

Owner Responsibilities of a Service/Assistive Animal



In compliance with the ADA and California law, service animals are welcome at River Oak and may attend any session, group meeting or other event. However there may be an exception to certain areas of the facility.

A person with a disability uses a service/assistive animal as an auxiliary aid. According to the ADA, a service animal is defined as “any animal individually trained to work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including, but not limited to, guiding individuals with impaired vision, alerting individuals to an impending seizure, protecting individuals or alerting individuals who are hearing impaired to intruders, or pulling a wheelchair and fetching dropped items.” California law defines a support animal as one type of “assistive animal”; other types include guide dogs, signal dogs and service dogs.

Requirements of service/support animals and their owners include:

- All animals need to be vaccinated against rabies and other diseases common to that type of animal and all vaccinations must be current.
- Animals must be in good health and free of fleas or any disease.
- All animals must be licensed per state law.
- Service animals must wear an owner identification tag (which includes the name and phone number of the owner) at all times.
- Animals must not produce offensive odor.
- Animals must be on a leash, harness or other type of restraint at all times, unless the owner is unable to retain an animal on leash due to a disability.
- The owner must be in full control of the animal at all times. The care and supervision of the animal is solely the responsibility of the owner.

A client/caregiver who brings a service/assistive animal on River Oak premises is completely and solely liable for any injuries or any damage to personal property by the animal. River Oak shall not be liable for loss of, or injury to, any service animal brought on the premises.

Reasonable behavior is expected from service and assistive animals while on River Oak’s property. The owners of disruptive and aggressive service/assistive animals may be asked to remove them from the facilities. Uncontrolled barking, jumping on other people, growling at people or running away from the handler are examples of unacceptable behavior for a service/assistive animal. If the improper behavior happens repeatedly, the owner may be told not to bring the service/assistive animal into any facility until the owner takes significant steps to mitigate the behavior or other accommodations can be made.

Consideration of others must be taken into account when providing maintenance and hygiene of service/assistive animals. Cleanliness of the service animal is mandatory. The owner is expected to clean and dispose of all animal waste.

Any person who knowingly and fraudulently represents himself or herself, through verbal or written notice, to be the owner or trainer of any canine licensed as, to be qualified as, or identified as, a guide, signal, or service dog, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and punishable by law. (CA Penal Code 365.7)