

Service Animals in Emergency Shelters



Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), emergency shelters must permit a person with a disability to be accompanied by their service animal, even if the shelter has a “No Pets” policy. A service animal must be allowed to accompany a person with a disability in all areas of a facility where members of the public, program participants, or clients are allowed.

If Shelter Staff is in doubt about a service animal, they can only ask two questions.

- 1) Is this animal required because of a disability?
- (2) What work or task has this animal been trained to perform?

Shelter Staff cannot ask for a demonstration of a task or about the person’s disability.

Shelter Staff may not ask for service animal certification, documentation, or a vest/patch as proof.

A Service Animal can be removed if:

- 1) The handler does not have control.
- 2) The animal is not housebroken.
- 3) The animal poses a legitimate safety risk.

Emotional support animals, therapy, or companion animals that are not trained to perform a specific task for a person with a disability, are NOT service animals. These pets are not allowed in the human shelter.

ADA Information Line
1-800-514-0301 | 1-833-610-1264 (TTY)
<https://www.ada.gov/topics/service-animals/>

[Frequently Asked Questions about Service Animals and the ADA](#)

Service Animals

- Are any dog that is individually **trained to perform a specific task** for a person with a disability.
- Can not be separated from its owner/handler
- Are allowed in all the areas that the public is generally permitted to go, including food areas
- Must behave appropriately in the public
- Must always be under the control of their handler
- Are the responsibility of the handler to groom, feed, and toilet
- Are not required to have special licenses or certifications
- Do not have to have a vest or tag
- Are NOT emotional support, comfort, or therapy animals

Emergency Preparedness

Animals need to be included in your family’s emergency plan.

1. Plan: Create a plan on what to do in a disaster or emergency.
Where are you going to shelter?
2. Prepare: Build an emergency to-go bag kit for your pet.
3. Practice: Practice your plan with family and the animals.

GSART



Garden State Animal Resource Team