



Service Animals at Dana-Farber

What you need to know.

What is a service animal?

A service animal is any dog that is trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability. Service dogs are *working animals*, not pets.

- Dana-Farber allows service animals, as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and 2008 (ADAAA), as well as Massachusetts law.
- Animals whose sole function is to provide *comfort or emotional support* to the patient do not qualify as a service animal.
- **Due to the serious risk of infection, Dana Farber does not permit therapy animals or comfort animals.** Therapy or comfort animals are not trained to relieve the symptoms of their handler's disability.

Service animals provide a specific task, such as:

- Guide people who are seeing impaired
- Alert people who are hearing impaired
- Pull a wheelchair
- Alert and protect a person with seizures
- Alert and protect a person who is diabetic
- Alert a person with mental illness to take prescribed medication
- Calm a person with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)

Therapy animals and comfort animals generally support people in more general ways, such as:

- Provide companionship
- Relieve loneliness
- Help with depression, anxiety, and certain phobias

What should I do and know when I bring a service animal to Dana-Farber?

If you need to bring a service animal to Dana-Farber, please remember these guidelines:

1. Please report the service animal when you first check-in at Dana-Farber.
2. Your service dog must be on a lead/leash at all times.
3. The owner of a service dog is responsible for all aspects of the dog's care while on Dana-Farber premises. This includes walking, feeding, and allowing the animal to relieve itself.
4. The dog should be able to work in a busy health-care setting.
5. The dog should be well-groomed and have good hygiene.
6. The dog should be up to date with all needed vaccines.

What if I arrive at Dana-Farber with an animal that is not a service animal?

If you bring an animal that is **not a service animal** to Dana-Farber, please know that:

1. We will ask you to have a friend or family member wait with the animal outside of the Institute during your visit.
2. If a friend or family member is not available to wait with the animal, please understand that your appointment may need to be rescheduled.

Questions?

If you have more questions about bringing a service animal to Dana-Farber, please call the Patient/Family Relations Office at 617-632-3417.

This document is intended to provide a general overview of a Dana-Farber policy. It should not take the place of conversations with members of your health care team.

