



New Mexico Commission for Deaf & Hard of Hearing

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Service Animals

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What is a Service Animal?

As of March 15, 2011, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) defines a service animal as “dogs that are individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities”. The ADA also made a separate provision for miniature horses. Service animals are working animals, not pets. According to the ADA: “the work or task an animal has been trained to provide must be directly related to the person’s disability”.

This definition does not affect the broader definition of an “assistance animal” under the Fair Housing Act, nor does it affect the broader definition of “service animal” under the Air Carrier Access Act

In 2013, the New Mexico Legislature passed SB320 which aligns with the changes in the ADA. Therefore, the dog or miniature horse must perform tasks for a person with a disability and directly related to that disability, such as alerting a Deaf or Hard of Hearing individual to the doorbell, phone, or an intruder.

The law does not include emotional support animals, companion animals, or therapy animals that do not provide a service.

Service Animals in Public Places

Under the ADA and NM State Law, service animals are allowed in public places and wherever the general public is allowed to go. This would include restaurants, movie theaters, grocery stores, and hospital rooms. Any business that displays a “no pets” sign still must comply, because the service animal is not a pet. The only exclusions are when a service animal would compromise a sterile environment, such as a burn unit or operating room.

The service animal must be housetrained and well behaved. A dog that barks during a performance can be asked to leave as the animal is preventing other people from enjoying the entertainment. Other unacceptable behavior would be jumping on people or running away from the owner. If the animal has caused damage to public property, the owner may be found liable. A service animal must also be leashed, harnessed, or tethered unless that would interfere with the work the animal provides. If that is the case, the animal still must be controlled by the person with the disability by voice, sign language, or signals.

Does a Service Animal have to be certified?

The ADA does not require the animal to have any certification or wear any special harness or vest. However, a harness or vest identifying the animal as a service animal is a good idea because it makes the public aware that the animal is working and has the right to be in public.

Business owners may not ask to see any papers identifying the dog or miniature horse as a service animal but are permitted to ask if the animal is required because of a disability and what tasks the animal performs. Questions about the disability or proof of disability should not be asked.

Misrepresenting an Animal as a Service Animal

New Mexico's revised Service Animal Act also made it a misdemeanor to misrepresent an animal as a service animal and if found guilty, the penalty is a fine up to \$1,000 and/or 364 days in jail.

Where can a Deaf or Hard of Hearing Person obtain a Hearing Dog?

Note: There may be a waiting list for service dogs

Service Dogs of New Mexico

17 Bus Lane

Sandia Park, NM 87047

Website: <https://servicedogsnm.org>

Email: servicedogsnm@gmail.com; Phone: 505.274.5048

Ralph Clever Working Dogs & Rehabilitation, LLC

Albuquerque, NM

Website: www.ralphcleverworkingdogsrehabilitation.com

Email: khill30060@yahoo.com; Phone: 505.515.5635

Pets and Helping Dogs, LLC

Serving several areas in New Mexico including Albuquerque, Santa Fe, Alamogordo, and surrounding areas

Website: www.petsandhelpingdogs.com

Email: info@petsandhelpingdogs.com; Phone: 505.331.4429

Canine Companions – Southwest Training Center

124 Rancho del Oro Drive

Oceanside, CA 92057-7344

Website: <https://canine.org>

Phone: 1.800.572.BARK (2275)

International Hearing Dog, Inc.

5901 E. 89th Ave.

Henderson, CO 80640

Website: www.hearingdog.org

Phone: 303.287.3277

Dogs for Better Lives

10175 Wheeler Rd.

Central Point, OR 97502

Website: www.dogsforbetterlives.org

Phone: 1.800.990.3647

Additional information:

For more information on where service animals are allowed and under what conditions:

www.adata.org/publication/service-animals-booklet

To see SB320 in its entirety:

www.nmlegis.gov/Sessions/13%20Regular/final/SB0320.pdf

For more information on the ADA and service animals:

www.ada.gov/service_animals_2010.htm