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Service Animal Definition Has Been Updated

By Rick Lentini

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Retail businesses throughout the United States can now more easily determine what qualifies as a service animal. The new Americans with Disabilities Act regulation states that only dogs (and in limited circumstances, miniature horses) qualify as service animals, and they must be "individually trained to do work or perform tasks" that are directly related to an individual's disability. Psychiatric service dogs are also included in the definition.

The new definition removes emotional support animals that might otherwise provide a person comfort by their presence.

The new definition makes it easier for retailers to identify pets acting as service animals, since nearly all animals other than dogs are excluded. Nevertheless, retailers should exercise tact and respect when denying access.

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