

Title

Animal Restrictions, Service Animals, Certified Pet Therapy

Purpose

To define the circumstances under which animals may be brought inside Sky Lakes facilities.

Scope

The American with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires that broad access be provided to service animals, and that persons using service animals be afforded independent access to Sky Lakes. Except as specified below, a person using a service animal shall generally be afforded the same access to Sky Lakes as the general public.

Definitions

- A. **Service Animal:** A dog or miniature horse that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for a person with a disability. Examples of such work include, but are not limited to, guiding people who are blind, alerting people who are deaf, pulling a wheelchair, alerting and protecting a person who is having a seizure, reminding a person with mental illness to take prescribed medications.
Service animals are working animals, not pets. Animals whose sole function is to provide comfort or emotional support do not qualify as service animals under the ADA.
- B. **Certified Pet Therapy Animals:** The primary objective of a certified pet therapy program is for the animal and handler to provide comfort and companionship by sharing the animal with the patients in hospitals, nursing homes, and other institutions. This is done in a way that increases emotional wellbeing, promotes healing, and improves quality of life for the people being visited and the staff that care for these people. While a service dog shall be individually trained to perform work or tasks directly related to the handler's disability, a pet therapy animal merely provides comfort to an individual in some fashion. Therapy animals are not defined as "Service Animals" under the ADA.
- C. **Disability:** An individual with a disability is a person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities including, but not limited to, walking, talking, seeing, breathing, or hearing.
- D. **Direct Threat:** A significant risk to the health or safety of others that cannot be eliminated or mitigated by a modification of policies, practices or procedures, or by the provision of auxiliary aids or services. In determining whether a service animal poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others, Sky Lakes shall make an individualized assessment, based on reasonable judgment that relies on current medical knowledge or on the best available objective evidence to ascertain:
 - 1. The nature, duration, and severity of the risk;
 - 2. The probability that the potential injury shall actually occur; and

3. Whether reasonable modifications of policies, practices, or procedures shall mitigate the risk.

Policy

- A. No animals of any kind are permitted inside of any Sky Lakes' properties, with the exception of service animals and certified pet therapy animals.
- B. This policy shall apply to all persons on Sky Lakes property, including but not limited to, inpatients, outpatients, employees, and visitors of Sky Lakes.

Procedure

A. Identifying Service Animals

1. If a person is seen in Sky Lakes with any animal, other than a dog, staff shall ask the person to remove the animal from the building immediately.
2. If a dog is seen in Sky Lakes, staff shall determine whether or not the animal is a service animal using only the limited inquiries allowed under the ADA. Staff may ask two questions:
 - a. Is the dog a service animal required because of a disability, and
 - b. What work or task has the dog been trained to perform?
3. Staff shall not ask about a person's disability, require medical documentation of the disability, require special identification or training documentation for the service animal, or ask that the dog demonstrate its ability to perform the work or task.
4. Unless the dog is a service dog, or a certified pet therapy dog, staff shall ask the person to remove the animal from the building immediately.
5. Please notify Sky Lakes security staff regarding any animal inquiries.

B. Service Animals

1. A service animal shall be permitted in any area of Sky Lakes that is unrestricted to inpatients, outpatients, or visitors provided that the service animal does not pose a direct threat.
2. Areas where a service animal shall generally not be permitted access, due to direct threat, include operating rooms and patient units where a patient is immunosuppressed or in isolation for respiratory, enteric, or infectious precautions. Access shall only be permitted in these areas under particular circumstances, as approved by the Director of the area or their designee, where it is determined by the Director or their designee that a service animal does not pose a direct threat.

C. Service Animal Handler Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the service animal handler to:

1. Keep the animal harnessed, leashed, or tethered at all times, unless doing so interferes with the animal's work or if the handler's disability prevents use of these devices.
2. Provide the animal with food, water, and other necessary care or make such arrangements through family members, friends, or accompanying persons (not including staff).
3. Clean up promptly after the service animal or have family members, friends, or accompanying persons do so. Staff members are not required to provide care or food for a service animal.

D. Removing a Service Animal

1. A person with a disability shall not be asked to remove their service animal from the premises unless:

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- a. The dog is out of control and the handler does not take effective action to control it;
 - b. The dog is not housebroken; or
 - c. The dog poses a direct threat.
2. When asking that a service animal be removed, the person with the disability shall be offered the opportunity to obtain services without the animal's presence.
 3. Service animals that pose a direct threat to the health and safety of others shall be reported to the Unit Director, Nursing Supervisor, or a designee of the respective unit.
 4. Any decision to exclude a service animal shall be made by the Director of the area or their designee, based on an individualized assessment pursuant to the definition of direct threat provided in this policy.
- E. Allergies/Phobia:
1. In the event a patient or staff member has allergies to or has a phobia about animals, Sky Lakes shall permit a service animal to remain with a patient in an inpatient room by, for example, moving the patient with the phobia to another comparable room, changing staff assignments, or using other nondiscriminatory methods so that the presence of the service animal would not pose a direct threat.
 2. Any staff member with an allergy to animals shall notify his or her supervisor of the allergy in a timely manner to facilitate assignment changes.
- F. Visitors:
1. Consistent with Section B of this procedure, all inpatient and outpatient visitors who use service animals shall be permitted to bring the animal to unrestricted areas of Sky Lakes, provided that the animal does not pose a direct threat.
 2. Any visit into an inpatient room with a service animal shall take place in accordance with Sky Lakes' policy for all visitors.
 3. If the visitor is not permitted to bring the service animal into a particular area, then staff shall offer the visitor and the patient an accommodation such as, but not limited to, transferring the patient to another comparable room where unrestricted visits could occur or allowing the visit to occur in a different area that affords comparable privacy and amenities.
- G. Visits with Service Animals:
1. In the event the service animal is not permitted in an inpatient room, staff shall, upon a patient's request, arrange for visits between a service animal and its handler or a visitor who uses a service animal in an area of comparable privacy and amenities.
- H. Certified Pet Therapy Animals include dogs and miniature horses only.
1. Certified Pet Therapy animals are excluded from the operating rooms, emergency department, ICU, newborn nursery, any patient room that is currently on isolation precautions, and any patient room that has wounds or burns.
 2. The handler is responsible for the following:
 - a. Providing proof of up-to-date vaccinations required by state law.
 - b. Provide behavioral assessment by a recognized organization.
 - c. Bathing the animal 24 hours prior to visiting the hospital.
 - d. Animal's ears are clean, and nails are short without any rough edges.
 - e. Animal is free of skin conditions and wounds.
 - f. Handler can attest that the animal and themselves have not been sick in past 24 hours prior to visiting (i.e., fever, diarrhea, vomiting).

- g. Animal may wear shirt or vest to help control allergies and foot coverings to help prevent scratches.
 - h. Handler shall always keep the animal on a short leash and control the animal.
 - i. Handler is responsible for all food, water, and cleaning up after animal.
 - j. Handler shall need permission from charge nurse, staff nurse, and patient before entering any patient room. Pediatric patients shall have verbal consent from guardian.
 - k. The handler shall remove the animal immediately from patient room and hospital if the animal cannot be controlled.
3. Other Considerations:
- a. All staff, patients, visitors, and handlers shall wash hands after coming into contact with animal.
 - b. No staff is responsible for the care of a certified therapy animal.
 - c. Any bites or scratches made by animal shall be reported and investigated. Upon review, these may be grounds for dismissal of the animal from the visitation program.
- I. Important Numbers
- 1. Klamath County Animal Control: 541-882-1279
 - 2. Klamath County Sheriff Nonemergency line: 541-883-5130

References

- A. ADA Requirements: Service Animals, *ADA.gov, February 28, 2020*
- B. Animals Visiting in Healthcare Facilities/Community based Infection Prevention Practices, *APIC, 2024*