

The differences and similarities between assistance animals, therapy animals, service animals, emotional support animals, and how to prepare to travel with them

Animals have been assisting people for centuries. In recent decades laws have been set in the US allowing assistance animals more freedom to accompany their humans into areas where previously animals were prohibited. As this has occurred people have used various names for these sorts of animals including ‘assistance animal’, ‘service animal’, ‘emotional support animal’, ‘therapy animal’ and others. However, these titles in quotes arose from the legislation that created special freedoms for these sorts of animals. As a result, these titles are legally defined, and are thus strictly defined. Misusing and misunderstanding these titles can result in embarrassing and tragic situations for people who need such animal companions to live their daily lives, and want to travel with them. In an effort to clear up this confusion the American Veterinary Medical Association has published the following chart. You can find the original here (<https://www.avma.org/KB/Resources/Reference/AnimalWelfare/Pages/Service-Emotional-Support-Therapy-Animals.aspx>)

The Legal Context For Assistance Animal Use - Definitions

Classification	Definition	As Defined By
Assistance Animal	“Any animal that works, provides assistance, or performs tasks for the benefit of a person with a disability, or provides emotional support that alleviates one or more identified symptoms or effects of a person’s disability,” as defined by the ADA.4 “Individuals with a disability may be entitled to keep an assistance animal as a reasonable accommodation in housing facilities that otherwise impose restrictions or prohibitions on animals. In order to qualify for such an accommodation, the assistance animal must be necessary to afford the individual an equal opportunity to use and enjoy a dwelling or to participate in the housing service or program. Further, there must be a relationship, or nexus, between the individual’s disability and the assistance the animal provides. If these requirements are met, a housing facility, program or service must permit the assistance animal as an accommodation, unless it can demonstrate that allowing the assistance animal would impose an undue financial or administrative burden or would fundamentally alter the nature of the housing program or services.”	U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (FHEO-2013-01)

Service Animal	<p>“Any dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability. Other species of animals, whether wild or domestic, trained or untrained, are not service animals for the purposes of this definition. The work or tasks performed by a service animal must be directly related to the individual's disability. Examples of work or tasks include, but are not limited to, assisting individuals who are blind or have low vision with navigation and other tasks, alerting individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing to the presence of people or sounds, providing non-violent protection or rescue work, pulling a wheelchair, assisting an individual during a seizure, alerting individuals to the presence of allergens, retrieving items such as medicine or the telephone, providing physical support and assistance with balance and stability to individuals with mobility disabilities, and helping persons with psychiatric and neurological disabilities by preventing or interrupting impulsive or destructive behaviors. The crime deterrent effects of an animal's presence and the provision of emotional support, well-being, comfort, or companionship do not constitute work or tasks for the purposes of this definition.” Miniature horses have been added as a specific provision to the ADA. The miniature horse must be housebroken, under the handler’s control, can be accommodated for by the facility, and will not compromise safety regulations.</p>	Americans with Disabilities Act 1990 (Section 35.136)
	<p>Any animal that is individually trained or able to provide assistance to a qualified person with a disability; or any animal shown by documentation to be necessary for the emotional well-being of a passenger... Psychiatric service animals are recognized as service animals, but are considered to be emotional support animals and, therefore, subject to the applicable regulatory requirements, i.e. documentation.</p>	Air Carrier Access Act (ACAA) and CFR Part 382
Emotional Support Animal	<p>An emotional support animal (ESA) may be an animal of any species, the use of which is supported by a qualified physician, psychiatrist or other mental health professional based upon a disability-related need. An ESA does not have to be trained to perform any particular task. ESAs do not qualify as service animals under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), but they may be permitted as reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities under the Fair Housing Act. The Air Carrier Access Act provides specific allowances for ESAs traveling on airlines, though documentation may need to be provided.</p>	Fair Housing Act (42 U.S.C. Part 3604) and Air Carrier Access Act (ACAA) and C.F.R. Part 382.117
Therapy Animal	<p>A therapy animal is a type of animal-assisted intervention in which there is a “goal directed intervention in which an animal meeting specific criteria is an integral part of the treatment</p>	Air Carrier Access Act (ACAA) and CFR Part 382; AVMA

	process. Animal-assisted therapy is provided in a variety of settings, and may be group or individual in nature.”	<u>Animal-Assisted Interventions: Definitions</u>
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It should be noted that the allowances mentioned above do not extend to permitting persons to travel with their animals without having to meet the necessary animal importation requirements that may be involved.

Flowchart for Assisting Clients With Pet Travel

It is the owner's responsibility to be fully aware of the requirements of importing their pet into whatever country or state they are visiting/moving to. It is not our responsibility to do all of this for them. If someone demands we do all this for them, especially if they become belligerent, please feel free to refuse to serve them at all and turn them away.

Dogs, Cats, Ferrets, Rabbits, Rodents, Hedgehogs, Tenrecs, Reptiles and Amphibians

Pet Bird: Pet bird species are species commonly kept as pets EXCEPT: Chickens, Doves, Ducks, Geese, Grouse, Guinea Fowl, Partridges, Peafowl, Pheasants, Pigeons, Quail, Swans, Turkeys, Raptors

Chickens, Doves, Ducks, Geese, Grouse, Guinea Fowl, Partridges, Peafowl, Pheasants, Pigeons, Quail, Swans, Turkeys, Raptors

Schedule the appointment for the exam and health certificate with Dr's Hansen or Peacock, allowing sufficient time for the owner to prepare ahead of time for the appointment

Inform the owner their pet's travel will be governed by the rules for transporting poultry

Traveling within the USA

Direct the owner to the USDA website for interstate transportation of animals

<https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/animalhealth/nvap/NVAP-Reference-Guide/Animal-Movement/interstate-regulations> and to the 'Traveling With Your Pet' page on our website, and to the State Veterinarian's Office of the State they traveling to <https://www.usaha.org/saho>.

Direct the owner to the USDA International Regulations (IRegs) for Animal Exports Home Page

<https://www.aphis.usda.gov/animalhealth/animal-exports> and to the 'Traveling With Your Pet' page on our website

Direct the owner to the USDA/APHIS Website for Importing Live Poultry into the United States:

https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/animalhealth/animal-and-animal-product-import-information/entry-requirements/sa_avian/importing-live-poultry/ct_live_poultry and to the 'Traveling With Your Pet' page on our website

Exiting the USA / Exporting

Entering the USA / Importing

Schedule the appointment for the exam and health certificate, allowing sufficient time for the owner to prepare ahead of time for the appointment

Traveling outside the USA

Direct the owner to the USDA Pet Travel Website: <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/pet-travel> and to the 'Traveling With Your Pet' page on our website.

Whether traveling internationally (leaving/exporting or entering/importing the United States), or domestically within the United States