

Service Animals and Transportation



A service animal performs a task to assist a person with a disability live independently. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the U.S. DOT define a service animal as *“any guide dog, signal dog, or other animal individually trained to work or perform tasks for an individual with a disability”* including, but not limited to:

- guiding individuals with impaired vision
- alerting individuals with impaired hearing to intruders or sounds
- pulling a wheelchair
- fetching dropped items

People with disabilities are not required to professionally train the animal, and have the right to train their own service animal.

The ADA applies to both public and private ground transportation providers. Contracted services must comply with the same requirements as if the direct recipient was operating the service, this is commonly known as “stand-in-their-shoes” requirements.

Reference: 49 CFR 37.3

Comfort vs. Service Animal

Any animal that provides emotional support, comfort or companionship are not considered service animals under the ADA, whereas service animals are trained to perform a certain task. ADA Regulations do not prohibit an agency from choosing to accommodate a comfort animal. This is a local decision.

Transportation providers should be aware of the following ADA guidelines:

- must allow service animals on board
- service animals are not required to wear a vest, ID tag or specific harness
- **Providers may ask:**
 - is that a service animal?
 - what task has the animal been trained to perform?
- **Providers may not:**
 - ask for proof of disability or the animal's certification
 - require a person with a service animal to sit in a particular seat on the vehicle
 - charge a cleaning fee, unless the animal causes damage

The customer is responsible for maintaining control of their service animal, and knowing the best way to position the animal to provide assistance. For the safety of others, all animals must remain clear of any exits and may not block the aisle of the vehicle.

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