



EPTA Service Animal Policy

EPTA adheres to U.S. Department of Transportation (US DOT) and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) guidelines in reference to service animals.

U.S. DOT Definition

The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) defines a service animal as “any guide dog, signal dog, or other animal individually trained to work or perform tasks for an individual with a disability, including, but not limited to, guiding individuals with impaired vision, alerting individuals with impaired hearing to intruders or sounds, providing minimal protection or rescue work, pulling a wheelchair, or fetching dropped items.”

A service animal must be under the control of its handler. Under the ADA, service animals must be harnessed, leashed, or tethered, unless the individual’s disability prevents using these devices or these devices interfere with the service animal’s safe, effective performance of tasks. **In that case, the individual must maintain control of the animal through voice, signal, or other effective controls.**

The **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)** governs public accommodations, including public transportation. Under the ADA:

- **Service Animal:** Defined as a dog (or in some limited cases, a miniature horse) that has been **individually trained to do work or perform tasks** for the benefit of an individual with a disability. The work or task must be directly related to the individual’s disability. Examples include guiding the blind, alerting the deaf, pulling a wheelchair, or alerting to seizures.
- **Emotional Support Animal (ESA):** Provides comfort or emotional support through its presence, but is **not trained to perform specific tasks** related to an individual’s disability. The ADA **does not** consider ESAs to be service animals.

While Riding EPTA vehicles-

- Service animals must be on a leash, harness or tether at all times whenever riding on an EPTA vehicle (including NEMT/Demand Response) or inside an EPTA facility.
- Passengers with service animals must keep the animal in control. Threatening behavior is a safety concern for other riders and is not allowed. Unacceptable behavior includes:
 - Snarling/growling
 - Picking fights
 - Jumping up
 - Barking/vocalizing (Exception: when a seizure alert animal is trained to alert by jumping up and pushing the owner down.)
- The owner must direct their service animal. Other riders cannot hold a service animal’s leash.
- Service animals must not block the steps, vehicle aisle or travel paths.
- Service animals are not allowed on passenger seating in vehicles or in EPTA facilities.
- Passengers with service animals must clean up after their animals when necessary. Waste products and supplies used to clean up after a service animal cannot be disposed of in vehicle trash containers. If the animal wears a diaper, the diaper must be changed regularly to prevent smells. Animals must be insect-free.



- Service animals appearing abused or mistreated will be reported to the appropriate organizations for follow-up.

EPTA employees are not allowed to take control of a service animal leash or harness. EPTA employees may not take responsibility or interfere with the duties of service animals.

Boarding and Exiting Vehicles or Cars-

- Passengers with animals must tell their vehicle operator or train crew member the preferred procedures for boarding and exiting for the passenger, service animal and any mobility aid.
- Passengers with animals must protect the service animal's paws, nose, ears, tail, leash, harness, protective gear or equipment from getting caught in bus, van or rail car machinery. This could include lifts, ramps, doors, securements and other machinery.
- For safety reasons, it is not recommended passengers using mobility devices and service animals ride on wheelchair lifts at the same time.

Non-Service Animals on EPTA vehicles-

Consistent with US DOT and ADA regulations, the following animals are **NOT** considered service animals on transit and must be in a carrier:

- Companion animals
- Therapy animals
- Comfort animals
- Mental health and emotional support animals
- Pets

For this reason, EPTA personnel may ask you about your animal and the services it provides to you.

Non-service or ESA animals must adhere to the same behaviors and rules as service animals whenever riding in an EPTA vehicle.

Passengers requiring additional information can refer to established ADA guidelines at:

[Service Animals | ADA.gov](#)