



ADA

Service Animal Information

Under Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) businesses and organizations that serve the public must allow people with disabilities to bring their service animals into all areas of the facilities where customers are normally allowed to go. This federal law applies to all businesses open to the public, including restaurants, hotels, taxis, and shuttles, grocery and department stores, theaters, health clubs, parks and zoos, as well as hospitals and medical offices.

If one feels that they have been discriminated against, they may file a Title III complaint with the U.S. Department of Justice at the following address:

US Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Ave, NW
Civil Rights Division
Disability Rights – NYAVE
Washington, D.C. 20530

U.S. Department of Justice ADA Business Brief – Services Animals is available on the US DOJ Website

Service animals are animals that are individually trained to perform tasks for people with disabilities such as guiding people who are blind, alerting people who are deaf, pulling wheelchairs, alerting and protecting a person who is having a seizure, or performing other tasks. Service animals are working animals, not pets.

- Businesses may ask if an animal is a service animals or ask what tasks the animal has been trained to perform, but cannot require special ID cards for the animal or ask about the person’s disability
- People with disabilities who use service animals cannot be charged extra fees, isolated from other patrons, or treated less favorably than other patrons. However, if a business such as a hotel normally charges guests for damage that they cause, a customer with a disability may be charged for damage caused by his or her service animal.
- A person with a disability cannot be asked to remove his service animal from the premises unless (1) the animal is out of control and the animal’s owner does not take effective action to control it (example, if the dog barks repeatedly during a movie) or (2) the animal poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others. In these two cases, the business should give the person with the disability the option to obtain goods and services without have the animal on the premises.

- Businesses that sell or prepare food must allow service animals in public areas even if state or local health codes prohibit animals on the premises.
- A business is not required to provide care or food for a service animal or provide a special location for it to relieve itself.
- Allergies and fear of animals are generally not valid reasons for denying access or refusing service to people with service animals.
- Violators of the ADA can be required to pay money damages and penalties.

If you have additional questions concerning the ADA and service animals, you may call the U.S. Department of Justice's ADA Information Line at 800 514 0301 (voice) or 800 514 0383 (tty) or visit www.ada.gov