

ADA Regulations

Under the **ADA** a business or entity **may** ask **ONLY** two questions of a Service Dog Handler. They are:

- 1) **Is the dog a Service Dog required because of a disability?**
- 2) **What work or task has the dog been trained to perform?**

They may **NOT** ask about the person's disability, require medical documentation, require a special identification card or training documentation for the dog or ask that the dog demonstrate its ability to perform the work or tasks.

Additionally: Under Massachusetts General Law c. 129

Section 39F. A person accompanied by and engaged in the raising or training of a service dog, including a hearing, guide or assistance dog, shall have the same rights, privileges and responsibilities as those afforded to an individual with a disability under the Americans with Disabilities Act, 42 U.S.C. sections 12101 et seq.

Other states have similar laws regarding dogs in training.

ADA Information Line

800-514-0301(Voice) 800-514-0383(TTY)



He [my service dog] allows me to function in situations that are otherwise difficult. I respect his skills, his loyalty and know every nuance of his special and complex personality. He is my friend, my family and my connection to all that is good. Please recognize him, not as a dog, but as an essential part of my life and well-being.

— Lon Hodge

SERVICE DOGS
LEAD from the HEART

SERVICE DOGS
What You Need To Know

It's About The Access

What Service Dogs Do

Service Dogs do many things. They assist visually impaired people as guide dogs, provide hearing alert tasks for the hearing impaired, aid mobility challenged people by providing balance and stability, pull wheelchairs, alert for seizures, assist those with PTSD by interrupting fear paralysis, retrieve medications and the list goes on. Service Dogs have come a long way from being recognized only as Guide Dogs.

Where Can Service Dogs Go?

As per the ADA Service Dogs must be allowed access generally anywhere the public is allowed. This includes restaurants, hotels, stores, hospitals, schools, government offices and essentially anywhere else the handler goes.

It is of great importance that a Service Dog never be separated from their handler.

Do Not Pet - Why?

When Service Dogs are working you often will see them wearing a vest that says 'Do Not Pet.' The reason is that when they're working their attention must be solely on their handler and their job. Should they become distracted by being petted, called, or even spoken to, it puts the handlers safety at risk, of falling or other injuries. Petting is distracting and is akin to taking away a person's glasses, hearing aid, cane or walker.

We don't pet you while you're working do we?

Are Service Dogs Specially Trained?

Absolutely! Not every dog is capable of being a Service Dog. It takes a very special combination of intelligence, willingness and desire to work, temperament and appropriateness of breed or type for the job. For example, A Toy Poodle would not be a good balance dog.

Regardless of whether they begin their training as young puppies or are rescue dogs, Service Dogs all undergo extensive socialization, obedience training, temperament evaluation and finally extensive training for the specific work they'll need to perform.

In fact, the ADA defines Service Animals as dogs that are individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities.

Service Dogs Are NOT

Emotional Support or Therapy Dogs. While both of these provide valuable service they are not Service Dogs and are not provided the same protections under the ADA.

May A Service Dog Be Removed?

Yes. A Service Dog must be under the handler's control. It may be removed if the dog is out of control and the handler does not take effective action to control it or the dog is not housebroken.



Remember, Service Dogs are NOT pets. They are needed by their person for essential daily functions.



Are Service Dogs Certified or Licensed?

No. There is no certification or licensing for Service Dogs. While many Service Dog training organizations furnish graduates with identification this serves predominantly for their own organizational as well as recovery purposes should the dog ever become lost. There is no certification, registration or licensing requirement under the ADA. In fact, websites offering to certify dogs as Service Dogs only perpetuate the growing problem of Service Dog fraud.

Do They Ever Get To Be 'Just Dogs?'

Yes! They run, play and are just as spoiled as any other dog, if not more so. They have their "off duty" time when they simply relax and enjoy playing with other dogs, friends and family members.

Resources

Additional information regarding Service Dogs may be found at:

Americans with Disabilities Act - ADA.Gov

International Association of Assistance Dog Partners (IAADP) - IAADP.ORG

Assistance Dogs International –
Assistancedogsinternational.org