



**Your Customers with Disabilities and their Service Animals:  
A Guide for Businesses**

What is a service animal under the ADA?	A service animal is any dog that has been individually trained to do work for an individual with a disability. There are no limitations on size, breed or weight of the service dog, even if the breed is illegal in the jurisdiction. In some circumstances, miniature horse may also be a service animal.
Is a service animal a pet?	No. A service animal is a working animal. The work a dog has been trained to provide must be directly related to the person's disability.
What are some examples of the work or the tasks provided by service animals?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guiding people who are blind;</li> <li>• Alerting people who are deaf;</li> <li>• Pulling a wheelchair;</li> <li>• Alerting and protecting a person having a seizure;</li> <li>• Reminding a person with mental illness to take prescribed medication;</li> <li>• Calming a person with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) during an anxiety attack; or</li> <li>• Performing other duties.</li> </ul>
Who can use a service animal?	Anyone with a mental or physical disability.
Can my business restrict a service animal's access to certain areas?	Individuals accompanied by service animals are allowed in all areas where the public is allowed to go. A service animal may be excluded from operating rooms or burn units where the animal's presence may compromise a sterile environment.
Can my business exclude a service animal?	Only if the animal is not housebroken, or if the animal is out of control and the owner does not take effective action to control it.
Does a service animal need to be certified?	No.
Can my business ask for documentation or proof that the animal is a service animal?	No. You are only allowed to ask 1) if the animal is required because of a disability, and 2) what task or work the animal has been trained to do.
Does a service animal need to be professionally trained?	Under the ADA, a service animal does not need to be trained by a professional trainer or training center. (New York law currently requires a service animal to be trained by a recognized training center or professional trainer, but is superseded by the ADA.)
Is a service animal required to be on a leash or harness?	A leash, harness, or other tether is required, unless <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The animal is under the control of its handler through other means, such as voice control or signals; or</li> <li>• If the use of such interferes with the service animal's work.</li> </ul>
Are emotional support animals and therapy animals the same under the ADA?	No. A service animal is trained to do specific work or tasks. If the animal gives emotional support, but also has been trained to calm its owner by nudging him/her before a psychiatric episode, or has been otherwise trained to calm its owner during an anxiety attack, it qualifies as a service animal.