

What is a service animal?

Under state and federal rules, a service animal is defined as any dog or miniature horse that is trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability. Service animals 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 are working animals and perform specific tasks, such as:

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

Therapy animals and comfort animals, which are not allowed at Dana-Farber, support people in more general ways, such as:

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

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

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

- Report the service animal when you first check-in at Dana-Farber.
- Your service animal must be on a lead/leash at all times.
- The owner of a service animal is responsible for all aspects of the animal's care while on Dana-Farber premises. This includes walking, feeding, and allowing the animal to relieve itself.
- The animal should be able to work in a busy healthcare setting.
- The animal should be well-groomed and have good hygiene.
- The animal must 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:

- We will ask you to have a friend or family member wait with the animal outside of the Institute during your visit.
- 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 or email patientfamily_relations@dfci.harvard.edu

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.