



# Carroll County Department of Fire & EMS

<b>Standard Operating Procedure: 3.42</b>	<b>Effective Date: July 10, 2024</b>
<b>Subject: Handling of Service Animals</b>	<b>Section: Emergency Medical Services</b>
<b>Authorized: Eric Zaney, Assistant Chief of EMS</b>	<b>Revision Date: N/A</b>

## I. PURPOSE

The Carroll County Department of Fire and EMS recognizes the need to define how emergency service personnel interact with and handle service animals when they are encountered during emergency incidents.

## II. APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to Carroll County Department of Fire and EMS career and volunteer personnel.

## III. DEFINITIONS

ADA: The Americans with Disabilities Act

Service Animal: Any dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability. Other species of animals, whether wild or domestic, trained, or untrained, are not considered service animals.

Miniature Horses: Generally, range in height from 24 inches to 34 inches measured to the shoulders and generally weigh between 70-100 lbs. ADA regulations have a separate provision for miniature horses that have been individually trained to do work or perform tasks for persons with disabilities.

#### IV. PROCEDURES

1. The ADA requires Services Animals to be safely transported alongside their handler when their handler requires care by emergency medical services personnel.
  - a. Personnel may not inquire about the nature or extent of an individual's disability or require documentation, such as proof that the animal has been certified, trained, or licensed as a service animal or require the animal to wear an identifying vest.
  - b. Personnel are permitted to make the following inquiries when handling service animals:
    - i. Is this animal required because of a disability?
    - ii. What work or task has this animal been trained to perform?  
Note: These questions may not be asked if the need for the service animal is obvious (e.g. a dog is guiding an individual who is blind or is pulling a person's wheelchair).
  - c. A service animal is not considered a pet or a companion animal.
  - d. A dog whose sole function is to provide comfort or emotional support does not qualify as a service animal under the ADA.
  - e. Personnel are not responsible for the care and supervision of a service animal.
  - f. The handler may be asked to remove the service animal from an emergency vehicle if the animal is out of control or if the animal is not housebroken.
  - g. A service animal must be under the control of its handler. Under the ADA, service animals must be harnessed, leashed, or tethered, unless the individual's disability prevents using these devices or these devices interfere with the service animal's safe, effective performance of tasks. In such case, the individual must maintain control of the animal through voice, signal, or other effective controls.
2. Miniature Horses
  - a. ADA regulations establish a separate provision for miniature horses that have been individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities.
  - b. The regulations establish the following four assessment factors to assist in determining whether miniature horses can be accommodated:
    - i. Is the miniature horse housebroken?
    - ii. Is the miniature horse under the owner's control?
    - iii. Can the receiving facility accommodate the horse's type, size, and weight?
    - iv. Does the miniature horse's presence compromise legitimate safety requirements necessary for the safe operation of the receiving facility?

### 3. Transportation

- a. EMS clinicians may refuse transport of a service animal for three primary reasons:
  - i. The service animal will “fundamentally alter” the crew’s ability to provide lifesaving care;
  - ii. The service animal is out of control and the handler does not take effective action to control it; or
  - iii. The service animal is not housebroken.
  - iv. If provider has an allergy to said animal – request EMS chase paramedic to assist.
- b. No specific regulation exists that specifies where a service animal must be placed during patient transport.
- c. The following criteria should be used when determining how and where to transport a service animal:
  - i. The size of the service animal
  - ii. Condition of the patient
  - iii. Space Configuration of the apparatus
- d. Service animals may be transported alongside a center mount cot, in the patient compartment or in the cab of EMS transport units.
  - i. If this is not possible, an alternative vehicle such as another emergency vehicle or law enforcement vehicle may be used to transport the service animal.
- e. The EMS cot should be secured and locked into place prior to placing the service animal into the patient compartment. This will require the service animal to be removed first when unloading the patient at the receiving facility.
- f. During patient transports the service animal should be tethered to a stationary fixed object, that is locked or secured in place (ie. the stretcher or a seatbelt) and will not move.
- g. Placement of the leash should be on the appropriate collar ring to prevent potential injury or asphyxiation (see below)



- h. Clinicians should make every attempt to pad sharp surfaces to prevent any potential injuries to a service animal.

- i. The service animal may also be transported in an appropriately sized carrier designed specifically for the service animal.

#### IV. RECISION

This Standard Operating Procedure rescinds all directives regarding Handling of Services Animals or similar content previously issued for personnel of the Carroll County Department of Fire & EMS.

# Attachment A

## ADA Requirements: Service Animals

Last updated: February 28, 2020

The Department of Justice published revised final regulations implementing the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) for title II (State and local government services) and title III (public accommodations and commercial facilities) on September 15, 2010, in the Federal Register. These requirements, or rules, contain updated requirements, including the 2010 Standards for Accessible Design (2010 Standards).

### Guidance & Resources

Read this to get specific guidance about this topic.

For a beginner-level introduction to a topic, view [Topics](#)

For information about the legal requirements, visit [Law, Regulations & Standards](#)

### Overview

This publication provides guidance on the term “service animal” and the service animal provisions in the Department’s regulations.

- Beginning on March 15, 2011, only dogs are recognized as service animals under titles II and III of the ADA.
- A service animal is a dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for a person with a disability.
- Generally, title II and title III entities must permit service animals to accompany people with disabilities in all areas where members of the public are allowed to go.

### How “Service Animal” Is Defined

**Service animals are defined as dogs that are individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities.** Examples of such work or tasks include guiding people who are blind, alerting people who are deaf, pulling a wheelchair, alerting and protecting a person who is having a seizure, reminding a person with mental illness to take prescribed medications, calming a person with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) during an anxiety attack, or performing other duties. Service animals are working animals, not pets. The work or task a dog has been trained to provide must be directly related to the person’s disability. Dogs whose sole function is to provide comfort or emotional support do not qualify as service animals under the ADA.

This definition does not affect or limit the broader definition of “assistance animal” under the Fair Housing Act or the broader definition of “service animal” under the Air Carrier Access Act.

Some State and local laws also define service animal more broadly than the ADA does. Information about such laws can be obtained from the relevant State attorney general’s office.

## **Where Service Animals Are Allowed**

**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 allowed to go.** For example, in a hospital it usually would be inappropriate to exclude a service animal from areas such as patient rooms, clinics, cafeterias, or examination rooms. However, it may be appropriate to exclude a service animal from operating rooms or burn units where the animal’s presence may compromise a sterile environment.

## **Service Animals Must Be Under Control**

**A service animal must be under the control of its handler. Under the ADA, service animals must be harnessed, leashed, or tethered, unless the individual’s disability prevents using these devices or these devices interfere with the service animal’s safe, effective performance of tasks.** In that case, the individual must maintain control of the animal through voice, signal, or other effective controls.

## **Inquiries, Exclusions, Charges, and Other Specific Rules Related to Service Animals**

When it is not obvious what service an animal provides, only limited inquiries are allowed. Staff may ask two questions: (1) is the dog a service animal required because of a disability, and (2) what work or task has the dog been trained to perform. Staff cannot ask about the person’s disability, require medical documentation, require a special identification card or training documentation for the dog, or ask that the dog demonstrate its ability to perform the work or task.

- Allergies and fear of dogs are not valid reasons for denying access or refusing service to people using service animals. When a person who is allergic to dog dander and a person who uses a service animal must spend time in the same room or facility, for example, in a school classroom or at a homeless shelter, they both should be accommodated by assigning them, if possible, to different locations within the room or different rooms in the facility.
- A person with a disability cannot be asked to remove his service animal from the premises unless: (1) the dog is out of control and the handler does not take effective action to control it or (2) the dog is not housebroken. When there is a legitimate reason to ask that a service animal be removed, staff must offer the person with the disability the opportunity to obtain goods or services without the animal’s presence.

- Establishments that sell or prepare food must generally allow service animals in public areas even if state or local health codes prohibit animals on the premises.
- People with disabilities who use service animals cannot be isolated from other patrons, treated less favorably than other patrons, or charged fees that are not charged to other patrons without animals. In addition, if a business requires a deposit or fee to be paid by patrons with pets, it must waive the charge for service animals.
- If a business such as a hotel normally charges guests for damage that they cause, a customer with a disability may also be charged for damage caused by himself or his service animal.
- Staff are not required to provide care for or supervision of a service animal.

## Miniature Horses

**In addition to the provisions about service dogs, the Department’s ADA regulations have a separate provision about miniature horses that have been individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities.** (Miniature horses generally range in height from 24 inches to 34 inches measured to the shoulders and generally weigh between 70 and 100 pounds.) Entities covered by the ADA must modify their policies to permit miniature horses where reasonable. The regulations set out four assessment factors to assist entities in determining whether miniature horses can be accommodated in their facility. The assessment factors are (1) whether the miniature horse is housebroken; (2) whether the miniature horse is under the owner’s control; (3) whether the facility can accommodate the miniature horse’s type, size, and weight; and (4) whether the miniature horse’s presence will not compromise legitimate safety requirements necessary for safe operation of the facility.

**For more information about the ADA, please visit [ADA.gov](http://ADA.gov) or call our toll-free number.**

ADA Information Line 800-514-0301 (Voice) and 1-833-610-1264 (TTY) M-W, F 9:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. and 3:00 p.m. - 5:30 p.m., Th 2:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. (Eastern Time) to speak with an ADA Specialist. Calls are confidential.

For persons with disabilities, this publication is available in alternate formats.

---

The Americans with Disabilities Act authorizes the Department of Justice (the Department) to provide technical assistance to individuals and entities that have rights or responsibilities under the Act. This document provides informal guidance to assist you in understanding the ADA and the Department’s regulations.

This guidance document is not intended to be a final agency action, has no legally binding effect, and may be rescinded or modified in the Department’s complete discretion, in accordance with applicable laws. The Department’s guidance documents, including this guidance, do not establish legally enforceable responsibilities beyond what is required by the terms of the applicable statutes, regulations, or binding judicial precedent.

---

Duplication of this document is encouraged.

Originally issued: July 01, 2011

Last updated: February 28, 2020