

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE? SERVICE DOGS EXPLAINED

Canine Companions for Independence Tip Sheet

Misconceptions about service dogs often arise because people don't understand the differences between service dogs, emotional support dogs and therapy dogs.



Service Dog

A dog extensively trained to perform specific tasks to mitigate the effects of the handler's disability. Service dogs are permitted with their handler in any place the public is allowed.

Emotional Support Dog

A dog whose sole function is to provide comfort or emotional support to its owner. Emotional support dogs are only allowed in the owner's home and on airplanes.

Therapy Dog

A temperament-tested pet that provides comfort in an approved facility. Therapy dogs are only allowed in designated facilities where they have been given permission.

California Regulations Regarding Assistance Dogs

California law requires that a specially trained Assistance Dog be allowed to accompany a blind, deaf, physically or mentally disabled person or trainer on all public accommodations and on all common carriers. No extra charge can be levied because of the dog's presence, but the dog user is liable for any damage the dog might cause*.



Federal Regulations Regarding Assistance Dogs

The Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 gives the overall structure and intent for the elimination of discrimination against individuals with disabilities. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is concerned with providing equal opportunity in housing for disabled persons. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is concerned with the rights of disabled persons and their Assistance Dogs on airlines. Brief introductory highlights are given to each of these along with links to their online pages. The Code of Federal Regulations spells out the laws regarding disabled persons and their Assistance Dogs*.

For more information about service dogs, please visit:
www.assistedogsinternational.org

* Guide To Assistance Dog Laws. <http://www.assistedogsinternational.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/ADI20062ndprint.pdf>.