

# Service Animals in Food Establishments



Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), public-serving businesses such as restaurants, hotels, retail stores, taxicabs, theaters, concert halls, and sports facilities, are prohibited from discriminating against individuals with disabilities. The ADA also requires these businesses to allow people with disabilities to have their service animal(s) with them to all areas of the facility where customers are normally allowed to go. An individual with a service animal may not be segregated from other customers.

**A service animal is:** *Service animals are defined as dogs that are individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities.*

Service animals perform some of the functions and tasks that individuals with a disability cannot perform for themselves. Some tasks service animals may help with include:

- Visual guidance
- Alerting people with hearing impairments to sounds
- Pulling wheelchairs or carrying and things for those with mobility impairments
- Assisting persons with mobility impairments with balance

**NOTE:** A service animal is NOT a pet!

Some, but not all service animals, are licensed or certified and have identification papers. Therefore, such documentation generally may not be required as a condition for providing service to an individual accompanied by a service animal.

You may exclude any animal, including a service animal, from your facility when that animal's behavior poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others. For example, any service animal that displays vicious behavior towards other guests or customers may be excluded. You may not make assumptions, however, about how a particular animal is likely to behave based on past experience with other animals. Each situation must be considered individually.

Consider posting a sign at your establishment similar to the ones below. This will not only ensure customers of your policies and expectations for animals at your facility, but also make those with service animals feel recognized and welcomed.

## Additional Resources:

For more information on ADA regulations regarding service animals:

[https://www.ada.gov/service\\_animals\\_2010.htm](https://www.ada.gov/service_animals_2010.htm)

