

# Quick Reference Guide: The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) & Service Animals

## Service Animals

The ADA explains what businesses and state/local governments must do to make sure that they do not discriminate against a member of the public with a disability who uses a service animal.

Generally, businesses and non-profits that are open to the public, as well as state/local governments, must allow service animals to go most places where the public can go. This is true even if they have a “no pets” policy.

### Service animals are:

- Dogs.
- Any breed and any size of dog.
- Trained to perform a task directly related to a person’s disability.

### Service animals are not:

- Required to be certified or go through a professional training program.
- Required to wear a vest or other ID that indicates they’re a service dog.
- Emotional support or comfort dogs, because providing emotional support or comfort is not a task related to a person’s disability.

If you are working at a business or state/local government facility and it is unclear to you whether someone’s dog is a service dog, you may ask for certain information using two questions.

### You may ask:

- Is the dog a service animal required because of a disability?
- What work or task has the dog been trained to perform?

### You are not allowed to:

- Request any documentation that the dog is registered, licensed, or certified as a service animal.
- Require that the dog demonstrate its task or inquire about the nature of the person’s disability.
- Isolate people with disabilities who use a service animal from other patrons.

## When a Service Animal Can Be Kept Out

A person with a disability cannot be asked to remove his service animal from the premises unless:

1. The dog is out of control and the handler does not take effective action to control it.
2. The dog is not housebroken. If there is a reason to ask that the service animal be removed, staff must offer the person with the disability the opportunity to obtain services without the animal's presence.

### Examples of Service Animal Tasks

A person who uses a wheelchair may have a dog that is trained to retrieve objects for them.

A person with depression may have a dog that is trained to perform a task to remind them to take their medication.

A person with PTSD may have a dog that is trained to lick their hand to alert them to an oncoming panic attack.

A person who has epilepsy may have a dog that is trained to detect the onset of a seizure, then help the person remain safe during the seizure.

For further information regarding rights and responsibilities, please refer to [the ADA website](#) (ADA.gov).