



OSS Service Animal Policy

I. Introduction & Purpose

Ramapo College of New Jersey (the College), being mindful of the health and safety concerns of the community, generally limits the presence of privately-owned animals on campus. However, the College is also committed to accommodating students and others with disabilities that require the service of service or support animals.

Animals are only allowed on campus when they are providing service or support to a member of the College or guest to campus as a reasonable disability accommodation. This policy applies to those individuals with disabilities who will be accompanied by a service animal or who require a support animal while on campus.

“The Department of Justice published revised final regulations implementing the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) for title II (State and local government services) and title III (public accommodations and commercial facilities) on September 15, 2010, in the Federal Register. Generally, title II and title III entities must permit service animals to accompany people with disabilities in all areas where members of the public are allowed to go https://www.ada.gov/service_animals_2010.htm” .

II. Definitions of Service Animals

“Service animals are defined as dogs that are individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities. Examples of such work or tasks include guiding people who are blind, alerting people who are deaf, pulling a wheelchair, alerting and protecting a person who is having a seizure, reminding a person with mental illness to take prescribed medications, calming a person with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) during an anxiety attack, or performing other duties. Service animals are working animals, not pets. The work or task a dog has been trained to provide must be directly related to the person’s disability. Dogs whose sole function is to provide comfort or emotional support do not qualify as service animals under the ADA (https://www.ada.gov/service_animals_2010.htm)” .

III. Service Animals

Service Animals are permitted on campus when accompanying a student, guest or member of the public who has a disability as defined by the ADA (https://www.ada.gov/ada_intro.htm). When the need for a service animal is not apparent College staff (including Public Safety Officers) may ask whether the animal is a service animal, and what work or task the animal has been trained to perform for the person with a disability.

IV. Service Animals in College Housing

Though students are not obligated to do so, it is highly recommended that any student who will be accompanied by a service animal in College housing register with OSS. When applying for housing, the student may be asked to disclose to Residence Life staff that they will be accompanied by a service

animal on campus, and to describe the animal and what work or task the animal has been trained to perform.

Residential Guests

Resident students who are requesting a guest pass for a guest with a disability who may be accompanied by a service animal should disclose to Residence Life staff that the guest will be accompanied by a service animal. Students are responsible for assuring that their guests comply with this policy when on campus.

V. Responsibilities of All Persons with Disabilities Using Service Animals

1. All animal owners are responsible for any damage caused by their animal on campus and must take appropriate precautions to prevent property damage or injury. The cost of care, arrangements and responsibility for the well-being of authorized animals are the sole responsibility of the owner at all times. **Support animals housed in College residences must be crated or caged when left unattended and must not be left unattended for more than a few hours. The length of time that an animal can be left alone depends on the species, breed, age, and temperament of the animal.** Animals may not be left unattended in parked cars or tied or chained to poles, fences, etc. on campus.

2. In order to be on campus, service animals must:

A. Meet Legal Requirements: All requirements for the presence of animals in public places (vaccinations, licensure, ID tags, etc.) mandated by state or local ordinances must be followed, including but not limited to:

Licensing: The animal must meet licensing requirements and wear tags. Students authorized to bring service animals to campus must provide documentation of licensing on an annual basis. Records of such are to be maintained by OSS.

B. Be Under Control of the Owner: The animal must be under full control of the owner at all times. Reasonable behavior is expected from all service animals while on campus. If an animal exhibits unacceptable behavior, the owner is expected to employ appropriate training techniques to correct the situation. In addition:

1. When outside of the owner's residence, the animal must be on a leash or caged at all times. It should never be permitted to wander the campus off leash even when accompanied by the owner.

2. The animal must be as unobtrusive as possible when in the presence of other members of the College community.

3. Animals must be house-trained.

4. Service animals are prohibited from kitchens and food preparation areas except those in apartment residence facilities.

5. *Consequences for misbehavior:* The service animal is held to the conduct and etiquette stated in this policy. The owner is fully responsible for all actions of the service animal. When a service animal is determined to be out of control or otherwise in violation of this Policy, the College will take appropriate action to protect the health and safety of its members. Consequences for animal misconduct may include, but are not limited to, muzzling a barking dog, refresher training for the animal and its handler,

or removal from College facilities. If the actions of the animal result in a violation of the College Code of Conduct, the owner may be charged accordingly.

C. Adhere to Cleanup Rule: The owner must follow local clean up ordinances when the animal defecates. Individuals with disabilities who physically cannot clean up after their own service animal are still responsible for ensuring that waste is disposed of properly.

The Office of Environmental Health and Safety has developed a policy for the proper disposal of pet solid waste, which applies to pets as well as to support animals. The complete policy as well as the Pet Walking Authorization Form can be found at the following webpage:

[http://ww2.ramapo.edu/libfiles/HR/Environmental Health and Safety/Pet%20Waste.pdf](http://ww2.ramapo.edu/libfiles/HR/Environmental%20Health%20and%20Safety/Pet%20Waste.pdf)

VI. Conflicting Needs

It is common for persons to have a condition that precipitates an allergic reaction to animals. Persons (including College faculty or staff) who have asthma/allergy/medical issues when in prolonged close proximity with an authorized animal on campus are to be directed to make this known to OSS. The student making the complaint must provide verifiable medical documentation to support his/her claim. Action will be taken to consider the needs of both persons to resolve the problem as efficiently and effectively as possible.

The guidelines addressing such conflicting needs apply in the residence halls, as well. If there is an allergy/animal conflict within a residence hall that cannot be resolved between the two parties, then the Office of Residence Life and OSS will collaborate to reach a solution. It should be noted that if the first person that has been placed into the residence hall uses an authorized animal and another person with severe allergies then arrives, the first person would generally not be required to vacate College housing to accommodate the second person.

VII. Damages

The owner is responsible for all damages that the service animal may cause while on campus. If a student's service animal causes damage to college property, the cost of the damage will be assessed and assigned to the student's bill.

VIII. Removal of Service Animals from Campus

In cases of imminent danger or threat to the animal or others, Public Safety Officers or On-Call Administrators may order the immediate removal of a service animal. Non-emergency removals may be authorized by the Dean of Students or designee. In such cases, the owner will be notified in writing that the animal must be removed, including the reasons for removal.

A service animal may be ordered removed from any area on the campus and may be prohibited from College facilities for the following reasons:

- a. **Disruption:** A owner may be directed to remove a service animal from a public or common area on campus when the animal is unruly or disruptive (e.g. barking, snapping, running around, bringing attention to itself, jumping up on people, escaping from cage or leash). If the improper behavior happens repeatedly, the owner may be prohibited from bringing the animal to campus until the owner can demonstrate that s/he has taken significant steps to mitigate the behavior. Any animal that exhibits aggressive or unsafe behavior may be prohibited from College facilities.
- b. **Threatening behavior:** A service animal may be excluded from the campus when that animal's

behavior or condition poses a direct threat to the health and safety of others including other service animals.

- c. **Ill health**: Service animals that are ill should not be taken into public or common areas on campus. An owner with an ill service animal may be asked to remove the animal from college facilities.
- d. **Uncleanliness**: Owners must ensure that their animals are kept in sanitary conditions, and are clean and well-groomed. An owner of an animal who's condition is excessively unclean or unsanitary (e.g., flea infested, foul-smelling and/or shedding excessively, urinating or defecating inappropriately) may be asked to remove the animal from college facilities.

Should an owner's service animal be ordered removed from campus and prohibited for any reason, OSS may afford the owner the option of replacing the service animal or continuing to attend the College with other reasonable accommodations but without a service animal on campus.

IX. Public Etiquette by the Service Animal

The College has an obligation to ensure the safety of all of its employees and students as well as to take the necessary steps to eliminate any undue interruption of the educational process and overall operation of the college.

Therefore, the animal:

1. Must not be allowed to sniff people, store shelves, tables in eating areas, or personal belongings of others.
2. Must not initiate contact with someone without the owner's direct permission.
3. Must not display any behaviors or noises that are disruptive to others, such as barking, whining, or growling; scratching doors or chewing on furniture or personal belongings of others.
4. Must avoid excessive personal grooming in public settings.
5. Must not block an aisle or passageway.
6. Must be trained not to be attracted to food that may be in common areas.
7. Be housetrained when accompanying the owner inside campus facilities.

An owner may be issued a verbal or written warning by College staff whenever a service animal exhibits poor etiquette on campus. Such warnings will be documented on a Public Safety Incident Report or report filed by a Residence Life Staff member, depending upon the circumstances surrounding the behavior. All such reports will be sent to the Dean of Students. Following an etiquette warning, the owner is expected to take action to train the animal to prevent re-occurrence of the offending behavior. If etiquette warnings for animal misconduct are repeatedly issued to an owner, the service animal may be ordered removed from College facilities, or the owner may be subject to disciplinary action under the Student Code of Conduct.

X. Areas of Safety

It may be considered unsafe for service animals to be present in certain areas of College facilities, or during specific educational or recreational activities on campus. Each place or activity will be considered as to its risk potential by College staff, including a representative from the OSS, the area director or professor, and the college risk management team. OSS will arrange reasonable accommodations when it is determined unsafe for the service animal to accompany a disabled student in one of these areas or College activities.

XI. Appeal Procedures

If a student is told not to bring a service animal to campus because of poor behavior, and the student with a disability believes they have been discriminated against because of their disability, they may appeal this decision in writing to the Office of Affirmative Action and Workplace Compliance.

Appeals must state a specific reason(s) for why the owner believes the request should be reconsidered. The College officials may consider records and information relevant to the owner's appeal, whether submitted by the owner or obtained from any College office or staff person, including OSS and the Public Safety Office. A decision on a service animal appeals shall be issued by the Office of Affirmative Action and Workplace Compliance in writing and shall be the final administrative action of the College.

XII. Modification and Enforcement

The College reserves the right to amend and enforce this policy at its discretion.

Contacts

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