

2017-138 Service Animals



Westbrook Fire & Rescue Department

Standard Operating Procedure

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| Section: Administration | TOPIC: Service Animals |
| NUMBER: 2017-138 | ISSUE DATE: October 19, 2016 |
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| POLICY REFERENCES: American with Disabilities Act (ADA) Maine Human Rights Act | APPROVED BY: <hr/> Andrew R. Turcotte Chief of Department |

Purpose:

This policy is for the purpose of establishing guidelines with regards on how to handle a patient transport involving a service animal.

Policy:

Definition:

Service Animals in Maine

Effective September 28, 2011, the Maine Human Rights Act has been amended to include a new definition of “service animal” applicable to the use of service animals in places of public accommodation. Places of public accommodations are restaurants, theaters, stores, government buildings, schools, etc. The new definition limits “service animals” to *dogs* that are individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability.

Public Accommodations:

For the purposes of subchapter 5 (*Public Accommodations*) a **service animal** is defined as a dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual or other mental disability. Other species of animals, whether wild or domestic, trained or untrained, are not service animals for the purposes of this definition. The work or tasks performed by a service animal must be directly related to the individual's disability. Examples of such work or tasks include, but are not limited to, assisting an individual who is totally or partially blind with navigation and other tasks, alerting an individual who is deaf or hard of hearing to the presence of people or sounds, providing nonviolent protection or rescue work, pulling a wheelchair, assisting an individual during a seizure, alerting an individual to the presence of allergens, retrieving items such as medicine or a telephone, providing physical support and assistance with balance and stability to an individual with a mobility disability and helping a person with a psychiatric or neurological disability by preventing or interrupting impulsive or destructive behaviors. The crime deterrent

effects of an animal's presence and the provision of emotional support, well-being, comfort or companionship do not constitute work or tasks for the purposes of this definition.

Housing Purposes

The Maine Human Rights Act defines "service animal" (for Housing Purposes) as any animal that has been determined necessary to mitigate the effects of a physical or mental disability by a physician, psychologist, physician's assistant, nurse practitioner or licensed social worker or has been individually trained to assist the person with a disability. An animal is protected if it meets this definition, regardless of whether it is called a "service animal" or any other term, such as assistive animal, therapy animal, guide dog, or emotional support animal. An example of a service animal might be a dog that is trained to guide a person with a visual impairment or help balance a person who had difficulty walking. It might also include a cat that is prescribed by a psychologist to provide companionship for a person with depression. Service animals (for housing) also may be any species or breed (e.g. monkey, bird, cat) and are not limited to dogs.

Procedure:

1. When a patient requests to be transported by ambulance to the emergency room with his/her service animal make all efforts to accommodate the request. Organizations must allow customers with disabilities to bring their service animals into all areas where customers are allowed to go (ADA).
2. Upon transfer of care of the patient to the emergency department, decontaminate the ambulance appropriately.
3. Notify the shift commander of the incident.

Deviation from Policy

1. If the provider feels that his/her safety is in question due to the current actions of the service animal (i.e. biting, contact protection, excessive barking, aggressive behavior, etc.) you are not required to transport the service animal in the back of the ambulance and law enforcement must be contacted. Document the deviation thoroughly in your MEMS patient care document narrative.
2. All deviations from this policy may be investigated by the Fire Chief or his/her designee.