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DID YOU KNOW?

provided by:



Are a service animal and emotional support animal the same thing?

As a park owner, you get to define the pet policy for your park. However, did you know you legally must allow service animals in your park, and the animal owner does not have to provide proof? Learn more below about service animals, emotional support animals, and your rights as a business.

What defines a service animal and what can I ask for "proof"?

According to the Americans with Disabilities Act (the ADA), when determining if a dog is a service animal, staff may ask only two specific questions: (1) is the dog a service animal required because of a disability? and (2) what work or task has the dog been trained to perform? Staff are not allowed to request any documentation for the dog, require that the dog demonstrate its task, or inquire about the nature of the person's disability.



Are a service animal and emotional support animal the same thing?

The ADA makes a distinction between psychiatric service animals and emotional support animals. For example, if the dog has been trained to sense that an anxiety attack is about to happen and take a specific action to help avoid the attack or lessen its impact, that would qualify as a service animal. However, if the dog's mere presence provides comfort, that would not be considered a service animal under the ADA.

So what can I do as a park owner to best prepare my park?

Rowley Insurance recommends a few simple things will help prepare you for animal guests in your park:

1. Determine your park's pet policy. We suggest requiring leashes and not allowing dogs with a history of aggressive behavior or tendencies, at a minimum; but consider your needs for your park. Remember that regardless of your policy, you must allow service animals.

2. Create a written pet policy release for guests to sign upon check-in. This will not always waive your liability as a campground owner in the event of an incident, but it doesn't hurt. You can find an example at RowleyInsurance.com/Resources.htm

3. Educate your staff on service animals – what you can and cannot ask guests at check in and how to best accommodate your park guests.

For additional questions, visit RowleyInsurance.com or ADA.gov.

Source: The Americans With Disabilities Act, ada.gov