

A helping hand

Guide, hearing and assistance dogs perform a range of tasks to help a person with disability in their everyday lives.

Guide dogs help people who are blind or vision-impaired to move freely in the community.

Hearing dogs alert their deaf or hearing-impaired handlers to specific sounds, such as a phone ringing, an alarm sounding, or a baby crying.

Assistance dogs help people with disability, or specific medical conditions, which reduce their capacity to have independent access to the community. They may help to open and close doors, pick up items or help with balance for people with mobility impairments, or alert and support people with medical conditions to a change in blood sugar levels, an oncoming seizure, or with psychiatric disorders e.g. a pending panic attack

Many Queenslanders can't live without them.

That is why certified guide, hearing and assistance dogs are provided access all public areas of our community, public passenger vehicles and places of accommodation

The *Guide, Hearing and Assistance Dogs Act 2009* confirms these rights, and significant fines apply if individuals or businesses deny access to a certified dog.

Individuals in control of a public place, public passenger vehicle or place of accommodation can be fined if they:

- deny entry or access, or refuse to serve them

- separate the person with a disability from their dog
- charge extra for the dog

*In addition to the *Guide, Hearing and Assistance Dogs Act 2009*, it may be unlawful under the *Queensland Anti-Discrimination Act 1991* and the *Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992* to discriminate by refusing entry or access to a public place because a person relies on a guide, hearing or assistance dog.*

Respect the badge

Certified guide, hearing and assistance dogs can be almost any breed, and will be easily recognised by the badge on their coat or harness.

Some dogs may wear other badges or branding in addition to this badge of certification.

Handlers accompanied by a certified dog including trainers will also carry an approved identity card.

This identification is required for the handler and certified dog to access a public place, including restaurants, cafes, shops, cinemas, sporting and entertainment venues.

It also means they can travel in buses, taxis, trains, ferries and other public passenger vehicles; and they can access places of accommodation (including rental and holiday)

Exceptions include food preparation areas, such as kitchens and some particular health service facilities and vehicles e.g. ambulance, where the presence of the dog would pose a risk to the health and welfare of people ordinarily at the place or on the vehicle.

How are dogs certified?

Once the handler/s and dog have completed their training, and passed a public access test administered by a trainer approved under the Act they can become certified. This ensures they are safe in a public place or public passenger vehicle, and able to be controlled by the Primary Handler, the person with disability who is able to physically control the dog, or the Alternative Handler, an adult whom the primary handler relies on, to physically control the dog.

Any dog that displays aggressive behaviour such as growling, biting or raising hackles will not pass the public access test. Also, any dog that toilets indiscriminately in a building or shows uncontrollable behaviour will fail the test.

Dogs certified under the Act must have ongoing review of their trained skills and behaviours to ensure they remain safe and effective in a public place, public passenger vehicle, and are able to be controlled by their handlers.

Certified dogs must be de-sexed and vaccinated, and not a restricted breed, or declared a dangerous dog under local law.

Etiquette

When you meet a person with a guide, hearing or assistance dog, it's important to remember that the dog is working.

Keep in mind that even though it may appear that the handler and dog team is not performing a task at that moment, the dog is still on call and must give their full attention to the person they are accompanying. Here are a few tips:

Do

- speak to the person first
- keep in mind that the dog has a very important job to do
- know that the dog loves to work and is well treated
- remember that the dog is highly trained
- teach others that the dog is working
- be aware that guide, hearing and assistance dogs are allowed in public places, on public passenger vehicles and in places of accommodation.

Don't

- talk to, call, or make sounds at the dog
- touch the dog without asking – and receiving – permission
- be offended if asked not to pat the dog
- feed the dog
- give commands to the dog – this is the handler's job
- ask personal questions about the person's disability or intrude on their privacy
- be offended if the person declines to chat about the dog.

More information

For more information about the *Guide, Hearing and Assistance Dogs Act 2009* contact:

Telephone: 13 QGOV (13 74 68)

TTY: 133 677

(Calls from mobile telephones are charged at applicable rates)

Email: ghad@communities.qld.gov.au

Postal address:

Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services

Guide, Hearing and Assistance Dogs

GPO Box 806

Brisbane QLD 4001

Online: www.qld.gov.au/ghadogs

Lodging a complaint

Address: Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services

Complaints Unit

GPO Box 806

Brisbane QLD 4001

Phone: 1800 080 464

Email: feedback@communities.qld.gov.au

Lodge online: <http://www.qld.gov.au/contact-us/complaints/#online>

TTY: 133 677



Access rights for
guide, hearing and
assistance dogs



Queensland
Government