

H. Service Animal in Laboratories

The Americans With Disabilities Act (“ADA”) defines service animals as dogs trained to do work or perform tasks for a person with a disability. In addition to dogs, revised ADA regulations have a separate provision about miniature horses that have been individually trained to do work or perform tasks for individuals with disabilities. Service animals may accompany people with disabilities in areas where members of the public are allowed. Dogs and other animals whose sole function is to provide comfort or emotional support do not qualify as service animals.

Requirements for Service Animals in Laboratories:

- Service animals must be harnessed, leashed, or tethered unless to do so interferes with the service animal’s work or task it performs for the person with the disability or the individual’s disability prevents using these devices.
- A person with a disability cannot be asked to remove his/her service animal unless:
 - 1) the dog or miniature horse is out of control and the handler does not take effective action to control it
 - 2) the dog or miniature horse is not housebroken

Additional Requirements for Miniature Horses:

- Generally, between 24-34 inches high and weight between 70-100 pounds
- Is housebroken
- Is under the owner’s control
- Can facility accommodate its type, size and weight
- Its presence will not compromise legitimate safety requirements necessary for safe operation of the facility

Inquiries Allowed:

When it is not obvious what service an animal provides, only limited inquiries are allowed. UNC faculty and staff may ask two questions:

- 1) Is the service animal required because of a disability?
- 2) What work or task is the service animal trained to perform?

Restrictions

There are certain situations or environments that may be considered unsafe for service animals where there may be risks to the safety of the animal, the handler or others. These risks include potential hazards due to chemicals used and/or the layout of the space that may have both safe and potentially hazardous areas for service animals. Appropriate protective clothing and/or equipment for the service animal may need to be provided to mitigate the risk. Discussions about these issues will inform a decision on restrictions, if any, that should be implemented about the service animal’s presence in the laboratory. The Disability Support Services (DSS) and Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) Departments will work together to decide what restrictions, if any, are implemented.

Review Process

If an individual requires a service animal in a restricted area, DSS and EHS will gather information to determine the best way to safely facilitate the presence of the service animal including:

- The work or task the service animal provides;
- The person's need for the animal's services during the work period and whether there are acceptable alternative ways of providing those services;
- The physical layout of the laboratory to identify safe and potentially hazardous areas for the animal;
- Potential hazards due to substances used and operation conducted in the laboratory;
- Emergency procedures for both the animal and the handler;
- Appropriate protective clothing and/or equipment for the service animal;
- The way the service animal alerts the handler to warn or protect them; and
- Steps to minimize or prevent negative impact to others in the laboratory

Service Animal Personal Protective Equipment

Service animals entering laboratories must be protected from exposure to hazards such as chemicals, sharp objects or other environmental hazards. Some examples of personal protective equipment are:

- Dog Goggles (protective eyewear)
- Booties (protective footwear)
- Vests
- Plastic-backed absorbent paper for the animal to lie on (protect animal from whatever might be on the floor)



NOTE: Animal beds or fabric pads are not allowed for use in a laboratory.