

# EMS and Service Dogs

*A quick reference guide to providing safe and efficient care to people traveling with service dogs*

**The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)** requires hospitals and first responders to modify their practices as necessary to ensure that service dog users are provided with the same assistance as their peers. **EMS providers must be prepared to safely transport service dogs alongside their handlers.**



The ADA defines a service animal as any dog that is trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability.

- EMS providers may not ask for proof of certification.
- A person may be asked to remove his or her service dog **only** if the dog is out of control or if the dog is not housebroken.
- A service dog is not a pet or companion dog.

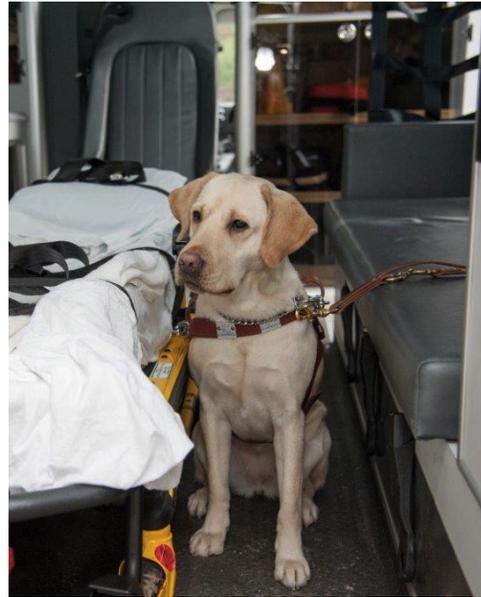


There are no regulations to specify where a service dog should be placed during transport. The size of the dog, condition of the patient and space configurations of the apparatus will drive this decision.

A service dog may be placed alongside a center-frame stretcher, remaining clear of the EMS provider. When a patient requires life saving interventions, or if space prevents the dog from transport in the patient compartment, the cab may be a viable option. An alternative vehicle - such as a police car or paramedic fly car - may also be considered.

## Best practices for transporting service dog teams:

- For everyone's safety, the dog should be tethered to a stationary device, i.e., the stretcher or a seatbelt that's locked into place.
- Be sure to secure the stretcher before placing the guide dog in the patient compartment. Remove the guide dog first upon arrival at your destination.
- If possible, place leash on the appropriate collar ring to prevent injury or asphyxiation when securing the dog. (See photo below.)
- Cover sharp surfaces in perforated running boards to prevent lacerations to paws.



*Dog's leash has been looped through fastened seatbelt.*

When possible, leash should be placed on the "dead" ring before securing the dog.



### Sources

- CDC *Guidelines for Environmental Infection Control in Healthcare Facilities (Guidelines)*
- National Archives and Records Administration (2011). "Electronic Code of Federal Regulations." Title 28. Part 35. *Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disability in State and Local Government Services.*
- US Department of Health and Human Services Office of Civil Rights. (2011). *Letter of Findings.*
- US Department of Justice (2010). "Animals, Revised ADA Requirements."
- US Department of Justice (2011). "Fact Sheet: Highlights of the Final Rule to Amend the Dept of Justice Regulation Implementing Title II of ADA."