

## Service Dog Manners

When you meet a person with a service dog, please remember that the dog is working. Don't do anything to interrupt the service dog while it is performing its tasks.

### Some rules for interacting with people who use service dogs:

1. Speak to the person first. Do not aim distracting or rude noises at the dog.
2. Do not touch the service dog without asking for, and receiving, permission.
3. Do not offer food to the service dog.
4. Do not ask personal questions about the handler's disability or otherwise intrude on his or her privacy.
5. Don't be offended if the handler does not wish to chat about the service dog.

### For More Information...

...about the **Americans with Disabilities Act:**

US Department of Justice  
ADA Information Line  
800-514-0301

....about the **Fair Housing Act:**

Dept. of Housing and Urban Development  
Housing Discrimination Hotline  
800-669-9777



## A Word About Pet Partners®

Pet Partners is the leader in demonstrating and promoting that positive human-animal interactions improve the physical, emotional and psychological lives of those we serve.

Pet Partners, formerly Delta Society, is an international 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that helps people live healthier & happier lives by incorporating therapy, service and companion animals into their lives. We receive no government funding and rely on individuals, foundations and corporations for financial support.

### Our Programs:

Pet Partners' **Therapy Animal** program trains "the human end of the leash" to team with their pet for visits to hospitals, nursing homes, schools and other facilities.

Our **Service Dog Resources** are available online to provide information for people with disabilities who are considering getting a service dog or who are currently partnered with a service dog.

Our website, [www.petpartners.org](http://www.petpartners.org), is a rich resource for people interested in information and research about the health benefits of companion animals in general.

*Your tax-deductable donation makes  
Pet Partners' services possible!*



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# Facts

*You Should Know About*

# Service Dogs



**Pet Partners®**  
*Touching Lives, Improving Health*

## What is a service dog?

As defined by the *Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)*, a service dog is one that **performs a task** for the benefit of a person with a disability.

## What is a disability?

It is any physical or mental condition that substantially limits a major life activity. Some disabilities are not visible, such as deafness, epilepsy, diabetes, and psychological conditions.

## What are some tasks that service dogs can perform for someone with a disability?

- guide people who are visually impaired
- alert epileptics to an impending seizure or protect them during a seizure
- summon help in case of emergency
- retrieve dropped items
- help a person rise after a fall

## What special laws apply to service dogs?

- The *ADA* requires businesses and places of public accommodation to admit people with disabilities who have service dogs to their premises. People with service dogs have access to nearly every place where the general public is welcomed. The only exceptions are, for example, kitchens of restaurants (food preparation) and sterile areas of hospitals.
- The *Fair Housing Act* permits a disabled person to keep an assistance animal (dogs are not the only species recognized) and waive the usual pet policies of the housing complex. Landlords are permitted to require verification that the pet is “necessary for the tenant’s health and well-being.” **\*Note: with this law and the one that follows, the animal is not required to perform a task.**
- The *Air Carrier Access Act* grants permission for people with medical or psychological conditions to have their assistance animal ride in the cabin of an airplane. Airlines are allowed to ask for verification that the animal is necessary for the health and well-being of the passenger.

## How can I be sure a dog is a service dog and not just a pet?

If a person wants to bring their dog into a public place, the only questions allowable are, “Is that a service dog?” and, “What task does s/he perform?” Asking about the person’s disability or requiring to watch the dog perform the task are in violation of the person’s rights.

## Does the dog have to wear a vest or tag to identify it as a service dog?

No, there is no federal requirement for the dog to wear any special gear or identification. There is also no requirement that the handler carry any certification papers showing that the dog has been trained as a service dog. Some service dogs may have certification from a professional trainer, but many service dogs are trained by their handler.



## What if my employees don't like dogs or are allergic to them?

If you operate a business open to the public, you must permit a person with a service dog to have access. Reasonable accommodation must be given to the disabled person. For example, if the service dog must enter a business at the same time as a person who is allergic to dog dander, they should be assigned to different locations within the building.

## What if the service dog barks, growls, or whines?

First, find out what happened before taking action. Perhaps someone stepped on the dog’s tail, causing it to yelp. It is also possible that the dog is responding to the handler’s medical condition. If the service dog’s behavior is not controlled quickly by the owner, you may ask the handler to remove it from the premises. The handler is responsible for any damage done by his or her service dog.

## What if other customers complain about a service dog being present?

Explain to your customers that the service dog is medically necessary and that federal law permits people with service dogs to have access to public places.

## Legislation Protecting People with Disabilities

### Federal Legislation:

- Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990
- Air Carrier Access Act of 1986
- Fair Housing Amendments of 1988
- Rehabilitation Act of 1973

### State Laws:

Check with the Attorney General’s Office in your state for applicable state laws and regulations. **\*If federal and state laws conflict, the one that affords the greatest protection to the person with a disability takes precedence.**