



ALBERTA SERVICE DOG LAWS

QUALIFICATION, IDENTIFICATION & PUBLIC ACCESS

A PLAIN-ENGLISH GUIDE FOR SERVICE DOG HANDLERS IN ALBERTA

Alberta's Service Dogs Act provides qualified service dog teams with the right to access places where the public is normally permitted. Alberta also sets standards for how service dogs become qualified, how teams identify themselves, and the responsibilities that come with public access.



WHAT IS A QUALIFIED SERVICE DOG?

A service dog is trained to perform specific tasks or behaviours that assist a person with a disability.

A service dog can qualify in Alberta through recognized routes, including:

- ✓ An Alberta-approved service dog organization
- ✓ A program accredited by, or holding candidacy status with, Assistance Dogs International (ADI)
- ✓ Certain other Canadian programs recognized as meeting equivalent standards
- ✓ Alberta's Service Dog Qualification Assessment, where applicable



IMPORTANT: Emotional-support and therapy dogs are not considered service dogs under Alberta's Service Dogs Act because they are not trained to perform specific disability-mitigating tasks.



PUBLIC ACCESS IS A LEGAL RIGHT

By law, qualified service dog teams have the right to access locations where the public is normally allowed, including:



Restaurants



Retail stores



Hotels



Schools



Hospitals



Taxis & buses



Theatres



Places of worship



Pet-restricted
apartments &
condominiums



A "No Pets" policy does not mean "No Service Dogs."



KNOW YOUR RIGHTS. UNDERSTAND YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES.
BE CONFIDENT IN YOUR PARTNERSHIP.



HOW DOES A DOG BECOME QUALIFIED?



OWNER-TRAINED & PRIVATELY TRAINED DOGS

Alberta allows people to train their own service dogs.

Owner-trained, privately trained, and dogs obtained from organizations not recognized in Alberta can become qualified by successfully completing Alberta's Service Dog Qualification Assessment.



THE QUALIFICATION ASSESSMENT

The assessment is based on the Alberta Training Standard.

The team is evaluated on the dog's ability to:

- ✓ Assist the person with a disability
- ✓ Behave appropriately in public
- ✓ Remain calm in busy environments
- ✓ Work without unnecessarily attracting attention

The handler must demonstrate control of the dog.

The dog must also demonstrate at least three skills or tasks that assist with the handler's disability.



SERVICE DOGS IN TRAINING

A dog being trained under the supervision of an approved/qualified service dog organization can receive public-access protection during training.

A dog being trained independently or through an organization that is not recognized in Alberta does NOT automatically receive public-access rights while it is still in training.



Reassessment requirements depend on your training path:

- ✓ Teams that qualify through an Alberta-approved or ADI-accredited organization do NOT need to redo the assessment every year.
- ✓ Teams that train independently or through an organization that is not Alberta-approved or ADI-accredited must complete the assessment every year.



QUALIFICATION IS WHAT MATTERS

A vest, harness, patch or online certificate does not by itself establish that a dog is a qualified service dog.

THANK YOU FOR RESPECTING THE RIGHTS OF SERVICE DOG TEAMS.

Your understanding helps create a more inclusive Alberta for everyone.

YOUR ALBERTA SERVICE DOG ID

IDENTIFICATION. ACCESS. UNDERSTANDING.

THE ALBERTA SERVICE DOG IDENTIFICATION CARD

The Alberta Service Dog Identification Card is issued to qualified service dog teams.

It verifies that the dog is a service dog under the Alberta Service Dogs Act.



WHAT THE CARD VERIFIES

- ✓ The dog is trained to assist a person with a disability.
- ✓ The team is legally protected under the Alberta Service Dogs Act.

WHAT INFORMATION IS ON THE CARD?

- Issue Date and Expiry Date
- Unique ID Number
- Government of Alberta Security Features
- Verification that the dog is a service dog

PUBLIC ACCESS COMES WITH RESPONSIBILITIES

- ✓ Service dogs must be under control at all times.
- ✓ Handlers are responsible for their dog's behaviour.
- ✓ You may be asked to leave if your dog is out of control and the situation cannot be corrected.
- ✓ You may be asked to leave if your dog is not housebroken.



**APPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR
AND CONTROL IN PUBLIC
KEEP ACCESS OPEN
FOR EVERYONE.**



SERVICE DOGS IN TRAINING

If you are training with an approved service dog organization, the organization will issue identification for your team while in training. This identification provides the team with public access rights while training.

QUALIFIED SERVICE DOG TEAMS

Teams that meet the requirements of the Alberta Service Dogs Act and pass the public access test are issued the Alberta Service Dog Identification Card. This card gives the team public access rights under Alberta law.



QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR ID?

If you have questions about your Alberta Service Dog ID card, contact Alberta Government for more information.



WHAT IF YOU'RE DENIED ACCESS?



1 STAY CALM.

Many access problems begin with someone simply not understanding Alberta's service-dog laws.



2 EXPLAIN THAT YOUR DOG IS A QUALIFIED SERVICE DOG.



3 PRESENT YOUR SERVICE DOG IDENTIFICATION CARD.



4 ASK FOR A MANAGER OR SUPERVISOR.



5 DOCUMENT WHAT HAPPENED.

RECORD THE:

- Location
- Date & time
- Names of those involved, if known
- What happened and what was said
- Whether you presented your ID
- Names of witnesses
- Relevant emails, messages or correspondence



REFUSING ACCESS CAN HAVE CONSEQUENCES

Under Alberta's service-dog legislation, discriminating against someone lawfully using a qualified service dog or refusing access to a qualified service dog team can result in a **fine of up to \$3,000.**



REPORTING A CONCERN

The Government of Alberta's Service Dog Assessment Team accepts reports about possible violations of the Service Dogs Act, Service Dogs Qualifications Regulation or Alberta Training Standard.

This includes a qualified service dog team being denied access after presenting its Service Dog Team Identification Card.

Report online: alberta.ca/report-concern-about-service-dogs

VISIT ALBERTA.CA

Visit alberta.ca for the most current information.

IMPORTANT: This resource provides general educational information and is not legal advice. Alberta legislation, regulations and policies can change. Refer to current Government of Alberta information when determining your legal rights or obligations.

*Know your rights.
Understand your
responsibilities.
Be confident in your
partnership.*