



DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH County of Riverside

INFORMATIONAL BULLETIN NO. 103-14-DES

DISTRICT ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES DIVISION

SERVICE ANIMALS IN FOOD FACILITIES

What is a service animal?

- A service animal is not a pet. The Americans with Disabilities Act identifies a service animal as a dog that has been specially trained to perform one or more tasks to benefit an individual with a disability. Providing emotional support, comfort, or companionship does not constitute work or tasks under this definition.
- Under current federal regulations, species of animals other than dogs are not considered service animals. The service the animal provides must be directly related to the handler's disability.
- A service animal must be well controlled by means of a harness, leash, voice commands or signals.

How can you identify a service animal?

- When it is not obvious what service an animal provides, a food facility owner or representative of the food facility can ask if the animal is a service animal and what task the animal has been trained to perform.
- Businesses may not ask about a person's specific disability.
- Current regulations do not require that a service animal have supporting documentation or display identification as a service animal and the handler cannot be required to demonstrate any task that the animal is trained to perform.

Where is a service animal allowed?

- Businesses, nonprofit organizations, or any other agency that serves the public must allow service animals in all parts of the facility that the public is normally allowed.
- An exception must be made for areas where health hazards such as contamination of food or food contact surfaces may result. Service animals are not allowed on restaurant tables, chairs, benches, in shopping carts or in areas where food is prepared or stored.
- Service animals and their handlers may not be excluded from an area due to allergy concerns of other patrons; an attempt must be made to accommodate both parties.
- The disabled patron may not be isolated, treated less favorably, or asked to pay additional fees that other patrons without service animals are not required to pay.

When can an animal be excluded from a food facility?

- If the animal does not fall under the definition of a service animal, is out of control and cannot be brought under control by the handler, or is not house broken, the handler may be asked to remove the animal from the facility but the individual must be offered the opportunity to obtain goods and services from the facility.

What additional accommodations must be made by a food facility?

- Facilities must only make reasonable modifications to accommodate service animals. Businesses are not required to provide food or care for the animal.
- Handlers are responsible for any damage done by the animal.

*For More information please call the ADA at (800) 514-0301 or visit their website at http://www.ada.gov/service_animals_2010.htm

OFFICES IN: RIVERSIDE, BLYTHE, CORONA, HEMET, INDIO, MURRIETA AND PALM SPRINGS

For more information call (888) 722-4234

Department Web Site – www.rivcoeh.org