

## Service dog etiquette

Do not touch the dog.

Do not distract the dog with noises, food, or attempts to pet.

Talk to the person, not the dog.

Do not ask the person what their disability is.

If you feel you must say something about the dog, limit it to compliments about the dog.

Do not feel offended if the human partner doesn't want to chat about their service dog or disability.

If you have a dog, don't let it approach, play with, or bark at a service dog.



## Learn more about service dogs with the following resources

### Department of Justice FAQ about service animals and the ADA

1-800-514-0301  
[www.ada.gov/regs2010/  
service\\_animal\\_qa.html](http://www.ada.gov/regs2010/service_animal_qa.html)

### Psychiatric Service Dog Partners

805-876-4256  
[www.psych.dog](http://www.psych.dog)  
[info@psych.dog](mailto:info@psych.dog)

### Table of state service animal laws

[www.animallaw.info/topic/table-state-  
assistance-animal-laws](http://www.animallaw.info/topic/table-state-assistance-animal-laws)

Psychiatric Service Dog 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.



# HANDLER NEEDS SPACE



**Q: Why am I getting this brochure?**

A: The person who handed you this brochure has a service dog. People with service dogs are normal people with busy lives. This business or their disability may make it hard to talk with strangers about their dog or themselves. Read on to learn more about service dogs!

**Q: What is a service dog?**

A: It is a dog of any breed or size, trained specifically to do work or tasks to assist with a person's disability, and prepared to behave appropriately in public.

**Q: What is a disability?**

A: It is a physical or mental condition that severely limits a major life activity—the disability may not be visible!

**Q: Who trains service dogs?**

A: They can be trained by the disabled partner, nonprofits, schools, or private trainers. Training takes about 2 years.

**Q: What can service dogs do?**

A: They can guide people, pick up items, alert to sounds, assist with balance, seizures, diabetic shock, chemical sensitivities, panic attacks, bipolar mood swings, flashbacks, hallucinations, etc.

**Q: Are they allowed in stores?**

A: Under the Americans with Disabilities Act and many state laws, service dogs are allowed anywhere the public is. This includes restaurants, hospitals, stores, movies, hotels, public transit, and taxis.

**Q: What identification is needed?**

A: Two questions can be asked: (1) is the dog a service animal required because of a disability? and (2) what work or task has the dog been trained to perform? Partners don't have to disclose their disability or demonstrate work/tasks. ID cards, vests, or certification are not required.

**Q: What about allergies or fears?**

A: These are not valid reasons for denying a service dog team. If the allergy or fear is disabling, both people must be accommodated. Usually the two parties stay away from each other.

**Q: What if a service dog barks?**

A: First, ask if they need assistance. The dog might be alerting to a medical condition, it might have been stepped on, or it might be a puppy learning manners. If the dog continues to be disruptive or destructive, the business can legally ask for its removal.

**Q: Can I get a vest for my pet?**

A: Service dogs are not pets! They must be trained to mitigate the partner's disability, and to behave stably in public. Otherwise, calling a dog a service dog is offensive and illegal. Therapy dogs that visit hospitals, help kids read, etc., do not have the same rights as service dogs. Neither do emotional support animals (ESAs), whose mere presence helps with a disability.

**Q: Do they get to “just be dogs”?**

A: Yes! When off-duty, service dogs act like regular dogs. Many compete in and enjoy sports and activities like agility, swimming, playing fetch, playing with other dogs, and even chasing squirrels.

**Q: What can I do to get a service dog?**

A: Check out the resources on our website for information about how to train your own service dog, be it a psychiatric service dog or another type. If you are interested in a psychiatric service dog, contact us for a phone consultation to join our free online peer guidance group, and to learn our recommended steps to train a service dog.

**Q: How can I help?**

A: If a service dog team is denied access, speak up for them. Share service dog etiquette with others. Consider donating to Psychiatric Service Dog Partners.