

Service Animal Partners

Have you ever wondered how a handler and a service animal work together? When you see them together you are watching highly trained partners. Each partner's contribution is essential for independent travel. The handler's role is to maintain control of the dog and reinforce the positive actions of the dog with praise and direct its focus. The dog's role in this team is to obey the commands, react to the environment, and keep the handler safe.



Service Animal Etiquette & Laws

*State and federal laws make it illegal to deny or provide unequal service to a disabled person with a service animal or segregate them at stores, restaurants, hotels, health care facilities, taxicabs, stores, zoos, parks or any other place the general public is admitted. The law prohibits public carriers like buses, trains, or planes from refusing to serve a disabled individual accompanied by a service animal. Handlers with their service animals have the same rights as other people to pick where they sit on such carriers where no other legally established seating requirements exist.

*Businesses may only ask if a dog is a service animal and what tasks the animal is trained to perform. They may not ask about the nature of the disability or require any sort of identification or documentation for the dog.

*Businesses may exclude a service animal only if it causes a direct threat to the health or safety of others or when the dog is out of control and the handler does not take immediate, effective action to correct its behavior.

*When you see a service animal in public, it is working. Never touch a service animal or its gear. Never call a guide dog by name, speak to it, or make noises or intentionally distract the dog from its work!

*Never feed a service animal. This may make it difficult to work the dog in places where food is present such as restaurants and grocery stores. Dogs can have food allergies like people do.

*Always assume that the handler can function safely and independently in most situations. Never touch or take hold of the person, the dog, its leash, or its gear at any time. This is especially important when a disabled person is making a street crossing. Blind people know when it is safe to cross by listening to traffic patterns. It is the blind person who tells the dog when it is safe to cross the street; it is NOT the dog that makes this decision.



Service Animals

What do they do?

*For a blind handler, the guide dog does not know where the blind person is going. The handler gives direction commands, and the dog avoids obstacles like people, shopping carts, overhanging trees, and steps or staircases.

*Service animals can be trained to perform a wide array of tasks to benefit a disabled person, e.g., pull a wheelchair, retrieve items, alert to the onset of seizures, interrupt harmful behaviors, and alert to other medical conditions. That's only a few of the many tasks service animals perform.

*If you think a disabled person needs help. Ask. If we need help, we will let you know what we need. If we don't need it, we'll let you know that, too! Please respect our decisions.

*Speak to the person with a service animal if they ask for assistance or directions. Do not call the dog or try to get it to follow you.

*Consistent discipline is essential to a dog team. Oral admonitions are used to maintain control. If these fail, the handler may use a firm tug on the leash. This does not hurt the dog; it gets its attention back to its job.

If you are a service animal handler needing assistance or resources, you can call the

ASAP Service Animal Hotline toll-free at

855-ASAP211 (855-272-7211)

or visit our website www.ServiceAnimals.info



Advocates for Service Animal Partners is a nationwide network of disabled service animal handlers in nearly every community who are available for presentations about service animals and demonstrations of tasks service animals are trained to perform to schools, churches, civic organizations, and professional associations.

"ASAP has given me the opportunity to attend webinars about service animal handlers' rights. I know that if I ever find myself in an access denial I can't handle independently I have a hotline available to assist me!"

Sydney P. - Long Island, NY

Here's how you can get in touch:

**Advocates for
Service Animal Partners (ASAP)
Marion Gwizdala, President
386-ASAP411 (386-272-7411)
Advocacy411@gmail.com**

Advocates for Service Animal Partners



"Forward together!"

"ASAP demonstrates how collaboration and cooperation between organizations can work together for a singular cause to dramatically improve accessibility for service animal users in zoological gardens across this nation."

—Larry Killmar, Ph.D.

*Former Director of Animal Science,
ZooTampa
Tampa, Florida*