



OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF RESCUE

August 1, 2014

INSTRUCTIONAL BULLETIN #14-21

TO: All Fire and Rescue Personnel
FROM: Ivan T. Mote, Division Chief/Rescue
RE: **ADA SERVICE ANIMALS**

Service animals are defined as dogs that are individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities. Examples of such work or tasks include guiding people who are blind, alerting people who are deaf, pulling a wheelchair, alerting and protecting a person who is having a seizure, reminding a person with mental illness to take prescribed medications, calming a person with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) during an anxiety attack, or performing other duties. Service animals are working animals, not pets. The work or task a dog has been trained to provide must be directly related to the person's disability. Dogs whose sole function is to provide comfort or emotional support do not qualify as service animals under the ADA.

This definition does not affect or limit the broader definition of "assistance animal" under the Fair Housing Act or the broader definition of "service animal" under the Air Carrier Access Act.



Under the ADA, service animals must be harnessed, leashed, or tethered, unless these devices interfere with the service animal's work or the individual's disability prevents using these devices. In that case, the individual must maintain control of the animal through voice, signal, or other effective controls.

A service animal, utilized by a patient for a disability, shall be permitted to accompany a patient or guardian of a minor patient in the rescue unless the presence of the service animal will disrupt patient care, the patient is unstable or there is some basis for the crew members to believe that the safety of the crew, the patient or others would be compromised by the presence of the service animal in the rescue.

- Growling may be considered threatening behavior in which case the service animal may be transported by other means. Barking may also be considered threatening, however, specific service animals are required to bark to get their owners attention.

When transporting a patient with a service animal, every effort should be made to do so in a safe manner for the patient, the animal and the crew members. If possible, the animal should be secured in some manner in order to prevent injury to either the animal or the crew during transport. The patient should be loaded into the vehicle first, and then the service animal. Whenever possible, the receiving hospital should be notified that you are in route with a service animal.

When the presence of a service animal in the ambulance might interfere with patient care, jeopardize the safety of the crew, the patient or others, personnel should make other arrangements for simultaneous transport of the service animal to the receiving facility.

- Acceptable alternative methods of transporting a service animal to the receiving facility includes, but are not limited to, family members, friends or neighbors of the patient, animal control, a District/Battalion chief, or a law enforcement official.



Personnel should document on the Patient Care Report (PCR) instances where the patient or guardian accompanying a minor patient utilize a service animal and note whether or not the service animal was transported with the patient. If the service animal was not transported in the ambulance with the patient, the PCR should contain the reason(s) and the means by which the animal was transported

When it is not obvious what service an animal provides, only limited inquiries are allowed.

Personnel may ask **only** two questions:

1. Is the dog a service animal because of a disability?
2. What work or task has the dog been trained to perform?

Personnel **cannot** ask about the person's disability, require medical documentation, require a special identification card or training documentation for the dog, or ask that the dog demonstrate its ability to perform the work or task.

Allergies and fear of dogs are not valid reasons for denying access or refusing service to people using service animals.

In addition to the provisions about service dogs, the Department's revised ADA regulations have a new, separate provision about miniature horses that have been individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities.

(Miniature horses generally range in height from 24 inches to 34 inches measured to the shoulders and generally weigh between 70 and 100 pounds.) Entities covered by the ADA must modify their policies to permit miniature horses where reasonable. The regulations set out four assessment factors to assist entities in determining whether miniature horses can be accommodated in their facility. The assessment factors are (1) whether the miniature horse is housebroken; (2) whether the miniature horse is under the owner's control; (3) whether the facility can accommodate the miniature horse's type, size, and weight; and (4) whether the miniature horse's presence will not compromise legitimate safety requirements necessary for safe operation of the facility.

ITM/mb/af

