

# Quick Guide: Service Animals



**DISABILITY RIGHTS**  
DENVER HUMAN RIGHTS &  
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## What is the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)?

- A 1990 federal civil rights law that protects the rights of people with disabilities in employment, government services, and private businesses. Colorado has a similar state law – The Colorado Anti-Discrimination Act (CADA).

## Who is a Person with a Disability?

- A person with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities.
- This is a broad definition and includes people who are deaf, blind, use wheelchairs or walkers, have mental health conditions, diabetes, cancer, and various other conditions.

## What is a Service Animal?

- Dogs or miniature horses trained to do a specific task for a person with a disability. Service animals are not pets.

## What Questions Can I Ask an Individual Who Has a Service Animal?

- You may only ask two questions about the dog when the task the dog is performing is not obvious. You cannot ask a person about their disability or have the dog perform the task. You can ask:
  - 1. Is this a service animal?**
  - 2. What task(s) has it been trained to perform?**

## What Are Some Tasks That Dogs May Perform?

- There are many tasks that dogs can be trained to perform, including guide dog, hearing dog, picking up/retrieving items, detecting blood glucose levels, anticipating seizures, interrupting anxiety attacks, allergen detection, mobility/stability assistance . . . and more!

## Can I Limit Where Service Animals Go?

- No, people with service animals are allowed to go anywhere that any member of the public may go – including restaurants, restrooms, movies, and hotels.

## What Certification or Training Do the Dogs Need?

- Service animals do not need to wear a vest or have any special certification. Individuals are allowed to train their own dogs.

## Does the Dog Need to Be on a Leash?

- Yes, unless it interferes with the task or the individual's disability prevents it. But the dog must be always under control.



## What If the Dog is Harassing, Aggressive or Not Housebroken?

- You can ask the individual to leave the business, but you must offer services another way, if possible.

## Are Emotional Support Animals Protected Under the ADA?

- No, emotional support animals are not specifically trained, and individuals do not have the right to bring them inside businesses. However, individuals with disabilities have the right to have their emotional support animals in housing per the Fair Housing Amendments Act. Emotional support animals can be cats, dogs, lizards, fish, birds, peacocks, and more! They are not specifically trained.

## Do Breed Bans Impact Service Dogs?

- No, service animals are not subject to breed bans.

## Are Service Animals in Training Protected Under the ADA?

- No, but in Colorado, service animals in training are protected and an individual with or without a disability may bring a service animal in training into a business per the CADA. However, they must remain under control and abide by all other requirements.

## What If I Suspect Someone is Lying About a Service Dog?

- In most cases, you are accepting what a person tells you about a service dog. However, if the dog is out of control, a nuisance, aggressive, or not housebroken, you can ask the person to leave the business.
- Also, it is against the law for a person to lie about their dog being a service animal and they can be charged with a misdemeanor if they do so after being warned. You may provide a warning by having a sign at the door of your business. See C.R.S. §18-13-107.7.