

LEAD WITH THE LEASH

If you use the harness instead of the leash, you will likely undo costly specialized training resulting in the animal no longer being able to help its handler.

If the handler asks you for assistance in getting the dog to and from the ambulance, hold on to its leash and walk behind the stretcher.

LAST IN, FIRST OUT

Load and unload service animals via the side door. Avoid open diamond plate gratings as they may injure the dog's paws. If you need to lift the dog, put one arm behind the back legs, the other in front of the chest and gently lift. It is recommended that you load the dog last and unload it first, as this minimizes risk of injuring animal and gives you needed space for maneuvering equipment.

VETERINARY CARE

If veterinary care is necessary, a responsible official, or someone given permission by the handler, should transport the service animal to a veterinarian of the handler's choice or one with whom you have made advanced arrangements with for emergency care of service dogs.



A very special bond develops (Lucas and Juno)

SERVICE ANIMAL POLICY

Adopting a service animal policy helps your company/city comply with applicable laws and outlines what to do when responding to an incident involving a service animal team.

You may want to include the following:

- Definition of service animal*
- Information about applicable laws and how to comply with them*
- What to do if handler is not in a condition to control the animal*
- Proper movement and transport of service animal*
- Veterinary facilities with whom you have established agreements for providing emergent care/boarding for service animal.*

For more information:

http://www.ada.gov/service_animals_2010.htm



Peek was the 1999 National Service Dog of the year

WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU ENCOUNTER A SERVICE DOG TEAM



Jeremy and his service dog Lars

People with disabilities constitute a large and rapidly growing segment of our population. Many depend on service dogs to mitigate the effects of their disabilities. The information that follows is intended to help emergency responders provide quality care to service animal teams while complying with a federal law, known as the Americans with Disabilities Act.

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WHAT ARE SERVICE ANIMALS?

They are critical tools for their handlers and they can help you too. The Americans with Disabilities Act, (ADA) defines service animals as dogs that have been specially trained to help people with disabilities and do tasks that they would otherwise not be able to do for themselves. Examples of such work or tasks include: guiding people who are blind, alerting people who are deaf to sounds (such as a smoke detector, doorbell or person calling their name), pulling a wheelchair, retrieving dropped objects, balance assistance or bracing, alerting a person about to have a seizure and/or helping them during/after a seizure, reminding a person (such as those with mental illness) to take prescribed medications, and calming a person with anxiety attacks, such as those with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

Handlers depend on service animals in much the same way you rely on your partner.

WORRIED ABOUT GETTING BITTEN?

Relax. Protection is not part of a service dog's responsibility. Its job is to help the handler. Dogs that are used for service work are selected for their stable temperament.

SERVICE ANIMAL OR FAMILY PET?

Service dogs come in all breeds and sizes. Sometimes they may be wearing a harness or vest identifying them as such.

But this attire or any other form of identification is not required.

To find out if it really is a service animal, the law permits you to ask these two questions only.

1. Do you need the animal because of a disability?
2. What tasks related to your disability has the animal been trained to do?

WHERE HANDLERS GO, THEIR SERVICE ANIMALS GO

By Federal law, these animals are permitted wherever the public is allowed.

This includes your ambulance

It may not be possible to keep the team together if the handlers' medical condition warrants transport by air or prevents the handler from controlling the animal. A responsible official such as a police officer or supervisor, or someone given permission by the handler, should transport the animal and reunite the team as quickly as possible.



Thanks to Federal law, service dogs go everywhere with their handler- to restaurants, stores and doctor's appointments, in airplanes, buses and trains, even on cruise ships!

CHAIN OF COMMAND

Handlers are in charge of their service animals in much the same way your superior officer is in charge of you.

Get handlers permission before touching, feeding, or talking to their service animals. If needed, explain to handlers where their dog would best be positioned and let them move it out of your way.

MINIMIZE STRESS WHILE MAXIMIZING SAFETY

--If handlers are alone at home and the dog is loose, ask if they have a leash you can get for them.

--Move slowly, but normally - rushing at the handler may alarm the dog.

--Avoid making direct eye contact with the dog and, if possible, simply ignore it.

--Minimize the number of people that enter the home or surround the handler.

--Keep your tone of voice calm and volume normal.

--Do not grab or reach quickly for the dog, its leash or its harness, especially if the dog is near its handler.

--If transport is necessary, offer to get food and any other supplies the dog may need.

--Accommodate the dog as you would a child alone with the patient. Take the dog with you and if the handler is unable to care for the dog at the hospital, attempt to notify a caretaker known to the handler for the dog, if possible.