



Service Animal Policy Under the Americans with Disabilities Act

I. Purpose of the Policy

Pets and other animals are restricted in and on Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) properties. This Policy addresses animals utilized for disability accommodation services. As established and defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), service animals shall not be excluded from DNR facilities or activities.

II. Definitions

Service Animal: *Service animal* means any dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of people with disabilities. Examples of work or tasks include, but are not limited to, guiding people who are blind or have low vision, alerting people who are deaf or hard of hearing, pulling a wheelchair, alerting or protecting a person during a seizure, reminding a person with mental illness to take prescribed medications, calming a person with post-traumatic stress disorder during an anxiety attack, or performing other duties.

Miniature Horses: *Miniature horses* generally ranging in height from 24 to 34 inches measured to the shoulders and generally weighing 70 to 100 pounds that have been individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities are service animals.

Support or Therapy Animal: *Support or therapy animal* means an animal that individuals with disabilities utilize for emotional support, well-being, or comfort. Because they are not individually trained to perform work or tasks, support or therapy animals are not service animals.

Individual with a Disability: *An individual with a disability* is a person who 1) has a physical or mental impairment that limits one or more major life activities or 2) has a record of such impairment.

Accommodation: *An accommodation* is any modification or adjustment in policies, practices, procedures, or environment to enable a qualified individual with a disability to enjoy equal opportunities and access to DNR rights, privileges, benefits and services.

III. Policy Statement

It is the policy of DNR to permit service animals anywhere in or on DNR managed property where the public is normally allowed to go. Further, it is the policy of DNR to permit miniature horses used as service animals in or on DNR property where reasonable based on whether the horse is housebroken, is under the owner's control, can be accommodated based on type, size, and weight, and will not compromise legitimate safety requirements. Service animals should be harnessed, leashed or tethered unless such devices

interfere with the service animal's work, or if the visitor's disability prevents the use of these devices. In that case, the visitor must maintain control of the animal through voice, signal or other effective controls. DNR's policy includes an expectation that service animal owners will take responsibility for meeting legal requirements, ensuring that animals are under their control, and adhering to cleanup rules.

Support or Therapy animal: DNR's service animal policy does not extend to support or therapy animals. Support or therapy animals, as defined in Section II Definitions, may be permitted on DNR properties where pets are not normally allowed on a case-by-case basis. However, it is DNR's policy to require that support and therapy animal owners obtain permission before bringing a support or therapy animal onto DNR property, the requesting individual must submit a request and appropriate supporting documentation. Requests for a support or therapy animal will be evaluated by the appropriate office.

Inquiries: When it is not obvious what service an animal provides, it is DNR policy to allow staff to ask two questions: (1) Is the dog a service animal required because of a disability? and (2) What work or task has the dog been trained to perform? Staff cannot ask about the person's disability, require medical documentation, require a special identification card, training documentation for the dog, or ask that the dog demonstrate its ability to perform the work or task.

Allergies and fear of dogs: Under DNR policy allergies and fear of dogs are not valid reasons for denying access or refusing service to people using service animals. When a person who is allergic to dog dander and a person who uses a service animal must spend time in the same room or facility, they both should be accommodated by assigning them, if possible, to different locations within the room or different rooms in the facility.

Removal of service animal: GA DNR policy prohibits removal of a service animal unless: (1) the dog is out of control and the handler does not take effective action to control it or (2) the dog is not housebroken. When there is a legitimate reason to ask that a service animal be removed, GA DNR policy requires staff to offer the person with the disability the opportunity to obtain goods or services without the animal's presence.

Food service areas: DNR policy requires establishments that sell or prepare food to allow service animals in public areas even if state or local health codes prohibit animals on the premises.

Integrated service: DNR policy forbids isolating people with disabilities who use service animals from other patrons or treating them less favorably than other patrons.

Fees and surcharges: DNR policy prohibits charging fees or surcharges to guests with service animals that are not charged to other patrons without animals. In addition, if a deposit or fee is required to be paid by patrons with pets, it must waive the charge for service animals.



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Damages: If guests are normally charged for damage that they cause, GA DNR allows a guest with a disability to be charged for damage caused by himself or his service animal.

Care and supervision: GA DNR policy does not require staff to provide care or food for a service animal.

DNR reserves the right to change, modify, or amend this policy at any time.