

Town of Shapleigh

Animals in Town Buildings

Adopted: November 21, 2023

While Emotional Support Animals or Comfort Animals are often used as part of a medical treatment plan as therapy animals, they are not considered service animals under the ADA.

Whereas, the State of Maine does not recognize emotional support animals (ESAs) for public access rights as it does service animals, emotional support animals *may* be denied access to public places.

In Maine, a service animal is a dog that is individually trained to do work or tasks to benefit someone with a disability, including an intellectual, mental, psychiatric, sensory, or physical disability.

Examples of service animals that must be allowed into public places are:

- hearing dogs, which alert their handlers to important sounds, such as alarms, doorbells, and other signals
- guide dogs, which help those who are blind or visually impaired navigate safely
- psychiatric service animals, which help their handlers manage mental and emotional disabilities by, for example, interrupting self-harming behaviors, reminding handlers to take medication, checking spaces for intruders, or providing calming pressure during anxiety or panic attacks
- seizure alert animals, which let their handlers know of impending seizures, and may also guard their handlers during seizure activity, and
- allergen alert animals, which let their handlers know of foods or other substances that could be dangerous (such as peanuts).

While the Town of Shapleigh generally welcomes animals that are well behaved, leashed, and under owner control; an attendee of a public proceeding may be asked by the Town Official overseeing a meeting or public space, to remove the animal from a public building when the presence of the animal may inhibit other attendees' ability to attend. For example: an attendee with a specific animal allergy or a general fear of the animal.

There may be other instances when non-service animals may not attend events for sanitary reasons, including but not limited to; a public meal or a healthcare service setting.