Series 3000: Operations, Finance, and Property

3100 General Operations

3108 Service Animals

The District will permit a person with a disability to be accompanied by a service animal in all areas of the District's facilities where members of the public, invitees, or participants in District services, programs, or activities are permitted.

A. Definitions

1. A "service animal" means any dog that is individually trained to perform tasks for the benefit of a person with a disability. A dog whose sole purpose is to deter crime or whose mere presence is to provide emotional support or comfort to the person with a disability is not a service animal.

   Except as provided by law, other animals are not service animals for purposes of this definition. Under certain circumstances, the District will permit a person with a disability to be accompanied by a miniature horse in District facilities if the horse has been individually trained to perform tasks for the benefit of the person with a disability.

   The work or tasks performed by a service animal must be directly related to the person's disability. The service animal must be trained to take a specific action when needed to assist the person with a disability. Examples of work or tasks include, but are not limited to:

   - assisting blind or low vision persons with navigation and other tasks;
   - alerting deaf or hard of hearing persons to the presence of people or sounds;
   - providing non-violent protection or rescue work;
   - pulling a wheelchair;
   - assisting a person during a seizure;
   - alerting persons to the presence of allergens, the onset of a seizure, or high/low blood sugar levels;
   - retrieving items such as medicine or a telephone;
   - providing physical support and assistance with balance and stability to persons with mobility disabilities; and
   - helping persons with psychiatric and neurological disabilities by preventing or interrupting impulsive or destructive behaviors.

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2. A “service animal in training” means an animal accompanied by an animal raiser or trainer with the intent that animal is being raised, socialized, and trained to become a service animal.

3. An "animal raiser or trainer" means an individual who raises and socializes a service animal in training with the intent that the animal will become a service animal.

B. Admission of Service Animals

A student or employee with a disability who desires to be accompanied by a service animal at school is encouraged, but is not required, to notify the District in writing at least 10 school days or as soon as is practicable before bringing the service animal to school. The District may provide a form for this purpose.

If a student or employee desires to be accompanied by a service animal during school or work and the student or employee will not be the animal’s handler, the handler must undergo a criminal history check and any other background check required for employees and volunteers by state law or Policy before being allowed to regularly access District facilities as the handler. The District will permit the person with a disability to be accompanied by a service animal in District facilities without that handler.

C. Inquiries

District officials may ask the person with a disability or the service animal’s owner or handler the following questions to the extent the answers to the questions are not readily apparent:

- Is the service animal required because of a disability?
- What type of work or task has the service animal been trained to perform?

District personnel will not inquire about the nature or extent of the person’s disability. District personnel also may not require documentation that the service animal is certified, trained, or licensed as a service animal, nor may District personnel require the service animal to demonstrate its task or work.

If a local ordinance or the public health department requires that dogs be vaccinated, registered, or licensed with the county or other authority, the District may require proof that a service animal meets those requirements.

D. Charges, Fees, and Liability

The District may not ask or require a person with a disability to pay the District to be accompanied by a service animal on District property. The District may charge the service animal’s owner for damages to District property caused by the service animal to the extent it charges other persons for damages caused to District property.

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The owner of the service animal is solely responsible and liable for any damage to District property or injury to persons caused by the animal.

E. Care and Supervision of Service Animal

The person with a disability or the service animal's handler is responsible for the care and supervision of the service animal at school, including, toileting, feeding, grooming, veterinary care, and exercising. The District is not responsible for supervising or otherwise caring for a service animal unless required by law.

F. Control of Service Animal

A service animal must be under its handler's control at all times. A service animal must be on a harness, leash, backpack, or other tether unless the person's disability prevents the use of the device or the device interferes with the service animal's safe and effective performance of work or tasks. In this case, the person with a disability or the handler must use voice, signal, or other effective means to maintain control of the service animal.

G. Exclusion of Service Animal

The District may exclude a service animal from District property or functions if:

- the animal is out of control and the handler does not take effective action to control it;
- the animal is not housebroken;
- the animal poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others; or
- the animal's presence fundamentally alters the nature of the District's programs, services, or activities.

If District officials determine that the service animal should be excluded from District facilities for one of the above reasons, the person with a disability (or the Parent of a student with a disability) will be notified of the determination, asked to remove the service animal immediately, and given an opportunity to respond to the District's concerns. If a District official determines to exclude a service animal, he or she shall notify the owner in writing and provide a copy of the District's Section 504/ADA grievance procedures. The person with a disability shall be given the opportunity to participate in the District service, program, or activity without the service animal.

H. Allergies

Allergies to pet dander and the fear of dogs are not valid reasons to exclude a service animal from District facilities. A person who has a concern about a service animal's presence in District facilities should contact the building administrator or the District's Section 504/ADA Coordinator.

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I. Denial of Access and Grievance

If a District official denies a request for access of a service animal, the person with a disability or his/her Parent may file a written grievance with the District's Section 504/ADA Coordinator.

Nothing in this Policy diminishes any right a person with a disability may have to be accompanied by a service animal or other assistance animal in District facilities or at District events under other federal or state laws.

J. Service Animals in Training

The District will permit service animals in-training in all areas of the District's facilities where members of the public, invitees, or participants in District services, programs, or activities are permitted, if the service animal in training is accompanied by an animal raiser or trainer for the purpose of training or socializing the animal.

The service animal in training must be under the control of the raiser or trainer and have a harness, leash, or other tether. If the use of these items interferes with the service animal in training's safe and effective performance of work, tasks, training, or socialization, the service animal in training must be otherwise under the control of the animal raiser or trainer.

Allergies to pet dander or fear of the animal are not valid reasons to exclude service animal in training from the District's facilities.

The animal raiser or trainer is responsible for the care and supervision of the service animal in training at school, including, toileting, feeding, grooming, veterinary care, and exercising. The District is not responsible for supervising or otherwise caring for a service animal in training unless required by law.

The District may exclude a service animal in training from District property or functions only if:

- the animal is out of control and the animal raiser or trainer does not take effective action to control it;
- the animal is not housebroken;
- the animal poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others; or
- the animal's presence fundamentally alters the nature of the District's programs, services, or activities.

If District officials determine that the service animal in training should be excluded from District facilities, the animal raiser or trainer will be notified of the determination, asked to remove the service animal in training immediately, and given an opportunity to participate in the District service, program, or activity without the service animal in training.

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The District may not ask or require an animal raiser or trainer to pay the District to be accompanied by a service animal in training on District property. The District may charge the animal raiser or trainer for damages to District property caused by the service animal in training to the extent it charges other persons for damages caused to District property.

The animal raiser or trainer is solely responsible and liable for any damage to District property or injury to persons caused by the animal.

K. Non-Service Animals

Animals on District property that are not service animals as defined by the ADA, such as pets or emotional support animals, are not covered by this Policy. See Policy 3109.

Legal authority: 28 CFR 35.136; MCL 287.291

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