

Guide Dogs for the Blind Inc.  
P.O. Box #151200  
San Rafael, California  
Ca. #94915 – 1200.

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Dear Business Owner / Manager,

Are you concerned about the growing number of people who misrepresent their pets as guide or service dogs? Have you ever suspected that someone was trying to pass off a pet as a guide or service dog, but were uncertain about how to handle the situation? The purpose of this letter is to let you know the overwhelming majority of people who use certified guide or service dogs are on your side. We share your concern, and would like you to know what your rights are to help keep public spaces safe for all who want to patronize businesses, whether or not a guide or service dog accompanies them.

The following are answers to some of the most frequently asked questions about the rights of business owners and the rights of their customers who are accompanied by their guide and service dogs. A guide or service dog is a dog trained to perform specific tasks for a person with a disability that mitigates his/her disability. Some examples of tasks performed include guiding those who are blind, alerting people who are deaf, pulling a wheelchair, alerting and protecting a person who is having a seizure, performing a specific action that reminds a person with mental illness to take prescribed medications, or performing a behaviour designed to interrupt anxiety or panic for a person with PTSD.

The British Columbia Guide Dog and Service Dog Act (Bill 17), the BC Human Rights Code and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms protects the rights of equal access to all public places and businesses for persons with disabilities accompanied by a guide or service dog. As many disabilities, including visual impairments, are not obvious, the best indicator of a legitimate guide dog team is to observe the behaviour of the dog.

There is no need to ask to see identification unless the dog or the team is behaving in a disruptive manner that is not justified. Certified guide and service dog schools issue identification cards to their graduate teams. Look for the International Guide Dog Federation (IGDF) or Assistance Dogs International (ADI) logo for authenticity of a cardholder.

Please also keep the following points in mind:

- Not all disabilities, including visual impairments, are visible.
- If a guide dog or service dog is disrupting customers; you have the authority to request the handler to control his or her dog. If the handler is unable to control the dog, you may ask the handler to remove the dog from the premises.

Guide dogs and service dogs cannot occupy a seat in restaurants or on public transit;  
The guide dog or service dog must be managed by a leash or harness.

On behalf of those of us who depend on our guide and service dogs for our independence and freedom, thank you for making your business an accessible, positive, and welcoming experience for all customers. I hope this information is helpful to you. If you have additional

questions, please visit **guidedogs.com** to learn more about how guide dogs are trained for service.

Yours sincerely,

The Guide Dogs for the Blind Alumni Association Board of Directors

Additional information about the British Columbia Guide Dog and Service Dog Act is found at the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General's website for the legislation, certification and contact numbers.

Main website page link:

<http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/justice/human-rights/guide-and-service-dog>

General Public information:

<http://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/law-crime-and-justice/human-rights/guide-animals/gdsa-public-info.pdf>