



Accredited DVA assistance dogs accessing public places and transport



FACTSHEET

It is important for veterans with an accredited assistance dog from the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) to be informed of their rights about accessing public places such as restaurants and cafés, and travelling with their dog on public transport.

Rights of veterans with an assistance dog

If you have an accredited DVA assistance dog, you and your dog are legally allowed to enter public places, including travelling on public transport. There are some exceptions, including:

- where your assistance animal has an infectious disease and denying you access is reasonably necessary to protect public health or other animals
- where allowing you access would impose an 'unjustifiable hardship', such as where access would cause major difficulties or unreasonable costs
- where the operator or the pilot in command of a flight reasonably believes that the assistance animal may have an adverse effect on the safety of the flight.

The *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Cth) outlines the rights of those with assistance animals for individuals with disabilities, including mental health conditions.

Accessing public places and transport with an assistance dog

While there is currently no national standard within Australia to identify accredited assistance dogs, it is unlawful to deny entry of an assistance dog and there are a few things you can do if you are refused access to a public space or transport, including:

- telling the operator that your dog is a working accredited assistance dog
- showing them your ID handler card as evidence of your dog's accreditation

- making sure your dog is wearing its assistance dog coat
- telling that operator that you are legally allowed to access the service with your assistance dog under your relevant state legislation or the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Cth).

You may also wish to report the incident to the venue or transport provider or make a complaint to the Australian Human Rights Commission. The Commission has the power to investigate and attempt to conciliate complaints of discrimination under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Cth). More information is available here: [Complaints | Australian Human Rights Commission](#).

Obligations for public places and transport providers

Accredited assistance dogs are not pets. These dogs are a highly trained support service that allows a veteran to safely participate in personal and public life activities.

Under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Cth), an assistance dog supporting an individual with a disability or mental health condition is allowed access to all public spaces and services.

Veterans supplied with an assistance dog from DVA receive individualised training with their dog to develop their working relationship, including awareness that when the dog is wearing its coat, the dog is actively providing support to the veteran.

Operators of public places and transport are reminded that it is against the law to deny a veteran with an accredited DVA assistance dog access to a public place or travel on services such as a taxi, bus, train.

Veterans must be allowed to access these services when travelling with their accredited assistance dog.

More information

For more information, visit the [DVA website](#).