

USA Service Dogs Airline Information Sheet

Updated May 16, 2025

We have compiled the latest information for you as it relates to service dogs and emotional support animals on aircraft in the United States.

Please note that as of January 2021, the U.S. Department of Transportation has ruled that airlines may deny emotional support animals even with an accompanying ESA letter, but your specific airline may still make exceptions for emotional support animals. Please check with your airline prior to your flight as policies are rapidly changing.

The Department of Transportation has also released these two forms, which are the only two forms airlines may require in order to bring your service dog with you on board an aircraft.

The forms may be accessed below and you can conveniently fill them out online, then print them before leaving for the airport.

U.S. Department of Transportation Service Animal Air Transportation Form

https://www.transportation.gov/individuals/aviation-consumer-protection/service-animals/Air_Transportation_Form

U.S. Department of Transportation Service Animal Relief Attestation Form

https://www.transportation.gov/individuals/aviation-consumer-protection/service-animals/Relief_Form

When bringing your service dog or emotional support animal with you on board, please remember the following:

- Your service animal must be permitted to accompany you in the space under the seat in front of you. Small animals may be permitted to sit on your lap if it can be done safely
- Your service animal cannot block a space that must remain unobstructed for safety reasons such as an emergency exit.

- Airlines are not required to upgrade your class of service to accommodate your service animal.
- Airlines cannot refuse to allow your service animal onboard because it makes other passengers or flight crew uncomfortable
- An airplane flight can be a stressful experience even for a well-trained service dog, but your service dog must still behave properly. An animal that engages in disruptive behavior (barking, snarling, running haphazardly, and/or jumping onto other passengers without being provoked) will not be accepted as a service animal.
- For better or for worse, flights are shared experiences. Please respect other passengers who may have severe pet allergies by agreeing to be moved to another part of the cabin if such a move does not create an additional burden for you.
- Most large airports have special pet relief areas. Please ask airport staff for the location of the nearest pet relief area before boarding your flight so that your service animal is as comfortable as possible during the flight.

We hope your flight with your service animal is as smooth as possible! By reading this document in its entirety, you are well prepared with all the information you need, so hopefully there are no surprises when you get to the airport. If you have additional questions for us, feel free to contact us at 888-656-DOGS or at orders@usaservicedogs.org.

FEDERAL GUIDELINES REGARDING SERVICE DOGS AND AIRLINES

To whom it may concern:

I seek to bring my service dog with me in the cabin of the aircraft. I am attaching the relevant federal guidelines regarding the transport of service dogs which you may read if you are not familiar with the current law. This information is also publicly available directly from the Department of Transportation website at the following address:

<https://www.transportation.gov/individuals/aviation-consumer-protection/service-animals>

As a convenience to you, I will highlight some of the relevant information contained in the aforementioned document (quoted directly):

Under the Air Carrier Access Act (ACAA) a service animal means a dog, regardless of breed or type, that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of a qualified individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability.

Which service animal species are airlines required to recognize and transport?

- Airlines are required to recognize dogs as service animals and accept them for transport on flights to, within and from the United States. Airlines, though not required, are free to transport other species for passengers if they choose to do so

How do airlines determine whether an animal is a service animal?

- Airlines can determine whether an animal is a service animal or pet by:
 - Asking an individual with a disability if the animal is required to accompany the passenger because of a disability and what work or task the animal has been trained to perform;
 - Looking for physical indicators such as the presence of a harness or vests;
 - Looking to see if the animal is harnessed, leashed, or otherwise tethered; and
 - Observing the behavior of the animal.

What kind of documentation can be required of persons traveling with service animals?

- Airlines may require:
 - A U.S. DOT form attesting to the animal's health, behavior, and training; and
 - A U.S. DOT form attesting that the animal can either not relieve itself or can relieve itself in a sanitary manner, if the animal will be on a flight that is 8 or more hours.