

service, emotional support and therapy animals

DEFINITIONS



As a veterinarian, it is important to be aware that animals have roles beyond that of the beloved family pet. An increasing number of animals assist clients with physical or psychological disabilities or participate in animal assisted activities. A better understanding of these roles will allow you to best address the specific health concerns of these animals.

ASSISTANCE ANIMAL

As defined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (FHEO-2013-01)

An assistance animal is an animal that works, provides assistance, or performs tasks for the benefit of a person with a disability, or that provides emotional support that alleviates one or more identified effects of a person's disability.



SERVICE ANIMAL

As defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) 1990 (Section 35.136)

Any dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability. Other species of animals, whether wild or domestic, trained or untrained, are not service animals for the purposes of this definition. The work or tasks performed by a service animal must be directly related to the individual's disability. Examples of work or tasks include, but are not limited to, assisting individuals who are blind or have low vision with navigation and other tasks, alerting individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing to the presence of people or sounds, providing non-violent protection or rescue work, pulling a wheelchair, assisting an individual during a seizure, alerting individuals to the presence of allergens, retrieving items such as medicine or the telephone, providing physical support and assistance with balance and stability to individuals with mobility disabilities, and helping persons with psychiatric and neurological disabilities by preventing or interrupting impulsive or destructive behaviors. The crime deterrent effects of an animal's presence and the provision of emotional support, well-being, comfort, or companionship do not constitute work or tasks for the purposes of this definition.

Note: Miniature horses have been added as a specific provision to the ADA. The miniature horse must be housebroken, under the handler's control, can be accommodated for by the facility, and will not compromise safety regulations.

'As defined by the Air Carrier Access Act (ACAA) and CFR Part 382

A dog, regardless of breed or type, that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of a qualified person with a disability including physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or another mental

disability. Animal species other than dogs, emotional support animals, comfort animals, companion animals, and service animals in training are not considered service animals.

EMOTIONAL SUPPORT ANIMAL

As defined by the AVMA policy on Emotional Support Animals

Emotional support animals (ESA) provide therapeutic benefits that alleviate one or more identified symptoms or effects of an individual's disability, or emotional support to a disabled individual who has a disability-related need for such support. An emotional support animal may be a dog, a cat, or many other kinds of animal. ESAs do not qualify as service animals under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), but they may be permitted as reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities under the Fair Housing Act and/or Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

THERAPY ANIMAL

As defined by the AVMA policy on Animal-Assisted Interventions: Definitions

Therapy animals include various species of animals that participate in animal-assisted interventions such as animal assisted therapy, education and activities. The handler partners with a therapy animal, working as a team, to assist other people.



avma.org/AssistanceAnimals