



Travelling with a Service Animal

People use many different animals as service animals but legislation regarding service animals may change as you travel to different places.

In Ontario, one of two conditions must apply for your animal to be considered a service animal:

- **the animal is easily identifiable as relating to your disability (for example, it is a guide dog or other animal wearing a vest or harness)**
- **you can provide documentation from a regulated health professional confirming the animal is required due to a disability**

In other provinces or countries, these conditions may vary. No matter where you are, recognized service animals are not pets. Additional fees or requirements that apply to pets do not apply to service animals.

What Steps Should You Take When Travelling with a Service Animal?

1. **Disclose in advance.** When making transportation accommodations, advise the customer service person that you are traveling with a service animal. This allows the carrier to arrange for additional space for the service animal, if required. The modes of transportation (air, rail, marine and automobile) have their own policies for carriage of service animals which can vary depending on whether they are federally or provincially regulated. For example, transportation that is Federally Regulated allows all types of service dogs, however, some Provincially Regulated services only allow dogs that are certified by ADI (Assistance Dogs International) as in British Columbia's BC Ferries or BC Transit. Specific modes of transportation may also have individual regulations. Taxi drivers in Ottawa, for example, who have a medical certificate respecting allergies to dogs, cats, etc., on file with their office, are not required to carry service animals. By advising in advance, a driver who is able to carry service animals can be given the assignment.
2. **When reserving accommodations, inform the reservation person that you travel with a service animal in order to avoid any confusion or delays upon arrival.** In Canada, all hotels, resorts, Provincial Parks and camp sites must abide by the Provincial Human Rights Legislation, while Bed and Breakfast locations can be Municipally Regulated but must abide by the Provincial Human Rights Legislation. Federal Parks are regulated under Federal Statutes and must abide by the Canadian Human Rights Act. When travelling outside of Canada, different hospitality accommodations can be regulated by various jurisdictions and regulations so it is advisable to research in advance the regulations regarding service animals for that specific accommodation and area.
3. **In Ontario, all service animals are now protected for access to restaurants and food outlets, (amendment to Ontario regulation 562 under the Health Protection and Promotion Act), in areas that are open to the public. In food preparation areas, where animals are excluded by law under the Health Protection and Promotion Act or Food Safety and Quality Act regulations, alternate meeting areas and/or alternate assistance must be given to that person with the disability so that goods, services,**



and facilities can be accessed. Outside of Ontario, service dog access is protected but not necessarily access for other service animals.

4. Tourist sites can be under either Federal or Provincial jurisdiction, thus having different regulations in regards to service animals. In Canada, Federally Regulated sites give guide and service dogs protected access while some Provincially Regulated sites allow access for all service animals. Tourist sites, such as zoos, make arrangements for the security of the service animal while the handler visits areas where service animals are not permitted.
5. In planning your travel, spend some time on the Internet and confirm that your service animal is covered under the Federal Statutes, Provincial/State Legislation and all applicable Regulations that apply.

What Can You Do If Your Service Animal is Being Denied Access to the Premises?

1. Remain calm. If you do have an issue or incident of denial of access, make sure you obtain and write down the name and position of the individual denying access, the location and the time. If the individual is not the supervisor, manager or owner, make sure you obtain their names and if possible, talk to the manager or owner before leaving the facility or public space.
2. Provide feedback. If there are witnesses close, inform them that you are attempting to protect your rights and ask for their name, telephone number and email address. If you have to file a complaint afterwards, you have a stronger case when you have witnesses as to what actually happened.
3. Be prepared when travelling. It is helpful to carry with you the following documents:
 - a. A letter from your medical professional stating that you are their patient, that you are a person with a disability and they certify that your animal is a service animal and part of your treatment program.
 - b. The annual Veterinarian's animal health certificate and Proof of Vaccinations, if it is available. If travelling internationally, the Veterinarian's International Health Certificate.
 - a. If you have one, your identification card from the trainer or training facility stating that you are the handler and the animal is a certified service animal.
 - b. Any other documents you have for your service animal, as you never know what you will need when you travel. (If you have a cell phone, simply take a picture of all current documents before you travel or put them in your passport holder.)
4. Be informed. When using local transportation services or taxis, check out the Municipal Bylaws and policies respecting transport of service animals and those for pets. (Although your service animal is not a pet, they will most often be viewed in that way.) It often helps if you are knowledgeable about taxi and municipal transportation service's policies.