

SOP 15 Service Animals

- A service animal is any animal trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of a person with a disability. A service animal is not considered a pet but rather an animal trained to provide assistance to a person because of a disability.
- People with disabilities accompanied by service animals should be allowed access with their service animals to places of public accommodation, including health care facilities.
- No evidence suggests that animals pose a more significant risk of transmitting infection than people; therefore, service animals should not be excluded from such areas unless a patient's situation or a particular animal poses risk that cannot be mitigated through reasonable measures.
- If health care personnel, visitors, and patients are permitted to enter care areas (e.g., inpatient rooms and public areas) without taking additional precautions to prevent transmission of infectious agents (e.g., putting on gloves, gowns, or masks), a clean, healthy, well-behaved service animal should be allowed access with its handler.
- No reports to date have been published regarding infectious diseases that affect humans originating in service dogs. Standard cleaning procedures are sufficient following occupation of an area by a service animal.
(Centres for Disease Control and Prevention 2003 Dental Guideline)