

KEY SERVICE ANIMAL ISSUES

Overarching issue (per Federal Register notice that convened this group): “whether to amend the definition of “service animals” that may accompany passengers with a disability on a flight.”

Current definition of a “service animal”: Any animal that is individually trained or able to provide assistance to a qualified person with a disability; or any animal shown by documentation to be necessary for the emotional well being of a passenger.

For non-U.S. carriers, the requirement is only to transport service dogs. For U.S. carriers, the requirement is service animals.

Key issues to be addressed in resolving this issue:

1. Should the rule designate eligible species and, if so, what should those species should be?
2. Should the rule eliminate the distinction between psychiatric service dogs and other service dogs?
3. Should documentation be required and, if so, under what circumstances? What documentation may be required? Who may provide it?
4. If documentation is required, how to we prevent fraud in the documentation process?
5. How do you distinguish between a pet and a service animal? Is it possible to predict reliably the animal’s behavior on the flight with its behavior in the gate area?
6. Should there be additional guidance given as to how to assess the animal’s behavior in the gate area?
7. Whether there should be a distinction in the documentation required based on the disability of the passenger?
8. Should there be a distinct emotional support animal category?
9. Should special training (i.e., disability mitigation training, public access) for the animal be required as a condition of access?
10. Should the rule allow airlines to deny passengers boarding if their animal is ineligible?
11. Should the rule specify procedures for challenging eligibility determinations by the airline, and if so, what should they be?
12. Is there something different about air travel that justifies a distinction between the ACAA and ADA?
13. Should the rule specify a limit on the number of service animals that may be brought on board by any passenger, and/or the total number of animals on a given flight?

Themes:

1. Eligibility criteria
2. Nature of the disability
3. Documentation

4. Procedural (due process, number of passengers, etc.)