

## ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Page 1 of 7

**Subject:** SERVICE ANIMALS

**Policy No.:** A434

Supersedes: August 19, 2021

Review Date: April 10, 2023

Origin Date: October 1, 2012

Revision Date: April 10, 2023

### **PURPOSE:**

To ensure equal access to the services, facilities, privileges, or accommodations provided by Rancho Los Amigos National Rehabilitation Center (RLANRC). This policy applies to employees, patients, companions, and visitors whose needs require the use of a service animal.

**NOTE:** Service animal needs related to employees are an ADA Title I related matter addressed through reasonable accommodations. Service animals for patients, companions and visitors are an ADA Title II related matter. The provisions related to service animals apply only to entities covered by the ADA. The Fair Housing Act covers service animal provisions for residential housing situations and the Air Carrier Access Act covers animal provisions for airline travel. The definition of a service animal under each of these laws differs from the definition under ADA.

### **POLICY:**

Service animals are allowed in RLANRC provided that safety precautions are observed for avoiding transmission of diseases from animals to humans and avoiding injury to humans.

The owners of the animals entering the facility are not required to show proof of “disability support certification.”

### **DEFINITION:**

“Service animals” (as distinguished from Therapy Animals, which are not covered by this policy), are defined as dogs that are individually trained to do work or perform tasks for persons with a disability, including physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability. Examples of work or tasks include guiding people who are blind (“guide dogs”); alerting people who are deaf (“signal dogs”); pulling wheelchair or retrieving items for a person with mobility impairments; alerting and protecting a person who is having a seizure; reminding a person with mental illness to take prescribed medications; calming a person with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) during an anxiety attack; or performing other duties.

Service animals are working animals and not pets. The work or task an animal (dog) has been trained to provide, must be directly related to the person’s disability. The crime deterrent effects of an animal’s presence and the provisions of emotional support, well-being, comfort, or companionship do not qualify as service animals under ADA and therefore are not permitted on hospital grounds.

The use of miniature horses under specific conditions can be accommodated, if the miniature horses have been individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities. (Miniature horses generally range in height from 24 inches to 34 inches measured to the shoulders and generally weigh between 70 and 100 pounds.) The assessment factors in determining whether miniature horses can be accommodated in the facility are:

- (1) whether the miniature horse is housebroken;

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**Subject:** SERVICE ANIMALS**Policy No.:** A434

- (2) whether the miniature horse is under the owner's control;
- (3) whether the facility can accommodate the miniature horse's type, size, and weight; and
- (4) whether the miniature horse's presence will not compromise legitimate safety requirements necessary for safe operation of the facility.

**RESPONSIBILITY:****A. Service animal handler**

1. Controls the animal and provides the animal with water, food, and other necessary care or to make such arrangements through family members, friends or accompanying person.
2. Cleans up promptly after the service animal or have family members, friends or accompanying persons do so.
3. If the service animal becomes out of control and the handler has not brought the animal under control within a reasonable amount of time, the handler must immediately remove the animal from RLANRC or have family members, friends or accompanying persons do so.

**B. Healthcare Provider/Staff**


If a staff member is not certain that an animal is a service animal, he or she may ask the service animal handler/s two questions:

- (1) is the animal required because of a disability, and
- (2) what work or task has the animal been trained to perform.

Staff cannot ask about the person's disability, require medical documentation, require a special identification card or training documentation for the animal, or ask that the animal demonstrate its ability to perform the work or task.

**PROCEDURE:**

RLANRC has the following guidelines/procedures to assist all workforce members when addressing an individual with a service animal:

- Service animal handlers must be vetted through hospital security staff prior to entering patient care areas.
  - Upon approval, security staff will issue a visitor's pass with an image of a blue paw print and date.
  - The recipient of the pass must visibly wear the pass to signify successful clearance.
  - Any staff who observes animal handlers within the facility without a blue paw print sticker must direct the person to security for clearance.
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**DATE** \_\_\_\_\_
- The supervisors of both outpatient and inpatient area are responsible for coordinating arrangements with their team for accommodating the service animal. (e.g. Handlers responsibility for the care of the animal, communication with the team, establishing guidelines)
  - The care or supervision of a service animal is the responsibility of the owner/handler, not the facility or its staff.
  - Infection control is available as a consultant for the service animal visitation.

**Subject:** SERVICE ANIMALS**Policy No.:** A434

- Service animals are required to be leashed or harnessed except when performing work or tasks where such tethering would interfere with the dog's ability to perform. The leash should always be attached to the dog to provide for immediate access and control positions when warranted.
- Allergies and fear of dogs are not valid reasons for denying access or refusing service to people using service animals.
- If possible, the person with service dog will be placed in single room. If not feasible, the roommate should be a person who does not have any opposition to have the dog in the room. Both persons should be accommodated according to their reasonable requests.
- A service animal accompanying an individual with a disability is allowed in the facility where the public is normally allowed to go. For example, in the hospital it would be inappropriate to exclude a service animal from areas such as patient rooms, clinics, cafeterias, or examination rooms. However, it may be appropriate to exclude a service animal from operating rooms where the animal's presence may compromise a sterile environment.
- Showing that health and safety will be jeopardized if an animal is present could serve as a basis for excluding a service animal. Safety risks must be based on actual risks
- Decision to have the service animal stay overnight in the inpatient area should be discussed and communicated to the interdisciplinary team.
- Decisions regarding the exclusion of service animals from the facility based on a determination that the animal is a direct threat to person's health and safety or based on legitimate reasons under the ADA. It should be made only after consultation with physicians, nurses or other licensed health care providers who are qualified to assess the health risks posed by animals and should be decided on a case-by-case basis.
- The reasons for any decision to exclude a service animal will be explained to the service animal's owner and recorded either in the patient's chart or as a separate document.
- When there is a legitimate reason to ask that a service animal be removed, staff must offer the person with the disability the opportunity to obtain services without the animal's presence.
- The service animal and healthcare situation should be evaluated, on a case-by-case basis, to determine whether reasonable modifications in policies and procedures will mitigate the safety risk.
- Petting and playing with the service animals by staff, patients, or visitors is prohibited.
- Staff are not required to provide care or food for a service animal.
- The service animal should eliminate outside the building.
- Behavior management of the service animal and any clean up that may be necessary remains the obligation of the owner/handler, not the healthcare staff.
  - Animal elimination accidents (urine, feces, and vomit) must be removed and the area cleaned using gloves and facility approved disinfectant. This is the responsibility of the handler.
  - If the owner/handler is physically unable to clean-up animal elimination accidents (urine, feces, and vomit), and family members, friends or accompanying persons cannot do so, staff must immediately notify Environmental Services.

**Subject:** SERVICE ANIMALS**Policy No.:** A434

- Hand hygiene should be performed after any contact with the animal, its equipment, or other items with which it has been in contact.
- Patients may be separated from their service animal for short periods of time, if it is necessary to provide a service such as Aquatic Therapy, Audiology testing, or other procedures where there is limited space. The separation should not be any longer than it takes to provide the service.
- The service animal should be restricted in the following circumstances:
  - The patient is in contact, droplet, or airborne precautions
  - The patient is in an Intensive Care Unit, Operating Room, a monitored bed, or area containing equipment critical for life support.
  - The patient's roommate has an allergy to the service animal or a severe phobia (in this situation, both patients must be accommodated).
- If a service animal has an active infection or epidemiologically linked to an infection or outbreak, the animal should be removed from the facility until examined and cleared by a veterinarian.

### **Reporting an Animal Bite**

All animal bites to people are legally reportable in Los Angeles County except for rodent and rabbit bites. All people with knowledge from the bite must report the incident. Locally most reports come from animal control agencies, physicians, and veterinarians, but anyone may report a bite. In the event of an animal bite to an employee, Employee Health Services and the employee's immediate supervisor should be notified immediately.

An event report should be documented through UHC Safety Intelligence. When documenting incident, staff should get basic information about the animal's owner and the animal if able so that a thorough investigation can be implemented. In addition, an animal bite reporting form for medical organizations should be completed and sent by the manager/supervisor of the employee who has reported the incident to the Veterinary Public Health-Animal Bite Reporting Form (See Attachment A) and the online link below:

<https://admin.publichealth.lacounty.gov/phcommon/public/bite/biteaddform.cfm?ou=ph&unit=vet&prog=dcp>

One of the most effective procedures to decrease the chance for infection is to wash the wound thoroughly with soap and water. The person who was bitten should see their doctor for medical attention immediately.

### **REFERENCES:**

Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology, Inc., 3'd Edition (APIC 2009), Animals Visiting Health Care Facilities.

Americans with Disabilities Act Title III, Technical Assistance Manual (Section 4.23000)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2003) Guidelines for Environmental Infection Control Practices Advisory Committee (HICPAC).

Department of Justice's Regulation, Americans with Disabilities Act, Title II, Regulation 28, CFR Part 35, Subpart B, Section 35.136, Part 36, Subpart A, Section 36.104, and Subpart B, Section 36.301, (2010).

Mayhall, Glen (2004) Hospital Epidemiology and Infection Control, 3'd edition.

**Subject:** SERVICE ANIMALS

**Policy No.:** A434

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Department of Justice 28 CFR Part 36 [CRT Docket No. 106; AG Order No. 3181-2010] RIN 1190-AA44

Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disability by Public Accommodations and in Commercial Facilities; Changes to ADA affecting Service Animals, Effective March 15, 2011, [http://www.ada.gov/service\\_animals\\_2010.htm](http://www.ada.gov/service_animals_2010.htm)

U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, ADA Requirements: Disability Rights Section (2010)

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Attachment A: Animal Bite Reporting Form

Attachment B: Frequently Asked Questions



# VETERINARY PUBLIC HEALTH PROGRAM

## Animal Bite Reporting Form

### Medical Facilities



**Instructions:** Use this form to report animal bites to the Veterinary Public Health Program at the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health. For more information about rabies in Los Angeles County, visit our website: <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/vet/>.

Date form completed: \_\_\_\_\_ Please submit completed form to [vet@ph.lacounty.gov](mailto:vet@ph.lacounty.gov) OR fax to (213) 481-2375.

1. REPORT INFORMATION			
Report date:	Reporter name (victim, owner, etc.):	Reporter phone #:	Reporter email:
2. FACILITY TAKING REPORT			
Facility submitting report:	Submitter's name:		Facility phone #:
3. PERSON BITTEN			
Bite victim first name:	Bite victim last name:	Date of birth:	
Street address (building #, street name, apt/unit#):		City:	State: Zip code:
Bite victim phone #:	Bite victim email address:		
4. DESCRIPTION OF INCIDENT			
Date bitten:	Time bitten (AM/PM):	Country where incident occurred (if not US):	
Street address where incident occurred:		City:	State: Zip code:
How bite occurred (explain):			
5. HUMAN INJURY INFORMATION			
Location of bite(s) (e.g. face, leg, hand, torso):	Side of body affected:	<input type="checkbox"/> L <input type="checkbox"/> R <input type="checkbox"/> Both <input type="checkbox"/> Unk	Date treated:
Type of treatment: <input type="checkbox"/> Antibiotics <input type="checkbox"/> Wound care <input type="checkbox"/> Tetanus vaccine <input type="checkbox"/> Pain management <input type="checkbox"/> Sutures <input type="checkbox"/> Surgery <input type="checkbox"/> Rabies PEP <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____			
Treating facility/provider name:	Provider phone number:	Hospitalized: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Hospital name:
6. ANIMAL OWNER			
Animal owner first name:	Animal owner last name:		
Street address (building #, street name, apt/unit#):		City:	State: Zip code:
Animal owner phone #:	Animal owner email address:		
7. BITING ANIMAL INFORMATION			
Biting animal species: <input type="checkbox"/> Dog <input type="checkbox"/> Cat <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	Breed:	Age:	Animal sex: <input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> F <input type="checkbox"/> Unk
Animal name:	Animal color:	Animal vaccinated for rabies? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unk	Date last vaccinated for rabies:
8. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION/COMMENTS:			
<i>Victim should contact their local animal control if the dog involved has bitten multiple times or if the animal is a stray. Call 211 to find your local animal control agency.</i>			

### 1. What is a service animal?

Under the ADA, a service animal is defined as any breed of dog that has been individually trained to do work or perform tasks for an individual with a disability. The task(s) performed by the dog must be directly related to the person's disability.

**Staff may ask the handler two questions:** Is the animal required because of disability? What work or task is the animal trained to perform?

**Staff may not ask about the person's disability or require documentation or proof** that the animal has been certified, trained, or licensed as a service animal, as a condition for entry.

### 2. What does "do work or perform tasks" mean?

The dog must be trained to take a specific action when needed to assist the person with a disability. For example, a person with mobility impairments may have a dog pull a wheelchair, retrieve fallen items or push ADA door push plates and elevator buttons to open doors, or a person with diabetes may have a dog that is trained to alert him when his blood sugar reaches high or low levels. A person with depression may have a dog that is trained to remind her to take her medication. Also, a person who has epilepsy may have a dog that is trained to detect the onset of a seizure and then help the person remain safe during the seizure.

If the dog has been trained to sense that an anxiety attack is about to happen and take a specific action to help avoid the attack or lessen its impact, that would qualify as a service animal. However, if the dog's mere presence provides comfort and emotional support, that would not be considered a service animal under the ADA.

### 3. Are emotional support, therapy, comfort, or companion animals considered service animals?

No. These terms are used to describe animals that provide comfort just by being with a person. Because they have not been trained to perform a specific job or task, they do not qualify as service animals under the ADA.

### 4. When can service animals be excluded?

Service animals may be excluded from entry or be asked to leave the facility for any of the following:

- Disruption or alteration in the nature of services, programs, or activities provided to public.  
For example, the dog may not be accommodated in the operating room or ICU.
- Animal is out of control and handler does not take effective action.  
For example, the dog barks loudly and repeatedly and handler is not able to control the dog by voice, signal, or other effective means of handling the dog.
- Safety or infection control concerns:  
For example, the dog is aggressive or attempting to bite without provocation or the animal is not house broken, the handler is not able to clean after the dog, or the dog is not leashed unless it interferes with the service animal's work or the person's disability prevents use of device.

### 5. Who informs the handler that the service animal may not be allowed entry or must leave the facility?

Any staff who determines the animal met the exclusion criteria must inform the handler. As needed, the staff may request assistance from immediate supervisor and chain of command for determination if the animal meets the criteria for exclusion and for informing the handler.

Infection control, hospital administration, and campus Sheriff may be contacted for further assistance.