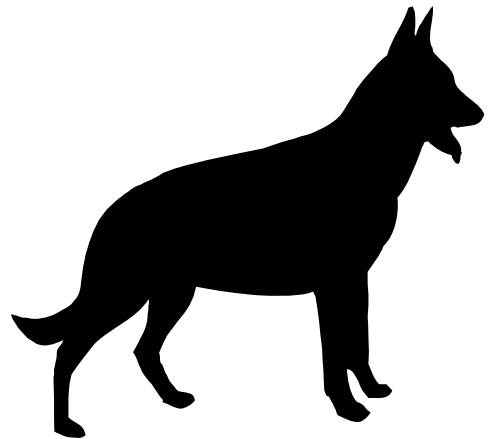
Service animals provide many different services. Guide dogs are used by people who are blind. Other service animals alert deaf people to sounds, alert a person about an oncoming seizure, carry and pick up things for a wheelchair user, or help with balance. Companion animals — also called assistance or therapy animals — help some people with disabilities to live more independently.

## **Where can service animals go?**

Service animals can go wherever their owners go (except places like in the public swimming pool). They can enter restaurants, stores, medical offices, hotels, buses or taxis, government buildings, public areas of hospitals, etc.

## **What if someone else is afraid of dogs or other animals, or has allergies?**

It's important to remember that people with disabilities need their service animals with them at all times. They must be allowed to enter and use a business, even though a business employee or customer might have a fear of animals. People who have minor allergies to animals may wish to keep their distance from the service animal.



## **Does a service animal have to be left outside if it is noisy or disruptive?**

There may be good reasons for a service animal to make noise. For example, a dog might bark once or twice as an alert, but that isn't a reason to kick it out of the business. A business owner can ask the animal's owner to take it outside if it makes constant noise or keeps jumping on people (even in a friendly way).

## **What if a service animal growls or nips at other people?**

If a service animal behaves this way, the business owner or clerk can ask for it to

be left outside. But they can't turn away people with service animals just because they are afraid of dogs or only think the animal might behave badly.



### **Do service animals have to be on leash?**

Some local laws require dogs to be on a leash in public areas, and many people with service animals leash their dogs. Sometimes a service animal needs to be off-leash to do its job, and businesses need to allow that so long as the owner controls the animal. Remember that some service animals are not dogs, so the owner might use a carrier instead.

### **If I want to know what the service animal does, can I ask?**

If you are curious, you can ask the animal's owner if you may ask questions about the service animal. Many people with disabilities feel this is personal information that they don't want to share. To respect the person's privacy, avoid starting conversations about the service animal, the person's disabilities, or other service animals you have known.

### **How do you know if an animal is a service animal and not just a pet?**

Sometimes it's clear, because some service animals (like guide dogs) wear special collars and harnesses, but you can't always tell. The law doesn't require service animals to wear any special gear or tags, and service animal owners don't have to have special identification papers for the animal. Also, some people may have disabilities that are not obvious, but they may still need a service animal.

### **What if I want to talk to the animal, pet it or feed it?**

Remember that service animals are "on the job." Don't distract them by talking to them, whistling at them, petting them or trying to feed them. If you'd like to talk to the animal or pet it, first ask the person with the animal. The owner will let you know if it's okay to approach the animal.

