

Veterans Park Pool Service Animal Policy 62124

Purpose: This policy ensures compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) by guaranteeing access for individuals with disabilities and their service animals to the Veterans Park Pool. It also prioritizes the health and safety of all patrons.

Definitions:

- **Service Animal:** A dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of a qualified individual with a disability. Examples include guiding people who are blind, alerting people who are deaf, or mitigating the effects of a disability. (Source: ADA Service Animals Definition)
- **Qualified Individual with a Disability (i.e.: qualified handler, handler):** A person with a disability who requires the use of a service animal for assistance.
- **Emotional Support Animal (ESA):** An animal that provides comfort or emotional support but is not trained to perform specific tasks to assist with a disability.

Guidelines:

1. **Access:** Service animals must be allowed to accompany their qualified handlers in all public areas of the pool facility, including the pool deck and seating areas. ESAs are not permitted in the pool area.
2. **Documentation:** Pool staff may request verification that the dog is a service animal. However, only limited inquiries are allowed. Staff can ask:
 - Is the dog a service animal required because of a disability?
 - What work or task has the dog been trained to perform?
 - **Documentation cannot be requested (medical records, ID cards, training certificates).**
3. **Hygiene:** Service dogs must be clean and well-groomed.
4. **Behavior:** Service dogs must be under their handler's control at all times and must not exhibit disruptive behavior, such as barking or aggression. Service dogs cannot be left unaccompanied within the facility at any time.
5. **Water Access:** dogs are not allowed to enter the water.

Enforcement: Pool staff will be trained to identify service animals and understand their rights under the ADA. In case of a disagreement regarding a dog's status or behavior, the Pool Supervisor will make the final decision. If a service dog disrupts the pool environment or poses a safety risk, the handler may be asked to remove the animal from the facility. If the service animal or handler do not follow the rules/policy they could be asked to leave the facility.

Please Note:

- Allergies and fear of dogs are not valid reasons for denying access to individuals with service animals. Reasonable accommodations will be made to address concerns. (Example: Separating the person with the allergy or fear and the service animal and their handler to different sections of the grassy area).
- Emotional support animals are not service animals under the ADA and are not permitted in the pool area.
- Staff should consult with the Supervising Guard on duty for assistance, questions, comments or concerns if needed.

