

**SERVICE ANIMAL RELIEF AREAS
IN AIRPORTS:
A GUIDE FROM ODO**

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1. Introduction:

What is a Service Animal Relief Area (SARA) and who uses it?

For more than 100 years, people with disabilities have relied on service animals and service animals to live and travel independently. These animals provide assistance such as

- guiding for people who are blind or visually impaired
- alerting to sounds for people who are deaf or hard of hearing
- alerting to medical conditions such as seizures
- providing physical assistance such as picking up dropped items, pulling wheelchairs for people with mobility disabilities.



When people with disabilities using service animals travel by air, they must plan for the care and feeding of their animals. Like their human handlers, the service animals' greatest need when arriving after a long flight is to be relieved, so handlers always seek "relief areas" (bathrooms) at the airport.

SARAs are locations in airports where passengers with disabilities can allow their service animals to relieve themselves. As of May 13, 2009, airlines are required to insure that the airports they use provide such relief areas. Relief areas vary greatly so this guide provides direction and instruction to increase the universal use and functionality of your relief area.

2. Statistics:

Who travels with a service animal?

Approximately 10,000 people who are blind or visually impaired in the U.S. use service animals as guides, and 5,000 people in Great Britain use them. Many other individuals with disabilities use service animals for alerting them to sounds, retrieving objects, or for balance. There is not sufficient data for this segment of teams but we estimate about 4,000 teams in the US and 2000 in Great Britain. Data does not exist regarding how many service animal teams travel by air.

However, relief areas will also be enjoyed by the 2 million U. S. passengers traveling with animals, in addition to the unknown portion of the 55 million U.S. Americans with disabilities who travel by air, and marketing your relief area to this clientele is just good business.

3. Laws and regulations:

What are the federal requirements?

As of May 13, 2009, the Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disability in Air Travel Final Rule, Part 382 amendment to the Department of Transportation's Federal Register to the Air Carriers Access Act, section Subsection D, 382.51.5, reads "In cooperation with the airport operator and in consultation with local service animal training organizations, [the airline and airport] must provide animal relief areas for service animals that accompany passengers departing, connecting, or arriving at an airport on [that airline's] flights."

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, these relief areas must be accessible to and accommodate all persons with disabilities. Handlers should be escorted to this area should they need assistance, and the distance to get to this area should not delay the standard one-hour layover time for persons on connecting flights.

All domestic *and* foreign carriers must meet these requirements within one year of the release date of this Rule, May 13, 2010.

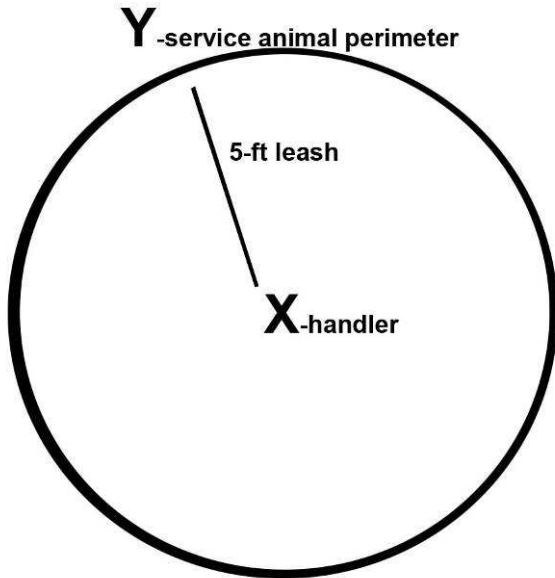
4. Animal behaviors:

How are service animals trained?

Service animals are trained by a wide variety of organizations, with more than 100 of them accredited by an international organization. Additionally individuals can self-train a service animal. However, service animals are generally trained not to relieve

themselves inside. The two largest schools for animals that guide blind handlers train their animals to relieve on concrete and asphalt.

Once home, many individuals with disabilities do not reinforce this flexible training, allowing their animals to relieve in a fenced yard with grass, thus the animal develops a preference for grass.



Escort stands outside animal's perimeter

Animals are typically trained to relieve themselves by walking around their handlers on an extended, 5-foot leash. Once they relieve, the handler then moves to the animal, picks up after them, and looks for a trash receptacle. Escorts assisting people with disabilities using animals to guide for vision should step back from the person during the relieving process, to allow the animal to make the circle.

Escorts should also offer assistance pointing the handler towards the trash receptacle.

5. People who use Service Animals:

How do we meet their needs?



People who use service animals know their animals' needs best, so staff should always ask first how they can assist every individual. People who use animals as sight guides may either ask to take the escort's left arm or may ask the individual to walk behind their right shoulder and provide verbal directions.

Others may choose to have the animal follow the escort. Relieving can often be accomplished while waiting on baggage so little extra time is needed if airport relief areas are convenient to baggage claim. However if travelers are connecting through the airport to another location, their needs and the

needs of their service animal should be met within reasonable time during the standard 1-hour layover.

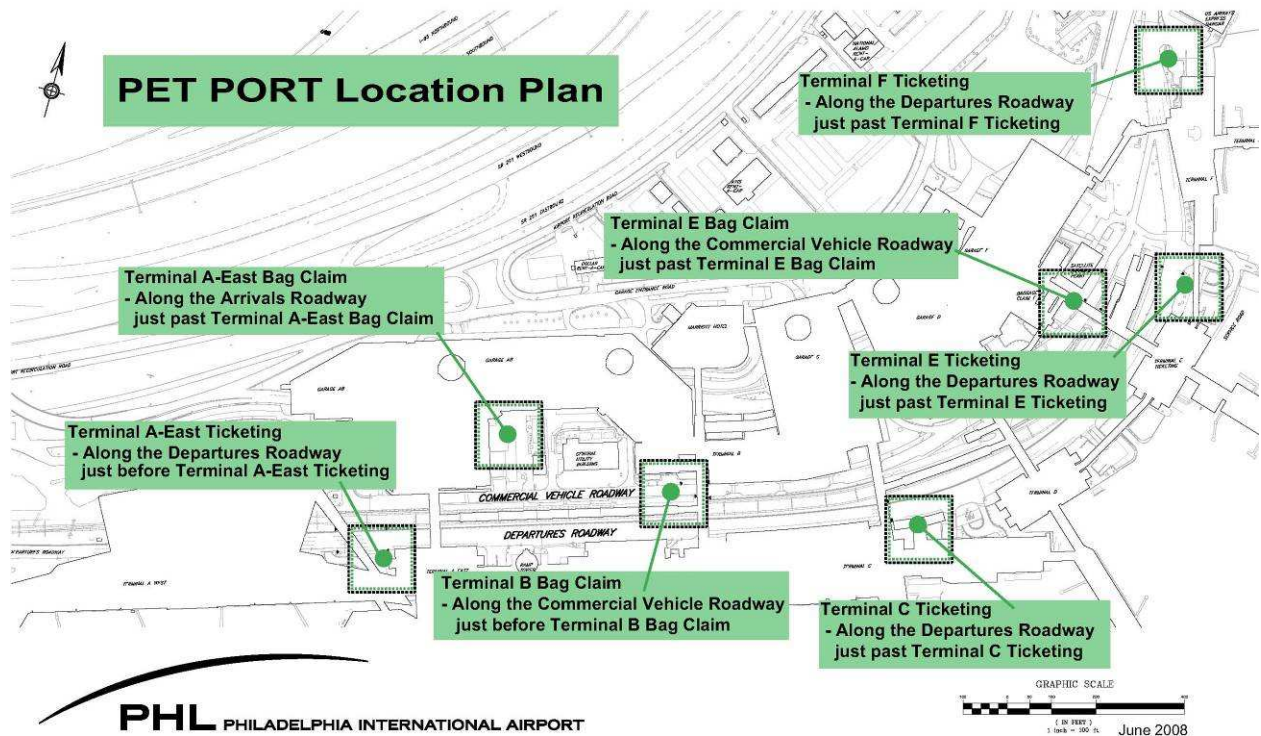
6. Location:

How do we make the areas easy to find?

Per the statement in CFR 14 Part 382, "...animals that accompany passengers departing, connecting, or arriving at an airport," you must consider all travel scenarios when building your animal relief area(s). Based on the size of your airport, the number of animal relief areas should be in ratio to comply with the time allowance of a standard one-hour layover for connecting travelers.

For smaller, regional airports, a single animal relief area at the central check-in and baggage claim location is sufficient.

For larger and hub airports, multiple animal relief areas will be needed in order to meet the time requirements for connecting passengers. If a passenger cannot disembark the plane (accounting that passengers with disabilities are often last of the plane), visit the animal relief area, and return to their connecting flight prior to boarding within the standard one-hour layover period, additional relief areas must be developed. For some airports, these locations will be inside security for connecting passengers at every terminal or centrally located between two terminals if the distance is permissible.



7. Design and materials:

How do we make this area appealing to animals?

To be appealing to the animals, we recommend that service animal relief areas should include the following:

- Approximately 60 square feet to allow a service animal on leash to walk around its handler
- Grass surface if possible since many animals are not trained to relieve on bark or concrete
- Accessible entrance and features for ease of use by wheelchair users
- Pooper Scooper with long handle
- Pick-up bags (preferably biodegradable)
- Trash receptacle
- Water source and drainage for maintenance
- Water bowls as most traveling animals get dehydrated
- Signage about usage and responsible behavior (use of pick-up bags)
- Safety lighting as needed
- Accessories that encourage relief such as shrubs or fire hydrants are exceptional.



Indoor locations must be more carefully designed and maintained to be effective, but can often prove to be tidier and easier to maintain.

Materials like water bowls and scoopers can be permanently attached to avoid theft.

8. Signage:

What signs do we need at our area?

Your relief area is of no use to your customers if they cannot find it!

The signage for your service animal relief area(s) should be placed throughout your airport at central locations, such as where locator maps, information booths, and other location devices exist. Signage should direct both sighted and blind users to the area, including talking signage or Braille where funds are available.

Escorts and airport personnel should be educated regularly on locations to further assist blind handlers with service animals, and should be trained to ask handlers if they need the relief area, to assist travelers who might not know these areas exist. Example: “Sir, I see you’re traveling with your service animal and there is an animal relief area nearby, would you like me to escort you and your animal to this area?”

In addition, signage at the relief area should educate on the location of the pick-up bags and trash receptacle, as well as the usage of these two items with accompanying text regarding responsibility and keeping the area tidy for other users.



9. Maintenance:

How do we keeping the area clean and operable?

The Animal Relief Area must be maintained regularly in order to keep it clean and operable, keeping in mind that many users will be blind and unable to see waste on the ground, therefore keeping it clean is even more important.

All service animal owners are taught to pick up after themselves, and your signage and pick-up bags will further encourage this so that the area is not full of animal waste. Visible and locatable trash receptacles are vital at keeping the area free of waste as well. "Green bags" for biodegradable waste can be used to reduce odors.

As grass will need to be watered regularly to stay green, creating areas with a watering system will not only keep the area alive, but will regularly dilute the liquid waste as well.

In addition, a designated maintenance crew should regularly check the area for trash and waste, empty the trash receptacles, and refill the animal waste pick-up bag dispensers.

Indoor facilities will need to be checked more often than outdoor facilities, but if worked into the existing plumbing system, should be generally cleaner and easier to maintain.

10. Marketing:

How do we promote our animal relief area?

Marketing these areas further promotes the willing compliance and achievements of your airport and air carriers, and can even be used to draw more customers to your airport for use of this area. We suggest you highlight the new relief area in your advertisements, at information booths, in written materials, and on the World Wide Web. We suggest you photograph your relief area in use, and publicize this addition, not only for persons with disabilities but for all persons who travel with their animals.

Airport maps are routinely offered on airport web sites but are often not accessible to travelers who are blind. Text descriptions of airport layout are easily crafted and should include what basic services (check in, security, baggage, etc.) are on which levels. They also can include which restaurants are across from which gates along with locations of bathrooms, water fountains and ATMs. For example: "Across from Gate 5 in Terminal C are restrooms, water fountains and the Big Burger Restaurant."

Instructions for animal relief areas might read something like: "The service animal relief area is located out the doors closest to baggage claim, to the left about sixty feet."

11. Resources:

Where can I find more information?

Airport-Specific Information

www.servicedogcentral.org/content/node/513

www.petfriendlytravel.com/airports

Service Animal Organizations/Schools

Assistance Animals International

www.assistanceanimalsinternational.org/membersstatecountry.php

Canine Companions for Independence

www.cci.org

Delta Society

www.deltasociety.org

Guide Animals for the Blind

www.guideanimals.com

Guide Animal Users, Inc.

<http://www.gdui.org>

International Guide Animal Federation

www.igdf.org.uk

International Association of Assistance Animal Partners

www.iaadp.org

The Seeing Eye

www.seeingeye.org/

Equipment Suppliers

Mutt Mitts -- www.muttmitt.com

Poop pickup – www.yuckos.com

Green Bags – www.poopbags.com

Fire Hydrants – www.pawesome.net

Animal Bowls -- www.onlypetsupplies.com/AutoFeeders