



What is a service animal?

A service animal is not a pet under federal law. According to the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) a service animal is any animal that has been individually trained to provide assistance or perform tasks for the benefit of a person with a physical or mental disability which substantially limits one or more major life functions. In New Mexico, a service animal is also defined as a dog trained or being trained by a recognized school for training dogs to assist persons with disabilities.



Background

Thousands of people with disabilities use the aid of service animals. Although the most familiar types of service animals are guide dogs used by people who are blind, service animals (i.e., dogs, ponies, monkeys, birds, etc.) are assisting persons who have other disabilities as well. Many disabilities are invisible. Therefore, every person who is accompanied by a service animal may or may not “look” disabled. A service animal is not required to have any special certification.



This informational brochure was developed by Working Like Dogs®.

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Includes Information on Assembling a Service Animal Emergency Kit

Service Dogs and Emergency Preparedness



Information on:

- Types of Service Animals
- Service Animal Etiquette
- Protecting Your Service Animal in an Emergency
- Identification and License
- Planning for Separation

Protecting your Service Animal in an Emergency

This brochure is designed to provide a checklist of activities for people who own a service animal to improve your emergency preparedness in the event of an emergency, attack or natural disaster. Preparation may seem like a lot of work. It is. Preparing does take time and effort. So do a little at a time, as your energy and budget permit. The important thing is to start preparing. The more you do, the more confident you will be that you can protect yourself and your Service Animal.

Types of Service Animals

This is only a partial list of Service Animals:

- Guide Dog or Dog Guide – Assist people with vision loss.
- Mobility Dog – Retrieve items, open doors, push buttons, also assisting people with disabilities with walking, balance and transferring from place to place.
- Hearing Alert Dog – Assist people with a hearing loss to sounds.
- Seizure Alert/Seizure Response Dog – Also known as Medical Alert-alerts to oncoming seizures and is trained to respond to seizures such as “Get Help” or stay with the person.
- Medical Alert/Medical Response Dog - Alerts to oncoming medical conditions, such as; heart attack, stroke, diabetes, epilepsy, panic attack, anxiety attack, post traumatic stress disorder.

Service Animal Etiquette

If you are unfamiliar with Service Animals, keep in mind the following suggestions:

- Do not touch the Service Animal, or the person it assists, without permission.
- Do not make noises at the Service Animal; it may distract the animal from doing its job.
- Do not feed the Service Animal; it may disrupt his/her schedule.
- Do not be offended if the person does not feel like discussing his/her disability or the assistance the Service Animal provides. Not everyone wants to be a walking-talking “show and tell” exhibit.

Identification and License Are Current

Make sure your Service Animal has identification tags with both your home telephone number and that of your primary out of town contact person. Make sure your animal’s license is current.

Planning for Separation

It may be difficult to think about but in an extreme emergency you might be separated from your Service Animal. Plan for the worst just in case you get separated:

- Keep several pictures of your Service Animal available.
- Know where the animal shelters or rescue animal organizations are located in your area.
- Have your Animal micro chipped and/or tattooed for identification purposes.
- Be prepared to use alternative ways to negotiate your environment.

Service Animal Emergency Kit

Assemble a Service Animal Emergency Kit that may contain the following supplies (you may want to group these items in a pack that your animal can carry in case you need to evacuate).

Emergency Kit Items May Include:

- Supply of any medications your animal is taking
- Week's supply of food and water
- Bowl
- Blanket
- Favorite toy
- Extra leash, collar, and harness
- Copy of all current vaccinations and health records, license numbers, microchip numbers, and tags
- Medication and feeding schedule
- Manual can opener
- Plastic bags and paper towels for cleaning up waste
- Several pictures of your animal
- First Aid Kit (include any specific items for your Service Animal that should be included in the First Aid Kit such as Neosporin®, styptic pencil or powder, etc.)
- Prior to an Emergency, talk with your Veterinarian. Ask if he or she has a Disaster Plan and if they have any suggestions for items to be included in your Service Animal Emergency Kit.