
Mayor's Office on Disability



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Service and Support Animals A Brief Overview

Individuals with disabilities that use **service AND / OR support animals** are allowed equal access to all City-sponsored programs, facilities, services, and activities.

What is a service animal?

The ADA defines a service animal as any dog or in some cases, a miniature horse that is individually trained to work specifically for a person with a physical, sensory, psychiatric, or other disability.

What is a Support Animal?

Support animals are animals of any species that are not trained to perform a specific task, but their presence provides assistance to people with psychological disabilities. They help by reducing symptoms of depression, anxiety, stress, and difficulties regarding social interactions.

Do I need a service tag for my animal?

There is no legal requirement for you to carry a service tag for your animal. Some people find it easier to access buildings and services by having a California assistance tag from Animal

Care and Control which is only available for service/support dogs. You may, however, be asked two questions when in public:

- *Is this animal required because of a disability?*
- *How does it assist you?*

What are my responsibilities for my service or support animal?

- Service and support animals must be focused on assisting the individual and **not be disruptive or a threat to the public's health and safety**. This means that you must make sure that if you have a dog it is current on its vaccinations and you maintain a current rabies tag.
- Your service and support animal must be under your control at all times and maintain socially appropriate behavior. Please refer to the attached Service and Support Animal Behavior Guidelines.

Am I allowed to keep my service/support animal at home even if it is a “no pets” building?

- Yes, you are! The Fair Housing Act allows you to have your animal at home as a “**reasonable accommodation**” for your disability.
- You must inform your landlord about your request and you may be asked to submit a letter from a medical professional verifying that you have a disability.

- Your landlord may also ask you to provide proof of current vaccinations for your animal and sign an agreement about assuming full responsibility for its behavior in the building.

Where am I allowed to bring my service / support animal?

- **Service animals ONLY** as defined under federal law are allowed in any public and private establishment.
- All service **AND** support animals are welcomed at any building, program, or agency of the City and County of San Francisco and its contractors.
- When it comes to private businesses or establishments that sell or prepare food, the state law is unclear; you may be denied access if you have a support animal.

Who can I contact if I am denied access with my service/support animal?

- If you are denied access at a City building, facility or program, please contact us by calling (415) 554-6789 or email at MOD@sfgov.org
- If you experience discrimination at a private business or restaurant, please contact the **Human Rights Commission** at **(415) 252-2500** or the **California Department of Fair Employment and Housing** at **(800) 884-1684**.