



Service Animal Guidance

For health and safety reasons, animals are not allowed at Special Olympics Montana's (SOMT) trainings, competitive settings, and indoor sponsored events unless they are a trained and working service animal.

Definitions

Service Animal

Under the ADA, a service animal is defined as a dog that has been individually trained to do work or perform tasks for an individual with a disability. The task(s) performed by the dog must be directly related to the person's disability.

Emotional Support Animal

An emotional support animal does not qualify as a service animal under the ADA because emotional support animals are designed to provide comfort and have not been trained to perform a specific job or task directly related to a person's disability. For health and safety reasons, pets or emotional support animals are not allowed at SOMT training and competitive settings.

Guidance

Montana law requires that service animals must be under control, housebroken, and service animals in training must visibly display identification legible from 20 feet.

Service animals must be individually trained to perform tasks directly related to the person's disability, remain under control at all times, and not pose a direct threat to the health or safety of others at an SOMT event.

Steps

- 1.) Local Program Coordinators must declare service animals on the roster/registration form and return to the SOMT Sports Staff or local area Competition Coordinator.
- 2.) SOMT staff will follow up with the athlete and Local Program Coordinator.
- 3.) You may be asked the following questions:
 - Is the service animal required because of a disability?
 - Is the service animal trained to perform a specific task directly related to the disability?
- 4.) The service animal must meet these three observable qualities:



- The service animal is trained to remain under control at all times.
 - The service animal is house broken.
 - The service animal does not pose a direct threat to the health or safety of others.
- 5.) Special Olympics Montana reserves the right to observe the service animal in action at Special Olympics training or events to gauge if the service animal has been properly trained to where it does not represent a health or safety issue to the athlete or others.
- 6.) Based on SOMT's risk assessment, venue, and sports competition rules, SOMT reserves the right to deny participation if the service animal is determined to potentially represent a health or safety issue within a specific training or competition setting.

Refusal or Removal

- SOMT reserves the right to ask a service animal owner to remove their service animal from an SOMT competition or event if:
 - It is not under control.
 - It is not housebroken and has accidents at venues.
 - It is a direct threat to the health or safety of others.
- Owners must immediately remove their animal without disturbance to other SOMT participants or the event.
- SOMT athletes and volunteers who knowingly misrepresent an animal as a service animal will jeopardize future participation.

Non-Competitive Settings

- A service animal must meet all the observable qualities listed above in SOMT's non-competitive settings such as travel, hotel stays, and special events and follow the establishment's guidelines.
- SOMT staff and volunteers may require a service animal owner to remove their animal from an SOMT non-competitive setting if the animal is unable to meet the observable qualities listed above.

Spectators and Service Animals

- The service animal must meet all the observable qualities listed above.
- All venue guidelines must be followed.
- Service animals and owners must stay in designated spectator areas, and they are not allowed to enter competition fields.