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Psychiatric Service Dogs Partners' purpose is to promote the mental health of people using service dogs for psychiatric disabilities by educating, advocating, providing expertise, facilitating peer support, and promoting responsible service dog training and handling.

## Service Dog Access: Carolina Gatekeeper Guide

—behavior, not belongings—

Service dog access laws are set up to give the **benefit of the doubt** to people with disabilities, so gatekeepers (employees) **don't harass** them, even unintentionally. But service dog users still must **respect the law!**

If your business doesn't allow pets, **when it's not obvious** whether the dog helps the person with a disability, gatekeepers can ask **just two questions** to determine whether it's a service dog—and so is reasonably allowed, just like a wheelchair.

(1) Is the dog a service animal required because of a disability?

...and if the answer is "yes", but the gatekeeper isn't yet satisfied, the second question is...

(2) What work or task has the dog been trained to perform?

**Gatekeepers can't:** request documentation for the dog or require identifying gear, make the dog show a task, ask about the nature of the person's disability, or charge extra.

Service dog or not, the dog **must behave**. A service dog must be **housebroken**, will **not** act **aggressive**, and should cause **no disruption** through unruly behavior its handler doesn't effectively control. If a dog remains unruly, gatekeepers can require the dog be removed. An undruptive person should be welcomed back right away without the dog.

### Service dogs in training and Carolina laws

Both North Carolina and South Carolina permit service dogs in training in places of public accommodation while being trained. According to NC law, a service dog in training should wear something identifying the dog as a service dog in training.

With service dogs and service dogs in training, the dog is expected to be safe in public, and the person is liable for any damage caused by the dog. A service dog can be **any breed** and the person may have an **invisible disability**.

A service dog can be a guide dog, hearing alert dog, psychiatric service dog, diabetes alert dog, etc., and can be a chihuahua or a labrador, as long as the dog is individually trained to do work or perform tasks to assist with the person's disability. Providing untrained comfort through its mere presence doesn't qualify.

This guide is not legal advice but a brief overview, applying to most situations in places of public accommodation. For more info, visit PSDP's webpage or call PSDP (contact info above), review the Department of Justice's 9-page 2015 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) service dog FAQ ([http://www.ada.gov/regs2010/service\\_animal\\_ga.pdf](http://www.ada.gov/regs2010/service_animal_ga.pdf)), review the state laws on service animals (in training), SC § 43-33-20 & NC § 168-4.2, or contact an attorney for legal advice.

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