

6 Frequently asked questions regarding ADA Service Animals in a FSO or RFE



1 What is a service animal?

Under the ADA, a service animal is defined as a **dog that has been individually trained** to do work or perform tasks for an individual with a disability. The task(s) performed by the dog must be directly related to the person's disability.

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4 Can a person bring a service animal with them as they go through a salad bar or other self-service food line?

Yes. **Service animals must be allowed to accompany their handlers to and through self-service food lines.** Similarly, service animals may not be prohibited from communal food preparation areas, such that are commonly found in shelters or dormitories.

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For more information: 42 U.S.C. §12181, et seq.; 28 C.F.R. §36.101, et seq.;
<https://www.ada.gov/resources/service-animals-faq>

2 What does “do work” or “perform task” mean?

The dog must be trained to take a specific action when needed to assist the person with a disability. For example, a person with diabetes may have a dog that is trained to alert him when his blood sugar reaches high or low levels. A person with depression may have a dog that is trained to remind her to take her medication. Or, a person who has epilepsy may have a dog that is trained to detect the onset of a seizure and then help the person remain safe during the seizure.

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5 Are stores required to allow service animals to be placed in a shopping cart?

Generally, **the dog must stay on the floor, or the person must carry the dog.** For example, if a person with diabetes has a glucose alert dog, he may carry the dog in a chest pack so it can be close to his face to allow the dog to smell his breath to alert him of a change in glucose levels.

3 What questions can a covered entity's employees ask to determine if a dog is a service animal?

In situations where it is not obvious that the dog is a service animal, staff may ask only two specific 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 are not allowed to request any documentation for the dog, require that the dog demonstrate its task, or inquire about the nature of the person's disability.

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6 Are restaurants, bars, and other places that serve food or drink required to allow service animals to be seated on chairs or allow the animal to be fed at the table?

No. Seating, food, and drink are provided for customer use only. The ADA gives a person with a disability the right to be accompanied by his or her service animal, but covered entities are not required to allow an animal to sit or be fed at the table.