

COLUMBUS ZOO AND AQUARIUM SERVICE ANIMAL POLICY



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The Columbus Zoo and Aquarium welcomes guests with disabilities who use service animals as determined by the American's with Disabilities Act and Ohio Administrative Code. Guests using service animals will be greeted by our ADA trained staff at the entrance gate. You will be provided with information to plan your visit to our facilities. This information will include a map of areas currently restricted (if any) to your service animal. Personal pets are not permitted on any Zoo and Aquarium grounds.

For our guest requiring the use of a service animal please be aware of the unique setting of bringing a service animal where live animal collections are held. Some animals by instinct can react to dogs or any animal outside of their enclosure as a threat and react strongly to their presence. A few areas on the grounds have animals that react this way and for the safety of you, your service animal, our animal collection and other guests, this area must be restricted. However we are happy to provide you with options to view these areas. A staff member will be happy to advise you on those options.

In the event an adverse reaction occurs between a zoo animal and your service animal, we greatly appreciate your assistance in moving your service animal away from the situation until we can work together to find a safe resolution.

Thank you for your cooperation as we strive to provide you with a safe and positive experience for you, your service animal, and our animal collection. For more information please call or stop in to see the Guest Relations Manager. We hope your visit will be an excellent experience.

CAN A PERSON WITH A SERVICE ANIMAL BE ASKED TO LEAVE?

An animal that meets the initial criteria for a service animal can be asked to leave if they cause a disruption to the operations of the facility. Specific behaviors that could be cause for removal from the facility include:

A dog is barking and/or growling.

The animal displays vicious or aggressive behavior toward other people or animals.

The animal is disruptive such as jumping toward or running at other people or animals.

The animal is not house broken.

The animal is not under control of the handler such as being held by a harness, leash or on a tethered line.

Please Note: Some service animals may not be on a harness, leash or tethered line since that interferes with the ability of the animal to perform a task for that person. The handler should be able to control the animal by voice commands, signals or other effective means. This would be acceptable under both accessibility codes and they should not be removed from the facility or be restricted. Such task that would require being off a harness, leash or tether could include; Going up to a push plate to open the automatic door, getting medicine from a bag on the back of a wheelchair, turning on lights in a restroom, etc.

The animal's size and/or weight cannot be accommodated in specific areas or sites on the grounds.

Service Animals are working animals, not pets. Thus pets can still be restricted from the zoo and aquarium grounds and facilities.

OVERVIEW

This document provides guidance on the term “service animal” and the service animal provisions in the Department’s new Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) 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.

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 normally allowed to go. For example, in a hospital it 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

Under the ADA, service animals must be harnessed, leashed, or tethered, unless these devices interfere with the service animal’s work or the individual’s disability prevents using these devices. 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 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.

Staff are not required to provide care or food for a service animal.

MINIATURE HORSES

In addition to the provisions about service dogs, the Department’s revised ADA regulations have a new, 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.

