

SERVICE ANIMALS AND FOOD FACILITIES FAQs

What is a service animal?

A service animal is a dog trained to perform a specific task for someone with a disability.

What type of animals are NOT considered service animals?

- Any species of animal other than dog, whether wild or domestic, whether trained or untrained.
- Dogs that are NOT trained to perform tasks for the benefit of individuals with a disability. This also includes dogs used for:
 - Crime deterrent effects
 - Emotional support
 - Well-being
 - Comfort, or companionship.

Where in a food facility are service animals allowed to stay?

Service animals are allowed to stay with their owners in dining and restroom areas. Service animals are NOT allowed in areas where food is being prepared, unless the food is located in a:

- Self service line, or
- Communal food preparation area such as a shelter or dormitory.

Do service animals need special certification or identification?

Service animals are NOT required to have special certification or wear special identification like tags, collars, leashes, harnesses, or vests.

Can I exclude a service animal from a food facility if I have allergies, fear of animals, or a policy against pets?

Allergies, fear of animals, and “no-pets” policies are not a valid reason for excluding service animals from a food facility.

Can I charge customers additional fees for accommodating a service animal?

No, a customer cannot be charged more money because they have a service animal.

What questions can I ask to determine if a pet is a service animal?

Two questions can be asked:

- Is your dog a service animal?
- What task has your dog been trained to perform?



For more information, call Environmental Health Services at (800) 442-2283

You can read the entire California Retail Food Code for Service Animals at wp.sbcounty.gov/dph/programs/ehs/food-facilities, sections 113903 and 114259.5