



Southeastern Guide Dogs
GuideDogs.org

Service Animal:

As defined under the ADA – Any dog trained specifically to mitigate their handler's disability. There are some provisions for miniature horses, but beyond that, service animals are species specific to dogs only. They must be trained in tasks that mitigate a legitimate disability. They have public access rights and are permitted to accompany their handler in any public place. Any representative of an establishment the service dog has rights to access may ask the handler only two questions pertaining to the service dog (Is this your service dog? What tasks does the dog perform?). There are rules that protect establishments that service dogs have the right to access. The dog must be under the control of the handler. It must not display disruptive behavior (barking, growling, etc.). It must be clean. It must not display any aggressive or harmful behavior. If these rules are not adhered to, the establishment has the right, under federal law, to ask that the dog be removed.

Emotional Support Animal (ESA):

An ESA is not species specific. It will have limited rights under the ADA. It does have access rights under Fair Housing and the Air Carriers Access Act (ACAA). No ESA has public access rights and should not be permitted to public places. An ESA does not require any training. The handler must provide documentation from a licensed physician that clearly states the need of the ESA for he handler. This document must be updated annually.

Assistance Animal:

Assistance animal is terminology used within certain organizations. Assistance animals fall under the umbrella of service dogs and must adhere to the same rules under the ADA. They have the same access rights as service animals. The terminology is usually used when the dog is a medical alert dog, hearing assistance dog, or mobility dog.

Comfort Animal:

These are pets. They have no rights under the ADA and are not recognized by the ADA. They may provide beneficial comfort to the owner, but they do not have access rights.

Therapy Animal:

These are animals that are certified through a therapy dog organization or testing authority and can only gain access to public places with express permission from the establishment they wish to enter. These animals are not recognized by the ADA, nor do they have public access rights of any kind. They are usually found visiting hospitals, nursing homes, reading programs for children or similar activities.

Household pets:

Domesticated animals that:

- Are traditionally kept in the home for pleasure rather than for commercial purposes.
- Can travel in commercial carriers.
- Can be housed in temporary facilities.

Examples are dogs, cats, birds, rabbits, rodents, and turtles.

Household pets do not include reptiles (except turtles), amphibians, fish, insects, arachnids, farm animals (including horses), or animals kept for racing purposes.

