

HOPE CHAPEL

SERVICE ANIMAL POLICY

In concert with the American Disabilities Act (ADA), Hope Chapel defines service animals as *“dogs that are 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.”* (ADA Revised Requirements: https://www.ada.gov/service_animals_2010.htm)

Examples of such work or tasks include, but are not limited to, assisting 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.

WHAT MAY WE ASK ABOUT A DOG?

When it is not obvious what service an animal provides, the Hope staff or leaders may ask two questions of the handler: 1) is the dog a service animal required because of a disability? and 2) what work or task has the dog been trained to perform? One cannot ask if the animal has documentation proving it is a service animal, nor is it required that the animal wears any type of vest showing it is a service animal, nor inquire about the nature of the person's disability.

Although Hope Chapel is under no legal obligation to admit individuals with service animals into houses of worship because it is exempt from Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Hope Chapel policy allows the use of service dogs in all areas with the exception of the children’s areas. Other types of service animals or comfort pets are not permitted anywhere on Hope Chapel’s campus.

Hope Chapel desires to be inclusive of all people with disabilities and to ensure freedom to worship for everyone. We have a responsibility to provide a safe environment for all people at Hope Chapel.

Therefore, if someone attends our services with a service animal we expect the service animal and the handlers to meet the following ADA standards and expectations:

- Service animals remain with their handlers while on campus.
- Service animals will not sit on church furniture.
- Service animals must be harnessed, leashed, or tethered, unless these devices interfere with the service animal's work or the individual's disability prevents using these devices. In that case, the individual must maintain control of the animal through voice, signal, or other effective controls.
- Service animals must not whine, bark, grumble, or make other noises (example: snoring). An exception may be if the whining is an alert, such as to notify the handler who is experiencing a physical complication.
- Service animals must not obstruct an area used for emergency evacuation. Hope Chapel leadership may make exceptions to this policy to accommodate unique events and situations.

MAY WE DEMAND THAT A DISRUPTIVE DOG BE REMOVED?

Yes. If a dog displays excessive barking, or howling, or if it growls or lunges at people, church leadership may ask that the dog be removed immediately. The person may return without the dog.

We expect service dogs at Hope Chapel to have exemplary behavior and good manners, and remain quiet and docile. Service dogs will not damage property or defecate/urinate indoors. In every case the dog owner/handler must clean up after their service dog.

Trainers of service dogs may be exempted from the disability clause, but their dogs in training must comply with all ADA requirements listed above.

EMOTIONAL SUPPORT ANIMAL (ESA) POLICY

Hope Chapel defines an Emotional Support Animal (ESA) as an animal (typically a cat or dog) that provides a therapeutic benefit to its owner through companionship and is not specifically trained or certified to perform tasks for a person who suffers from emotional, psychiatric or mental health-related disabilities. Under the law, an ESA does not qualify as a service animal and, thus, is not granted legal access to places of public accommodations by the American Disabilities Act (ADA).

Persons wishing to access the Hope Chapel campus with their ESA should obtain prior approval from pastoral staff. Approval is strictly on a case-by-case basis. ESA animals will be held to the same standards of behavior listed above for ADA animals.

Instructions for Pastors:

For a person to qualify for an emotional support animal, he/she must be considered emotionally disabled by a licensed mental health professional (therapist, psychologist, psychiatrist, etc.) as evidenced by a properly formatted letter. **The letter must be dated, written on his/her letterhead, include his/her license type, number, date of license, and state in which the license was issued.** The letter should state:

- You are currently his/her patient.
- Are under his/her care for the treatment of mental disability found in the DSM IV or V (the Diagnostic and Statistical manual of mental Disorders, version 4 or 5).
- Your disability substantially limits at least one major life activity.
- He/she prescribes for you an emotional support animal (the numbers and types of animals) as a necessary treatment for your mental health. Unless a member of the leadership staff grants approval, an ESA is not permitted access to the campus for Sunday Services or other classes, events, and programs. Therefore, requests for appointments should be made well in advance of a plan to attend. Persons with ESAs who are

granted permission will receive a special identifier for staff, ushers, greeters, and other leadership to readily identify their ESA as approved. Approved ESAs must comply with all expectations listed under the service animal policy. In addition, ESAs are not permitted in areas of the church where the handler's presence is not necessary.

Courtesy and Respect:

We ask that all Service Animals and ESA handlers please limit your seating and walking areas to be sensitive to our members with animal allergies. We ask that during services you would sit in the rear of the sanctuary.

Should an ESA not comply with these expectations, the owner will be asked to remove their ESA from the campus immediately, and approval of the ESA may be revoked.

Hope Chapel seeks to maintain a clean, healthy environment for our members and guests. Please do not allow your animals to emit bodily fluids of any type while in the facilities including drool, urine, blood, feces, or semen.