

Oregon Coast Aquarium Service Animal Policy

We welcome guests with disabilities who choose to bring their trained service animal into the Aquarium. A printed copy of this policy may be obtained at the Aquarium's Front Desk.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) defines a "service animal" as dogs, and in some cases, miniature horses that are individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities. If they meet this definition, dogs are considered service animals under the ADA regardless of whether they have been licensed or certified by a state or local government. ADA requires service animals to be harnessed, leashed or tethered unless these devices interfere with the service animal's work, or the individual's disability prevents using these devices. In that case, the individual must maintain control of the animal through voice, signal, or other effective controls. The care and supervision of a service animal is solely the responsibility of his or her owner.

Service animals are working animals, not pets. The work or task a dog has been trained to provide must be directly related to the person's disability.

Dogs whose sole function is to provide comfort or emotional support and therapy dogs do not qualify as "service animals".

Dogs that provide a service to others not present (dogs in-training) do qualify as "service animals".

A service animal may be excluded from the Aquarium when that animal's behavior poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others. Examples are vicious behavior towards other guests, a dog that is out of control and the handler cannot or does not regain control, or if the dog is not housebroken. If a service animal is excluded, the individual with the disability who uses the service animal must have the option of continuing to enjoy the Aquarium.

The Oregon Coast Aquarium is responsible for the health and wellbeing of collections of birds, marine mammals, and other animals. In the event that a service animal's presence within certain areas of the Aquarium is demonstrated to cause the animals in that area undue stress or anxiety, or present the potential for injury or illness, we reserve the right to designate such sensitive areas as off-limits. Sensitive areas may be designated as a result of new births or hatchings, nesting or breeding behavior in progress, or new animals in exhibits.

Currently, the following locations that are visited during behind-the-scenes tours at the Oregon Coast Aquarium are designated as sensitive areas, and thus off limits to service animals:

- Pelican holding enclosure and bird rehabilitation area
- Marine Mammal holding area during Seal & Sea Lion Kisses encounter program

So that our guests with a disability may enjoy the Aquarium to the fullest, Aquarium staff members will be made available to hold/walk the service animal while other Aquarium staff accompany the guest to these sensitive areas during part of a regularly scheduled program/tour.

While service animals are permitted in other behind-the-scenes areas as a part of tours/programs, owners should be aware that access to these areas requires all participants, including the service animal, [to step into disinfectant footbaths upon entering and exiting to maintain a safe environment for the animals in the Aquarium's collection. Information on the disinfectant utilized can be found on the Aquarium's website or at the Aquarium's Front Desk.](#)

Owners of service dogs should also be aware that access to the Passages of the Deep behind-the-scenes areas requires utilizing two flights of industrial steel stairs with rough, porous treads.

Definitions:

Disability: A physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities.

Service animal: An animal which is trained to do a task or service directly related to a disability. Oregon state law also uses "assistance animal."

Companion animal: An animal that provides emotional support, comfort or companionship.

Pet Areas:

The Oregon Coast Aquarium has several animal/pet areas located in or around the parking lots with complimentary cleanup bags and nearby garbage cans. These areas include the south side of the Sea Otter parking lot and the south side of the Wolf Eel parking lot. A map showing these areas is available on the Aquarium's website or at the Aquarium's Front Desk.