

Service Animal Fact Sheet

Under the ADA, a service animal is defined as **a dog that has been individually trained to do work or perform tasks for an individual with a disability.** The task(s) performed by the dog must be directly related to the person's disability.

Emotional support*, therapy, comfort, or companion animals are **NOT** considered service animals under the ADA. While there are different regulations for these types of animals under legislation such as the Fair Housing Act, the ADA, which covers public spaces, only recognizes task-trained service animals under the law.

* The ADA makes a distinction between psychiatric service animals and emotional support animals. If the dog has been trained to sense that an anxiety attack is about to happen and take a specific action to help avoid the attack or lessen its impact, that would qualify as a service animal. However, if the dog's mere presence provides comfort, that would not be considered a service animal under the ADA.

In situations where it is not obvious that the dog is a service animal, staff may ask only two specific questions:

- **Is the dog a service animal required because of a disability?**
- **What work or task has the dog been trained to perform?**

Staff are **NOT** allowed to request any documentation for the dog, require that the dog demonstrate its task, or inquire about the nature of the person's disability. The ADA does **NOT** require service animals to wear a vest, ID tag, or specific harness.

The ADA requires that service animals be under the control of the handler at all times. **If a particular service animal is out of control and the handler does not take effective action to control it, or if it is not housebroken, that animal may be excluded.** In most instances, the handler will be the individual with a disability or a third party who accompanies the individual with a disability. The service animal must be harnessed, leashed, or tethered while in public places unless these devices interfere with the service animal's work or the person's disability prevents use of these devices. In that case, the person must use voice, signal, or other effective means to maintain control of the animal. The dog could be off leash to do its job but may be leashed at other times. Under control also means that a service animal should not be allowed to bark repeatedly in a lecture hall, theater, library, or other quiet place.

However, if a dog barks just once, or barks because someone has provoked it, this would **NOT** mean that the dog is out of control. **If a service animal is out of control and the handler does not take effective action to control it, staff may request that the animal be removed from the premises.**

Source: <https://www.ada.gov/resources/service-animals-faqs/>