

6. Assisting Assistance Dog Users

1) What is an assistance dog?

Under the Act on Assistance Dogs for Physically Disabled Persons, it is obligatory to allow assistance dogs (i.e. guide dogs, service dogs, and hearing dogs) into event venues. If others at the venue complain about the presence of an assistance dog, explain that the event organizer is required to accept its presence by law and that assistance dogs are clean, well-trained, and do not harm or cause trouble to anyone.

The category of each assistance dog is indicated on its harness or cape. If you notice a person with an assistance dog, ask the person if he/she needs further help, and provide assistance if and as desired. Remember to inform yourself beforehand to be able to explain how to get to the nearest washroom for use with an assistance dog. Do not give orders directly to an assistance dog; do not pet or touch it. Dogs are sensitive to heat; to prevent heatstroke, remember to lead persons with an assistance dog to the shades, whenever deemed necessary.

2) Assisting a service dog user

A service dog is trained to assist a person with an upper or lower limb impairment in performing daily tasks. A service dog lives with its user who needs a wheelchair or cane for mobility.

Basic points

When a service dog user gets in a car or moves to a chair, the dog needs to be retained temporarily by someone else in some cases. If the dog user also needs to be assisted in making such a move, you and another staff member must be there to provide assistance.

When using an elevator, to ensure its safety, a service dog must be in a fixed position vis-à-vis the wheelchair. Ask the service dog user about the dog's position beforehand.

3) Assisting a guide dog user

A guide dog is trained to assist a person with a visual impairment in walking outdoors safely. A guide dog leads its user in directions ordered by him/her, navigate obstacles, and stop to indicate a corner or a change in surface level.

Basic points

You may assist a guide dog user in the same manner as you would a white cane holder, by following the dog and dog user from behind, or by leading them in front of them. Ask the guide dog user how he/she wants to be assisted. If you encounter difficulty, contact the Headquarters and seek advice.

Precautions

When a guide dog is blocking a path, or the dog's tail is in danger of being stepped on by passers-by, inform the guide

dog user promptly. If you notice someone petting or trying to feed a guide dog, explain to this person that guide dogs should not be touched, and also inform the guide dog user of the incident.

4) Assisting a hearing dog user

A hearing dog is trained to assist a person with a hearing impairment by alerting him/her to sounds that must be distinguished in daily life (such as doorbell, fire alarm, and automobile honk from behind).

Basic points

Hearing dogs vary in size and breed and are most likely to be mistaken for a mere pet. Do not make assumptions about hearing dogs (about their stand-by position, etc.) based on your knowledge of guide dogs.

Precautions

Hearing dog users, because of their appearance that does not necessarily show their impairment, can be often mistaken for a person with a pet dog. When a hearing dog and its user enter a given venue, inform the Headquarters immediately to share the information among the venue staff so that the hearing dog user need not be “interrogated” repeatedly about the dog.