A business owner may not ask the person to disclose their disability, but they may ask if the animal is required because of a disability and what task the animal has been trained to perform. Violation of Florida law Chapter 413.08 could result in a misdemeanor of the second degree.

Am I responsible for the service animal while the person with the disability is in my business?

No. The care and supervision of the animal is solely the responsibility of the owner of the animal. The business is not required to provide care, food or a special location for the service animal.

What if a service animal growls or is disruptive to other people, or is otherwise out of control?

You may exclude any animal, including a service animal, from your facility when that animal’s behavior poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others. Although you may exclude a service animal that is out of control, you should give the individual with a disability who uses the service animal the option of continuing to enjoy the goods and services on the premises.

For additional information concerning the Americans with Disabilities Act or other disability rights laws, call the Hillsborough County ADA Liaison 813-276-2742 or log on to www.hillsboroughcounty.org/liaisons/ada

To file a disability related discrimination complaint contact:

Department of Justice
Civil Rights Division: 1-800-514-0301
The Florida Attorney Generals’ Office
Civil Rights Division: 954-712-4600

Hillsborough County
Equal Opportunity Administrator’s Office
813-272-6554
City of Tampa
Department of Community Affairs
813-274-5835
What is a Service Animal?
Effective March 15, 2011, “Service Animal” means:

- Any dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual or other mental disability.
- Other species of animals, whether wild or domestic, trained or untrained, are not service animals for the purposes of this definition.
- The work or tasks performed by a service animal must be directly related to the handler’s disability.
- The crime deterrent effects of an animal’s presence and the provision of emotional support, well-being, comfort or companionship do not constitute work or tasks for the purposes of this definition.

What about a miniature horse as a service animal?

- The use of trained miniature horses as alternatives to dogs, subject to certain limitations is permitted.
- The miniature horse must be individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of the individual with a disability.
- The miniature horse must be housebroken.
- The handler must have sufficient control of the animal.
- Consideration should be given to the type, size and weight of the miniature horse and whether the facility can make accommodations.

Are Emotional Support Animals considered “Service Animals” under the ADA?

Emotional support animals are not included in the definition of service animal. However, psychiatric service dogs, trained to detect the onset of psychiatric episodes and reduce their effects, does fall under the ADA definition of a service animal.

What are examples of tasks that service dogs might provide?

Psychiatric Service Dogs can:
- Remind the handler to take medicine
- Provide safety checks or room searches
- Turning on lights for persons with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
- Interrupt self-mutilation by persons with dissociative identity disorders
- Keep disoriented individuals from danger

Guide Dog or Seeing Eye® Dog can:
Serve as a travel tool for persons with severe visual impairments or who are blind.

Hearing or Signal Dogs can:
Alert a person with significant hearing loss or deafness when certain sounds occur, such as a crying baby or a knock on the door.

SsigDogs can:
Alert a person with autism to their distracting repetitive movements or other common behaviors, allowing the person to stop the behavior.

Seizure Response Dogs can:
- Assist a person with a seizure disorder by standing guard over the person during a seizure, or going for help.
- Predict a seizure and warn the person in advance.

QUESTIONS FOR BUSINESS OWNERS

What are the laws that apply to my business?
Under the ADA, privately-owned businesses that service the public, such as restaurants, hotels, retail stores, taxi cabs, theaters, libraries, sports facilities, health care facilities and concert halls are required to allow people with disabilities to bring their service animal onto business premises in whatever areas customers are generally allowed.

How can I tell if it’s a service animal or a pet?
Some, but not all, service animals wear special collars and harnesses. Some, but not all, are licensed and have identification papers; however, a business shall not require documentation.

(Continued on reverse.)