



Service Animal Q&A

It is the policy of Deaconess and its affiliates to assess and accommodate service animals for patients and visitors, as needed, to comply with applicable federal and state laws, regulatory agencies and infection control guidelines. A person using a service animal shall be afforded the same access to the hospital as the general public.

Q. Do I tell someone I have a service animal?

If it is apparent that a patient or visitor's animal is a service animal, then Deaconess will permit the use of that animal with no further questions regarding the animal's status as a service animal.

Q. What questions can the staff ask about my service animal?

If it is not apparent that a patient's or visitor's animal is a service animal, then Deaconess staff may ask the following two questions to determine if the animal is a service animal under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

1. Is the animal required because of a disability?
2. What work or task has the animal been trained to perform?

Deaconess staff may ask follow-up questions only if necessary to clarify answers given to the above two questions to determine if an animal is service animal under the ADA.

Q. What if I disagree with the staff's assessment of my service animal?

If Deaconess staff determine that the animal is not a service animal under either the ADA or Indiana law, and the patient or visitor disagrees with the decision or the line of questioning by Deaconess staff, then the most appropriate manager/director will be immediately contacted to communicate with the patient or visitor.

Q. What are the rules for having a service animal at the hospital?

Responsibility for the service animal will be assumed by the owner/handler, who will:

1. Control the service animal and provide food, water, exercise, elimination and other necessary care or make arrangements with family members, friends or accompanying person (not staff) to perform these functions.
2. Ensure good hand hygiene practices. (Wash hands frequently.)
3. Clean up after the service animal as necessary or have a family member, friend or another accompanying person (not staff) perform this function. If the animal has an elimination accident, gloves should be worn to remove the debris and clean up the area and hand hygiene performed after glove removal. Any organic debris and paper towels should be placed in a plastic bag in a trash container, similar to the disposal of diapers. After the area is cleaned, it must be disinfected by hospital staff with the facility's approved cleaning product, following the label instructions for appropriate concentration and contact time.

Q. Can the service animal be removed from the hospital?

If the service animal becomes out of control or is not housebroken, the animal can be removed. Staff will still make health care services available to the patient without the animal present. Examples of out of control would be excessive barking, growling, threatening manner, etc.

A service animal cannot be removed based on the thought that the animal might behave inappropriately.

Q. Can my service animal be everywhere that I am?

Service animals are allowed to be in "unrestricted areas" or any area where patients and visitors are permitted to enter without taking additional precautions. These areas are typically patient rooms, exam rooms, emergency department, lobbies, waiting rooms, restrooms, and gift shops.

Service animals **are not allowed in "restricted areas"** where patients and visitors are only permitted if they have taken additional precautions to prevent transmission of infectious agents, such as wearing gloves, gowns or masks or lead apron (for radiology). These areas are typically "sterile areas" such as operating rooms and patient rooms where patients are immunosuppressed, in isolation for respiratory or infectious precautions and/or sterile procedures take place.

If you have questions about our service animal policy, please call (812) 450-2361.