

Service Animal Emergency Preparedness Tips



The Governor's Commission On Disability



Under the ADA, State and local governments, businesses, and nonprofit organizations that serve the public generally must allow service animals to accompany people with disabilities in all areas of the facility where the public is normally allowed to go.

Aiding Individuals With Service Animals During An Emergency*

A Service Animal is a dog or a miniature horse that has been individually trained to do work or perform tasks for an individual with a disability. The tasks performed by the dog or miniature horse must be directly related to the person's disability.

- Guide dog or Seeing Eye dog - is a carefully trained dog that serves as a travel tool for persons who have severe visual impairments or are blind.
- Hearing or signal dog - alerts individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing.
- Mobility dog - helps a person with a disability by pulling a wheelchair or providing physical support and assistance with balance and stability.
- Seizure Response dog - is a dog trained to assist a person with a seizure disorder.
- Psychiatric Service dog - is a dog that has been trained to perform tasks that assist a person with a disability to detect the onset of psychiatric episodes and lessen their effects.

*See "Service Animals and Emotional Support Animals"
<http://adata.org/publication/service-animals-booklet>

Evacuation Plans Must Include Service Animals

- Evacuation plans should be developed in conjunction with persons with disabilities who use service animals. The plans should consider all emergency contingencies with the assumption that the service animal and the handler will not be separated.
- Alert first responders if there is an employee with a disability who has a service animal.
- During an emergency, service animals are allowed to be transported with their handler during an evacuation.
- A service animal may become hesitant or confused during an emergency. Discuss how to best assist the person with a disability if this should occur.
- Have building Floor Wardens or the individual's buddy receive information or training on how to support an individual who uses a service animal.
- The person with a disability and their service animal should be given the opportunity to participate in the evacuation drill, including providing feedback to the coordinators of the drill.