



## Join Us in This Important Effort

Service animals enrich the lives of many disabled Americans by performing vital tasks that increase their owners' safety, mobility and independence. These animals are not a luxury, but a necessity.

By denying a disabled person with a service animal access to your business, you're exposing yourself to lawsuits and serious penalties.

So please join us in welcoming disabled guests and their service animals into your business.

It's the law. And it's the right thing to do.

For more information about our "We Welcome Service Animals" program, or to request additional materials, please contact the U.S. Department of Justice.

ADA Information Line — Telephone: 1-800-514-0301 (Voice)

ADA Information Line — Telephone: 1-800-514-0301 (TTY)

ADA Homepage: [www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/adahom1.htm](http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/adahom1.htm)

Created by the California Hotel & Lodging Association Educational Foundation, this educational program of the American Hotel & Lodging Association is made possible by funding from the American Hotel & Lodging Foundation and the American Express Foundation.



# We Welcome Service Animals™





## Make All Your Guests Feel Welcome

Under the Americans with Disabilities Act:

- You **must** allow service animals in your hotel or restaurant — even if you have a “no pets” policy or a health code that prohibits animals in restaurants. Service animals are not pets. The ADA pre-empts health codes on this issue.
- You may **not** ask disabled guests to show proof of disability — even if the disability is not readily apparent to you or ask for proof that their animals are “certified” to provide assistance; this is true even if state or local laws provide to the contrary. However, you **may** ask what service the animal provides.
- You may **not** restrict disabled guests and their service animals to certain areas — such as smoking floors, “pet rooms” or restaurant smoking sections. They are allowed in all guest rooms, dining rooms and buffets, swimming pools, exercise rooms and any other place guests are normally allowed.
- You may **not** charge an extra fee or cleaning deposit for service animals at check-in. However, like any other guests, those with service animals are still responsible for any damage caused by them or their animal.
- You **may** eject a service animal that engages in excessive or prolonged barking, or is, eating food off tables, being aggressive or threatening other guests or employees — but this is highly unlikely.
- You should **not** touch disabled persons or their service animals without permission — it’s rude and can jeopardize the safety of both.
- You should **not** pet, feed or distract a service animal in any way. Remember, they’re not pets — they’re working.
- Ask disabled guests if they need assistance — don’t assume they do.
- Remember that service animals have needs too — so try to offer a safe, nearby area where they can be walked to relieve themselves.

“**We Welcome Service Animals**” is a national campaign to teach people in the hospitality industry and law enforcement how to improve service to disabled guests who depend on service animals for assistance.

Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), hotels, motels and restaurants are required to treat disabled customers with service animals like all other guests, providing them with the same service and access to all areas where other guests are allowed.

Violating the ADA can lead to serious penalties and costly lawsuits. Also denying access to disabled people with service animals is a crime in every state.

## It’s the Law — and the Right Thing to Do

Congress passed the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in 1990 to prevent discrimination against persons with disabilities. Among other things, the law guarantees all disabled persons the legal right to be accompanied by a service animal in all areas open to the general public. Failure to comply with the ADA exposes you and your business to lawsuits and serious federal penalties. Other state and local laws against discrimination may also exist in your area.

## What is a Service Animal?

Federal law defines a service animal as any guide dog, signal dog or other animal trained to perform tasks for an individual with a disability. While most service animals are dogs, other animals, such as monkeys or cats, are sometimes used. The potentially life-saving tasks they perform may include:

- guiding individuals who are blind or who have impaired vision
- alerting individuals who are deaf or hearing impaired to intruders or to sounds, such as fire alarms, telephones and door bells
- pulling a wheelchair
- fetching dropped items
- providing minimal protection or rescue work

You may not always see a service animal performing these tasks — but they’re always on the job, working to make life safer and more rewarding for their owners.

Service animals can often be identified by special harnesses or colorful vests they sometimes wear — but these items are not required by law. So if you are uncertain whether an animal is a service animal, simply ask its owner.

