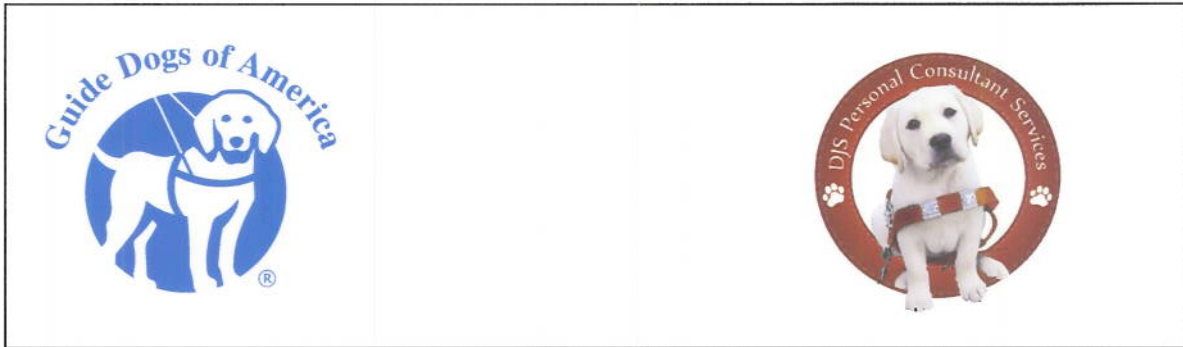


Los Angeles County Commission on Disabilities



Service Animal Presentation

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Deborah Sands, DJS Personal Consultant Services

January 18, 2012



SERVICE ANIMAL INFORMATION

Assistance Dog categories:

- ***Guide Dogs*** - for blind/visually impaired - guide from point A to point B safely and efficiently with the aid of a harness.
- ***Service dogs*** - turn lights on/off, pull down bed covers, open/close doors, pick up items off the floor, pull a wheelchair, etc. Dogs are also trained to "alert" their handlers to sound, allergens, oncoming seizure and diabetic shock and balance issues.

Seizure alert - dog can alert their handler several minutes to 1 hour before a seizure occurs in order for handler to find a safe place to sit or lay down. Their dog is trained to lay across their body, or be attentive until the seizure passes.

- ***Hearing Dogs*** - They are trained to "alert" their handler to particular sounds.

Note: Dogs can be physically rough in some cases....seizure alert, hearing..to get their handler's attention (jumping/pawing/bumping), so please DO NOT get in the way of the dog's job.

Dogs trained for Veterans - Dogs are being trained and placed with our returning veterans to assist with both physical and mental disabilities (i.e. calming nightmares, fear of crowds, the dark, loud noises etc.) Also, those rehabilitating from lost limbs, severe burns and major head trauma are seeing their recovery accelerated by having these dogs in their life.

What has changed is the psychological support dog criteria as of March 15, 2011:

Example: dog sitting in your lap for "comfort" no longer qualifies as a "service animal."

New law: dogs must do at least 2 physical tasks to assist their handler in mitigating their medical condition. Also, "service animal" must be a "dog."

Dog's behavior:

Dogs can have good days and bad days...corrections may be necessary if the handler feels they missed a cue. Please don't interfere.

Addressing complaints:

If any guest/patron complains about a service dog to you....your response should be, "these dogs are medically necessary and federal law protects their access."

Basic service dog etiquette:

Rule of thumb..... just ignore these wonderful creatures, and please don't interfere with them. Most important, please respect the NO PETTING rule!! These dogs are "on duty" when they are working, so it can be dangerous for both the handler and their dog if you distract them. (They have plenty of "off duty" fun, but not when they are "working.")

Just remember...you cannot ask "what is your disability?"... but you can ask "what is your dog trained to do?"
Legitimate reasons for removing a dog from your premises: Ill mannered, out of control, aggressive towards people or dirty. Dog's behavior is key!



Americans with Disabilities Act ADA Business BRIEF:

Service Animals

Service animals are animals that are individually trained to perform tasks for people with disabilities – such as guiding people who are blind, alerting people who are deaf, pulling wheelchairs, alerting and protecting a person who is having a seizure, or performing other special tasks. Service animals are working animals, not pets.

Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), businesses and organizations that serve the public must allow people with disabilities to bring their service animals into all areas of the facility where customers are normally allowed to go. This federal law applies to **all** businesses open to the public, including restaurants, hotels, taxis and shuttles, grocery and department stores, hospitals and medical offices, theaters, health clubs, parks, and zoos.



Businesses that serve the public must allow people with disabilities to enter with their service animal

- Businesses may ask if an animal is a service animal or ask what tasks the animal has been trained to perform, but cannot require special ID cards for the animal or ask about the person's disability.
- People with disabilities who use service animals cannot be charged extra fees, isolated from other patrons, or treated less favorably than other patrons. However, if a business such as a hotel normally charges guests for damage that they cause, a customer with a disability may be charged for damage caused by his or her service animal.
- A person with a disability cannot be asked to remove his service animal from the premises unless: (1) the animal is out of control and the animal's owner does not take effective action to control it (for example, a dog that barks repeatedly during a movie) or (2) the animal poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others.
- In these cases, the business should give the person with the disability the option to obtain goods and services without having the animal on the premises.

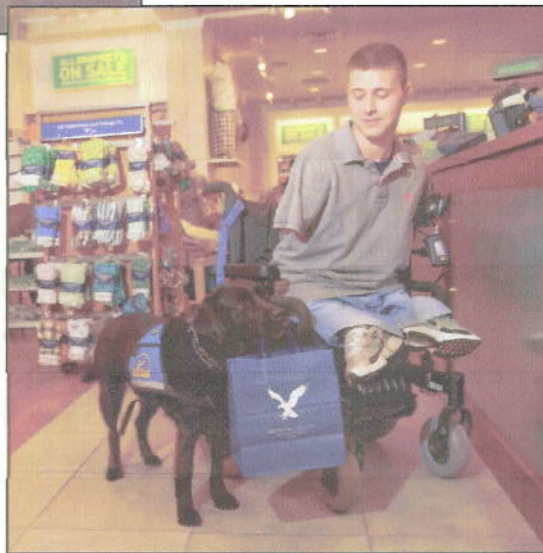
- Businesses that sell or prepare food must allow service animals in public areas even if state or local health codes prohibit animals on the premises.
- A business is not required to provide care or food for a service animal or provide a special location for it to relieve itself.
- Allergies and fear of animals are generally **not** valid reasons for denying access or refusing service to people with service animals.
- Violators of the ADA can be required to pay money damages and penalties.



Service animals are individually trained to perform tasks for people with disabilities

If you have additional questions concerning the ADA and service animals, please call the Department's ADA Information Line at (800) 514-0301 (voice) or (800) 514-0383 (TTY) or visit the **ADA Business Connection** at www.ada.gov

Service Dogs.....



Did You Know...?

Both dog and human must be individually trained before coming together as a team. Before being accepted to the Guide Dogs of America training program, applicants must be experienced, independent travelers through formal Orientation and Mobility (O&M) training or with mobility skills learned from years of experience.

New teams take 6 months to a year to develop and learn to work "in sync". It's a little like learning to dance with someone. Both partners know the steps, but it takes time to learn to move as one.

Guide Dogs rely on the skills and training of their handlers to tell them when to proceed. If the dog perceives a danger, such as an approaching car or a hole in the street, it will display "intelligent disobedience" and refuse the command. It is then the handler's responsibility to determine what the danger is and wait until it is safe or change the route. Of course the dog is given lavish praise for a job well done!

Guide Dogs are not on duty all the time. When they are at home, they are very much family dogs – playing with the kids, chewing on a (dog-safe) bone or snoozing at their partners' feet.

The true value of a guide dog comes clear when the team is faced with a dangerous situation – from a speeding car or a torn-up street, to an unexpected disaster. The high standards of Guide Dogs of America's extensive and rigorous training programs give both dog and human partner the means to work through these challenges.

With the help of their canine partners, and the understanding of those of us who encounter them, blind men and women will continue to pursue their goals of independence and greater mobility.

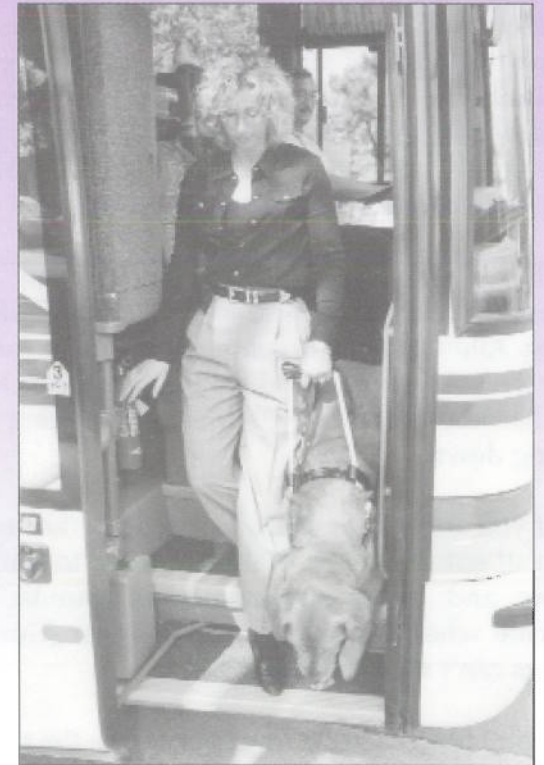


For more information about the programs, events and opportunities at Guide Dogs of America, please contact:

GUIDE DOGS OF AMERICA
13445 Glenoaks Blvd., Sylmar, CA 91342
(818) 362-5834 Fax: (818) 362-6870
www.guidedogsofamerica.org

Guide Dogs of America

Access and Etiquette



*"With an independent spirit,
and a good dog...
I can go anywhere!"*

WHEN YOU MEET A GUIDE DOG TEAM

A blind handler and a Guide Dog have a special bond that enables them to travel in a safe and skillful manner. Guide Dogs of America extensively trains both person and dog to work together as a team. While the handler is determining the destination and route, the Guide Dog is carefully maneuvering around obstacles, through crowds, and across streets. Human and canine are committed to each other as partners.

This partnership extends beyond a dog and a person walking down the street, however. It takes hundreds of puppy raisers, GDA staffers, volunteers, and donors to keep the team “guidedogging”. Even the average “person on the street” has a place in this partnership. You can help by remembering these guidelines:

- Please don't pet, call out (bark, meow or cluck), or otherwise distract a working Guide Dog. Allow the dog to concentrate and perform for the safety of its blind partner. A Guide Dog in harness is “on duty”, even when sitting or lying down.
- If you are in a car, please don't honk the horn or call out directions. Handlers listen to traffic flow and other environmental sounds to decide when it's safe to cross a street (Guide Dogs can't read traffic lights!).
- Don't forget, Guide Dog teams have the right of way!

- Please don't feed a Guide Dog. Diet and feeding times are strictly monitored to maintain good health and reliable relieving schedules.

- Never grab the harness or leash from the handler – you can disorient or confuse the team. If the handler looks like he needs help, offer your assistance and take your cue from his response. If you believe someone is in a dangerous situation voice your concern in a calm manner, but do not push, pull or grab the person.

- Speak to the person, not the dog! Some Guide Dog handlers may allow petting, but always ask first. Many folks enjoy introducing their dogs, but if they decline, please respect their wishes. Blind people have busy lives, too, and they may not have time to stop and chat.

- Sometimes a Guide Dog will make a mistake, and a correction is necessary to keep up the training. This could be a verbal reprimand or a leash correction. Handlers have been taught the proper and humane training techniques to maintain their dogs' working standards. You may not always hear it, but Guide Dogs get loads of praise when they do the right things.

- You can expect to see Guide Dog teams just about anywhere. The Federal Americans with Disabilities Act and State Laws explicitly grant the right of access everywhere the public is allowed. Guide Dog teams are allowed into restaurants, offices, churches, hospitals and hotels. They travel on buses, in taxis and airplanes, shop at grocery stores, enjoy amusement parks, movies and concerts.

WHEN YOU MEET A PERSON WHO IS BLIND

Introduce yourself when entering a room, and let the person know when you are leaving. Say the person's name, if you know it, so he realizes you are speaking to him.

If you are leaving a blind person alone in an unfamiliar area, give her a point of reference, verbally or tactily, such as a counter, wall or piece of furniture.

When speaking to a blind person, make an effort to be verbally descriptive. Instead of saying “over there” or “this way”, try to give a more detailed picture of things, such as “thirty paces in front of you” or “turn right where the carpet ends”.

When offering sighted assistance to people who are blind, don't hold on to them, but offer your elbow or arm so they can follow where you lead. Allow them to tell you if they want to take your arm, or if they prefer to use their cane or Guide Dog.

Don't be concerned about saying things like “see you later”, or “looking good”. These are part of our verbal culture - blind people use these common phrases too.

People who are blind are just like you and me. Be friendly and considerate, and speak directly to them, not to the people they may be with.