

Etiquette for Guide and Service Dogs

Guide dogs are the guiding eyes for people who are blind or visually impaired. Service dogs are assistance dogs for people with disabilities other than blindness. These dogs are specially bred and trained for this most important job. There are several guidelines people should follow when in the presence of a guide or service dog to allow for the safety of the dog and its handler. Disregarding these guidelines can distract the dog, which can create a dangerous situation for the dog and its handler.

It's also important to know, that under the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA), people with disabilities are allowed to be accompanied by their guide and service dog in all places the public is permitted.

 Please don't touch, talk, feed or otherwise distract the dog while he is wearing his harness or vest. You should allow the dog to concentrate and perform for the safety of his handler.



- 🐾 Don't treat the dog as a pet; give him the respect of a working dog.

- 🐾 Speak to the handler, not the dog. Some handlers will allow petting, but be sure to ask before doing so. If allowed, don't pat the dog on the head, stroke the dog on the shoulder area.

- 🐾 You should not give the dog commands; allow the handler to do so.

- 🐾 Guide and service dog teams have the right of way.

- 🐾 Don't try to take control in situations unfamiliar to the dog or handler, but please assist the handler upon their request.

- 🐾 When walking with a guide or service dog team, you should not walk on the dog's left side, as it may become distracted or confused. Ask the handler where you should walk. Depending on the situation, they may ask you to walk ahead of them on their right side, or behind them by their right shoulder.



- 🐾 Never attempt to grab or steer the person while the dog is guiding or attempt to hold the dog's harness. You should ask if the handler needs your assistance and, if so, offer your left arm.

- 🐾 Try not to be over-protective or overbearing when the graduate first arrives home with the new dog. Be thoughtful, patient, and try to inspire confidence in the handler. In time, you will admire the expertise of the team.

- 🐾 Don't expect too much too soon, remember, the dog is young and that complete harmony and confidence takes patience, perseverance, and time.

- 🐾 Never give the dog table scraps. You should respect the handler's need to give the dog a balanced diet, and to maintain its good habits.

- 🐾 Don't allow anyone to tease or abuse the dog, allow it to rest undisturbed.



- 🐾 Make sure not to allow your pets to challenge or intimidate a guide dog. You should allow them to meet on neutral ground when all parties can be carefully supervised.

- 🐾 A guide and service dog should not jump on furniture or go in areas of a home not mutually agreed upon by the family or handler. You can ask the handler to correct any errant behavior or trespassing.

- 🐾 Never let the dog out of the house unsupervised, and be sure that all doors and/or gates are closed to prevent the dog from exiting your property.

For more information on our programs:

Guide Dog Foundation

www.GuideDog.org

800-548-4337

America's VetDogs

www.VetDogs.org

866-838-3647