

Service Animal Guide



Service Animal Acceptance as an Accommodation for a Disability

The number of people with disabilities traveling with service animals has grown steadily. With this growth, it is important to reiterate the DOT Part 382 regulations on the acceptance of service animals and how they are applied.

When DOT Part 382 was put into effect, most service animals were guide or hearing dogs. Since then, a wider variety of animals (e.g., cats, monkeys, etc.) have been individually trained to assist people with disabilities. Service animals also perform a much wider variety of functions than ever before (e.g., alerting a person with epilepsy of imminent seizure onset, pulling a wheelchair, assisting persons with mobility impairments with balance). This wide variety of service animals can make it difficult for you to distinguish service animals from pets, especially when a customer does not appear to be disabled, or the animal has no obvious indicators that it is a service animal. Customers may claim that their animals are service animals at times to get around pet policies or from paying a fee for their pet. Clear guidelines are needed to assist airline personnel and people with disabilities in knowing what to expect and what to do when these assessments are made.

The purpose of this document is to aid you in understanding and applying the regulations and the provisions of Part 382 with respect to service animals in determining:

- If an animal is a service animal and its user a qualified individual with a disability.
- How to accommodate a qualified person with a disability with a service animal in the aircraft cabin.
- When a service animal legally can be refused carriage in the cabin.

Service Animal Definition

“Any guide dog, signal dog, or other animal individually trained to provide assistance to an individual with a disability. If the animal meets this definition, it is considered a service animal regardless of whether it has been licensed or certified by a state or local government.”

Terms used to describe service animals:

- Assistance Animal
- Hearing
- Seeing Eye Dog
- Signal
- Seizure Alert
- Psychiatric Service
- Emotional Support
- Comfort Animal

Note: Psychiatric, emotional, comfort animals, etc., require documentation in order to travel in the cabin as a service animal.

Service Animal Acceptance

There are four steps to follow in order to determine if a service animal as an accommodation for a disability can be accepted in the cabin of the aircraft.

1. *Look for physical indicators on the animal:*

- Harnesses
- Vests
- Capes
- Backpacks
- Tags

Example: A dog from the “Seeing Eye” will wear a marked harness.

2. *Obtain credible verbal assurances, ask the customer:*

“Is this your pet?”

- If the customer responds that the animal is a service animal and not a pet, but uncertainty remains about the animal, appropriate follow-up questions are:

“What tasks or functions does your animal perform for you?” or “What has it been trained to do for you?”

- You can not ask the customer what their disability is. You can only ask how the animal provides a function for the disability.

“Would you describe how the animal performs this task (or function) for you?”

- If the customer can provide a reasonable explanation of how the animal was trained or how it performs the function for which it is being used, this will be accepted as a “credible verbal assurance” and the animal will be accepted in the cabin of the aircraft as a service animal (examples: seeing eye dog, seizure alert dog, hearing dog, assistance monkey, etc.).

If a customer cannot provide “credible verbal assurance” or if the animal is for emotional support, documentation is required. Otherwise the animal will only be accepted for in-cabin travel in accordance with current pet policies.

Examples of animals for emotional support, such as panic attacks, social anxiety, etc. are:

- Rabbit
- Dog
- Cat
- Bird
- Monkey

Note: Any type of rodent, reptile, snake, spider, or ferret will not be accepted in the cabin of the aircraft for any reason as these animals present a “direct threat to the health and/or safety of others and/or the aircraft.”

3. *Ask for required documentation for emotional support animals:*

Animals used for emotional support (which need not have specific training for that function though behavioral training is necessary, i.e., being obedient in an airport/aircraft setting) will require current documentation (not more than one year old) on letterhead from a mental health professional stating that:

- The customer has a mental health-related disability; and
- The animal accompanying the customer is necessary to the customer's mental health or treatment, or to assist the customer (with his or her disability); and
- The individual providing the assessment of the customer is a licensed mental health professional and the customer is under his or her professional care.

Note: The purpose of this requirement is to prevent abuse by customers who do not have a medical need for an emotional support animal and to ensure customers who have a legitimate need for emotional support animals are permitted to travel with their service animals on the aircraft.

4. *Observe behavior of the animal:*

Service animals are trained to behave properly in public settings. For example, a properly trained guide dog will remain at its owner's feet. It does not run freely around an aircraft or an airport gate area, bark or growl repeatedly at other persons on the aircraft, bite or jump on people, or urinate or defecate in the cabin or gate area. An animal that engages in such disruptive behavior is an indication it has not been successfully trained to function as a service animal in public settings. Therefore, airlines are not required to treat it as a service animal, even if the animal performs an assistive function for a customer with a disability or is necessary for a customer's emotional well-being.

Note: Before non-acceptance of an animal for behavior problems, allow the customer to modify the animal's behavior (such as placing a muzzle on a barking dog).

Refusal of Transportation

Any animal which has been determined not to be a service animal can be accepted for travel following current pet policies. Any time an animal is refused or a service animal is carried in the cargo compartment a CRO Report must be filed. Contact your CRO on duty to send a report to Customer Care.

- If the animal (dog, cat, or bird) will fit in a carry-on kennel the animal may travel in the cabin as a pet. All in-cabin pet fees apply.
- If the animal does not meet the in-cabin pet policies the animal must be tendered through the Live Animal Desk. All health certificate documentation and fees will apply.
- A qualified service animal that does not fit i.e., very large dog, and the customer chooses not to purchase an additional seat will be accommodated in the cargo compartment free of any charges. Provide a kennel if needed. The service animal must be returned to the customer at the gate. Contact the downline station.
- No rodents, reptile, snakes, spiders, or ferrets will not be accepted in the cabin of the aircraft for any reason as these animals present a “direct threat to the health and/or safety of others and/or the aircraft. Contact the Live Animal Desk for assistance in shipping.
- If a service animal is unable to behave in the airport/aircraft environment the animal will not be accepted as a service animal. Animals that engage in disrupted behavior are demonstrating that they have not been successfully trained as a service animal and will be accepted following current pet policies. Contact the Live Animal Desk.
- Any animal accepted through the Live Animal Desk or accepted as an in-cabin pet will be charged any and all appropriate fees.

Check-In Procedures

After determining the animal will be accepted in cabin as a service animal:

- Check-in the customer.
- Offer the customer pre-boarding.
- All customers traveling with service animals must be introduced to the inflight crew. This is required since service animals are not required to be in a kennel, and to avoid any possible concerns by inflight in regards to what may appear to be a pet.
- Indicate on the Flight Attendant Final Report (IFR) which customer(s) are traveling with a service animal.

Service Animals to Hawaii

Animals traveling to Honolulu must meet rabies quarantine guidelines. An exemption for those animals that qualify as a service animal are in place, provided that the animal meets all the exemption guidelines. At this time ***Honolulu International Airport is the only port of entry*** for animals entering Hawaii including service animals. Any customers traveling to Maui must travel through Honolulu to have their animal cleared prior to travel into Maui.

Service animals (dogs only) that meet the following requirements may travel in the cabin as a service animal:

- “Guide dog” means any dog individually trained by a licensed guide dog trainer for guiding a blind person by means of a harness attached to the dog and a rigid handle grasped by the person.
- “Service dog” means any dog that is individually and professionally trained to:
 - Alert a person with impaired hearing to the presence of people or sounds, or
 - Assist a person with disabilities involving mobility by pulling a wheelchair, retrieving dropped items, or otherwise aiding the user in accomplishing a variety of tasks, or
 - Alert a person with a seizure disorder to the onset of a seizure or to alert another person or organization at a remote location to the seizure, or
 - Alert a person to an impending life-threatening medical crisis and assist in mitigating the consequences of such a crisis, and
 - Belongs to a citizen of the United States with a disability that substantially limits a major life activity. Citizens of other countries must contact the Live Animal Desk for specific requirements.

All service animals must meet the following guidelines in order to be exempted from the quarantine:

- The dog must have current rabies vaccination. (Documentation of the vaccination must include the product name, the lot or serial number, and the expiration date of the lot.)
- The dog must have a microchip implanted that can be read with an Avid scanner (Avid or Home Again chip).
- Prior to arrival the dog must have passed two OIE-FAVN tests with a level of 0.51.U. rabies antibody or greater. The time interval between the tests must have been at least 30 days.
- The dog must have a standard health certificate issued not more than 14 days prior to arrival in Hawaii.
- For a service dog, there must be a physician’s statement which certifies as to the disability, and that the service dog provides assistance having to do with that disability.
- The Animal Quarantine Branch must receive notification at least 24 hours in advance of arrival information and location where the dog will be staying. Information can be faxed to 808-483-7161 or telephoned to 808-837-8092.
- On arrival in Honolulu, the dog must be brought by the airline to the Airport Animal Quarantine Holding Facility for verification of compliance with the above requirements, the dog examined for external parasites, and a final OIE-FAVN sample taken.
- If all is in order, the dog will be released to the customer at the airport. This process takes approximately 20 minutes.

Note: Any animals arriving into Maui on our non-stop flight will be confiscated upon arrival. Honolulu is the only port of entry for any animals.

Miscellaneous

Service animal in training. We will accept service animals being trained to assist people with disabilities to travel in the cabin of the aircraft. The service animal must be traveling with his/her trainer and the trainer must provide a letter written on the training schools letterhead stating; the animal is in training to assist a person with a disability.

Service animal traveling with a non-disabled customer. Service animals will be accepted for travel following current pet policies.

Customers with disabilities traveling with more than one service animal. If the animals are of a size that they can be accommodated with the customer without interfering on another customer's space they may travel in the cabin with the customer. If the size of the animal cannot be accommodated in the cabin, the customer may purchase another seat (at the current fare level) to accommodate the additional service animal(s) or offer the customer the option of allowing animal to travel in the cargo compartment. In this case the animal will be accepted free of charge and returned to the customer at the aircraft door upon arrival. Provide a kennel if needed.

Service animals too large to be accommodated in the cabin. If the size of the animal cannot be accommodated in the cabin, the customer may purchase another seat (at the current fare level) to accommodate the additional service animal(s) or offer the customer the option of allowing the animal to travel in the cargo compartment. In this case the animal will be accepted free of charge and returned to the customer at the aircraft door upon arrival. Provide a kennel if needed.

Another customer adverse to sitting next to a service animal or indicates an allergy. Move the customer to another seat as far away as possible from the customer with the service animal.

Search and Rescue. - These are dogs used in disasters that have been trained to search for persons that are injured or deceased. We allow these dogs to travel free of charge and they may sit in the cabin with their handler on the way to a mission. On the return the dog is to be tendered through the Live Animal Desk. Charges will apply on the return flight.

Service Animal for Contraband. - These are dogs used by government agencies and private industry to detect drugs, explosives, weapons, etc. These animals are not allowed in the cabin as a service animal for an accommodation for a disability. These animals are to be tendered through the Live Animal Desk and the customer is to pay the appropriate fees for travel.

Animals into the UK. - The UK will now accept animals into the UK without quarantine provided that they meet rabies guidelines set by "Pet Travel Scheme". Customers traveling with service animals must also meet these guidelines. All animals including service animals must be tendered through the Live Animal Desk. Service animals will not be charged the Live Animal Fee. UK government handling fees may be required. If the customer insist on the animal traveling in the cabin with the customer, the service animal must be surrendered to the quarantine facility upon arrival. The "Pet Travel Scheme" does not allow for an animal to travel in the cabin at this time. The customer must make arrangements in advance through the Live Animal Desk.