
6.15 Pet and Service Animal Relief Areas

1 Credit: Implement 3 of 4

- All pet and service animal relief areas are enclosed.
- All pet and service animal relief areas have a water trough or basin with a faucet that can replenish the supply without the need to touch the trough or basin.
- All pet and service animal relief areas have waste clean-up tools and disposal bin.
- All pet and service animal relief areas are staffed.

1. Overview

Service animals are trained to help disabled individuals perform daily functions, allowing them to lead more independent lives. According to the U.S. Dog Registry (2013), these specially trained animals can help to support both mental and physical disorders including:

- Neuromuscular disorders
- Epilepsy
- Autism
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
- Seizures
- Diabetes
- Visual impairments
- Mobility issues



Figure 1: Service Dog; Image courtesy of U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Dogs are most commonly used as service animals and are currently the primary animal identified as such by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Although not as common, miniature horses can also be trained to perform similar tasks and are gaining popularity as service animals.

Service animals can be classified as: *Guide or Seeing Eye® Dogs*; *Hearing or Signal Dogs*; *Psychiatric Service Dogs*; *SSig Dogs (sensory signal dogs or social signal dogs)*; and *Seizure Response Dogs* (Brennan, 2014).

Under Title II and III of the ADA, service animals must be permitted to accompany their handler, “in all areas where members of the public are allowed to go” (U.S. Department of Justice, 2011). This requirement makes animal relief areas a necessity for individuals with service animals. The animal relief area can be indoors or outdoors, but is more commonly located outdoors due to training standards that require these animals to be housebroken and sanitation concerns. The relief area should be easily accessible to all individuals and should be well identified with signage and/or wayfinding cues. If a relief area is provided outdoors, protection from inclement weather should also be provided. Relief areas should not be co-located with a designated smoking area (Brennan, 2014).



Although the ADA does not give non-service animals the same access rights under the ADA as working animals, mounting evidence supports the physiological, psychological, and social benefits of pet ownership. Facilities that make design considerations for non-service animals also accommodate pets that may be utilized as *Emotional Support or Therapy Animals* (Brennan, 2014) as well as non-service pets.

Figure 2: Animal relief area signage. Image courtesy of the Southwest ADA Center.

2. Issues to Consider

Mobility impairments: Animal relief spaces should have at least one hard, step free surface at the entrance to allow for easy access of mobility devices and one softer surface intended for animal relief (VanHorn, 2016). The softer surface designated for the relief area, should consist of materials such as grass or mulch for outdoor areas or artificial turf for indoor areas (VanHorn, 2016).

Ideally the allotted space should allow for a service animal on a 6' leash the ability to circle their handler, which would require a minimum of 60 square feet (VanHorn, 2016). Most pet relief areas are enclosed, in which case animals may be allowed to roam leash-free. In the case of enclosed relief areas, 60 square feet may not be necessary to adequately accommodate pet relief needs.

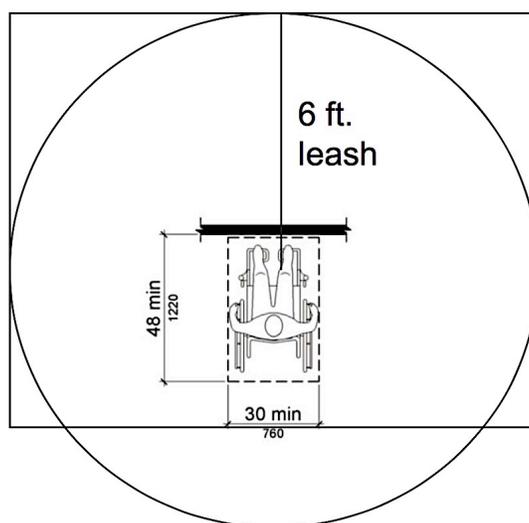


Figure 3: Service animal space requirements. Image courtesy of the Southwest ADA Center.

Visual impairments: A service animal trained as a Seeing Eye® Dog has a vital role in their handler’s life and should always be able to access a relief area. Tactile and audio signage and wayfinding devices should be utilized to direct the visually impaired to service animal relief areas. For guidance on best signage and wayfinding practices for the visually impaired, refer to [isUD Standards 3.1, Wayfinding and 3.2, Signage](#). To further improve an animal relief area’s accessibility and usability, designated staffing should be provided.

Sanitation: Animal waste is not only unpleasant to smell but is also hazardous to human health. For the safety and sanitation of a facility it is important that all animal relief areas be cleaned regularly, and that animal owners clean up after their pet or service animal. Signs should be clearly posted informing users to do so and identifying locations of provided disposal bins, waste bags, clean-up tools (“pooper scooper”), and the nearest hand washing station.



Figure 4: Animal waste clean up tool, operates with the use of one hand does not require bending.

3. Related Standards

[Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\) 2010 revision for title II \(State and local government services\) and title III \(public accommodations and commercial facilities\)](#) provides guidance on the term “service animal” and the service animal provisions in the department’s regulations.

[28 CFR 35.136 – Service Animals](#) states that “generally, a public entity shall modify its policies, practices, or procedures to permit the use of a service animal by an individual with a disability.”

4. Measurement and Verification

Post Occupancy Evaluation (POE) can help to ensure accessibility and usability of animal relief areas. POEs should be conducted after the program is implemented with ongoing feedback encouraged. The information from these evaluations should be collected from a diverse group of animal owners and pet owners.

5. Design Considerations

For 6.15, Pet and service animal relief areas

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1. *All pet and service animal relief areas are enclosed.* Whether animal relief areas are indoors or outdoors, it is important that the space is enclosed to allow for the animal to be off leash without violating leash rules or regulations. The enclosure should have a minimum height of 4' and an accessible gate or door that can be easily opened and closed by individuals of various heights and in standing and seated positions. For additional guidance on reach targets for individuals in wheeled mobility devices, refer to *isUD Standard 2.4, Reach Targets*. Immediately within the enclosure's entrance, there should be a step-free, hard surface for handlers to comfortably stand or sit while their animal is using the space.



Figure 5: Animal relief area/dog park. Image courtesy of the City of Overland, MO.

2. *All pet and service animal relief areas have a water trough or basin with a faucet that can replenish the supply without the need to touch the trough or basin.* The animal relief areas should provide water to the animal and their owner. A service animal's handler may have a disability that limits their ability to bend down or reach objects on the floor. One of the best strategies to ensure that these limitations do not inhibit an animal's water supply is to locate the faucet or hose handle/valve within reach of individuals in seated mobility devices and design these controls for easy on/off access. Providing this access also decreases the spread of germs, as animal handlers do not need to touch the shared water bowls or troughs.



Figure 6: Drinking fountain at multiple heights to accommodate humans and service animals. Image courtesy of the Town of Somers, WI.

3. *All pet and service animal relief areas have waste clean-up tools and disposal bin.* Animal waste can carry bacteria, viruses, and parasites that can be hazardous to our health, making it very important to dispose of waste as soon as possible. To ensure the sanitation of these areas, the animal relief area should provide waste bags (preferably biodegradable), a covered disposal bin, and a clean-up tool or "pooper scooper" to pick up waste while avoiding direct contact. The "pooper scooper" should have a long handle that can be used from both a seated and standing position and be operable with only one hand. The disposal bin should be enclosed and well identified by signage to eliminate foul smell and the possible spread of bacteria.

4. *All pet and service animal relief areas are staffed.* Having assigned staff members to an animal relief area helps to increase the area's overall sanitation, improves a user's ability to easily find and navigate about the area, and provide assistance in operating the

provided features. A trained staff member would be particularly beneficial for individuals with severe disabilities that may need additional assistance in cleaning up after their animal or operating features.

6. Definitions

Emotional Support or Therapy Animals	Used as part of a medical treatment plan as therapy animals, they are not considered service animals under the ADA (Brennan, 2013).
Guide Dog or Seeing Eye® Dog	A dog that has been trained to serve as a travel tool for persons who have severe visual impairments or mobility disabilities (Brennan, 2013).
Hearing or Signal Dog	A dog that has been trained to alert a person who has significant hearing loss or is deaf when a sound occurs (Brennan, 2013).
Psychiatric Service Dog	A dog that has been trained to perform tasks that assist individuals with disabilities to detect the onset of psychiatric episodes and lessen their effects (Brennan, 2013).
Sensory Signal Dog or Social Signal Dog (SSig)	A dog that is trained to assist a person with autism (Brennan, 2013).
Seizure Response Dog	A dog trained to assist a person with a seizure disorder (Brennan, 2013).
Service animals	As defined by the ADA, "Dogs that are individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities" (U.S. Department of Justice, 2011).

7. References

1. U.S. Dog Registry. 2013. "United States Dog Registry." Accessed June 12, 2017. <http://www.usdogregistry.org>.
2. Brennan, Jacquie. 2014. Service Animals and Emotional Support Animals: Where are they allowed and under what conditions. Houston, TX: Southwest ADA Center.
3. U.S. Department of Justice. 2011. Service Animals: 2010 Revised ADA Requirements.
4. VanHorn, Laurel. 2016. "Service Animal Relief Areas: Guidance and Best Practice." 7th Annual FAA National Civil Rights Training Conference for Airports, Chicago, IL.