



## Service Animals

Often businesses such as stores and restaurants have policies that can exclude people with disabilities. For example, a "no pets" policy may result in staff excluding people with disabilities who use dogs as service animals. A clear policy permitting service animals can help ensure that staff are aware of their obligation to allow access to customers using service animals and to disallow access to customers bringing in pets.

Under the ADA's revised regulations that took effect on March 15, 2011, **the definition of "service animal" is limited to a dog that is 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. For example:

- Many people who are blind or have low vision use dogs to guide and assist them with orientation;
- Many individuals who are deaf use dogs to alert them to sounds;
- People with mobility disabilities often use dogs to pull their wheelchairs or retrieve items;
- People with epilepsy may use a dog to warn them of an imminent seizure;
- Individuals with psychiatric disabilities may use a dog to remind them to take medication; and
- Service members returning from war with new disabilities are increasingly using service animals to assist them with activities of daily living as they reenter civilian life.



*Service animals provide many types of assistance for people with disabilities*

**Under the ADA, "comfort," "therapy," or "emotional support animals" do not meet the definition of a service animal.**

The ADA requires that service animals be harnessed, leashed, or tethered, unless these devices interfere with the service animal's work or the individual's disability prevents him/her from using these devices. Individuals who cannot use such devices must maintain control of the animal through voice, signal, or other effective controls.

Businesses may exclude service animals if 1) the dog is out of control and the handler cannot or does not regain control or 2) the dog is not housebroken. If a service animal is excluded, the individual must be allowed to enter the business without the service animal.

**In situations where it is not apparent that the dog is a service animal, a business may ask two questions to help determine whether the dog may be properly permitted into the business:**

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

No other inquiries about an individual's disability or the dog are permitted. Businesses cannot require proof of certification or medical documentation as a condition for entry.

## INFORMATION RESOURCES

### U.S. Department of Justice

For more information about the revised ADA regulations and 2010 ADA Standards related to service animals, please visit the Department of Justice's ADA Website or call our toll-free number.

ADA Website: <<http://www.ADA.gov/>>

ADA Information Line: 800-514-0301 (Voice) 800-514-0383 (TTY)

