

SUMMIT SERVICE DOGS

SERVICE DOG ETIQUETTE

A working service dog has a job to do. The best way to support a service dog team is usually simple: give the dog space, respect the handler's privacy, and allow the team to go about their day without interruption.

HOW TO RESPECT A WORKING TEAM

DO NOT PET WITHOUT PERMISSION	Even a friendly touch can distract a working dog. If you would like to pet the dog, ask the handler first and respect the answer.
DO NOT CALL, WHISTLE OR MAKE SOUNDS AT THE DOG	Calling the dog's name, making kissing noises, barking, whistling, or trying to get its attention can interfere with its focus.
DO NOT FEED THE DOG	Do not offer treats, table food, or other food. Feeding a service dog can interfere with training and may make the dog ill.
KEEP YOUR PET AWAY	Do not allow your dog or other pet to approach or greet a service dog. A working dog needs to remain focused on its handler.
SPEAK TO THE HANDLER - NOT THE DOG	If you need to interact with the team, address the person directly. The dog is working and does not need to be included in the conversation.
RESPECT PRIVACY	Do not ask the handler to explain their disability, medical history, or why they need a service dog. Not every disability is visible.
DO NOT ASK FOR A DEMONSTRATION	A service dog's trained tasks relate to its handler's disability. The handler should not be expected to demonstrate the dog's skills for curiosity.
ASK BEFORE TAKING PHOTOS OR VIDEO	Do not photograph or record a service dog team without permission. A service dog team is entitled to the same dignity and privacy as anyone else.

A FEW THINGS TO REMEMBER

A vest does not mean the dog is available for attention.

Service dogs are trained to ignore distractions, but they are still dogs. Giving them space helps them perform their work safely.

Do not be offended if the handler says no.

A handler may decline a request to pet the dog or may not have time to stop and talk. Allow the person to continue with their day.

Not all disabilities are visible.

Avoid making assumptions about whether someone 'looks disabled enough' to need a service dog.

Service dogs belong in public spaces.

In Alberta, qualified service dog teams have protected access to places where the public is normally allowed, including restaurants, stores, hotels, schools, hospitals, taxis, buses, and other public areas. Limited exceptions apply to non-public or restricted areas.

**THE SIMPLE RULE:
Ignore the dog. Respect the person. Give the team space to work.**

FOR BUSINESSES & ORGANIZATIONS

Qualified service dog teams in Alberta are permitted to enter places where the public is normally allowed. Businesses should treat service dog handlers with dignity and consider the rights of all people respectfully. A service dog may be asked to leave if it is aggressive, disruptive, damaging property, or not under the handler's control.

ALBERTA INFORMATION

This resource is written for an Alberta audience. Current Government of Alberta guidance specifically advises the public not to distract service dogs, offer food, allow pets to interact with them, ask for task demonstrations, ask personal questions about a handler's disability, or photograph or record a service dog team without permission.

Source: Government of Alberta, *Service dogs in public* and *Service dogs in Alberta*.

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 legal rights or obligations.

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