

Pets/Service Animals on Camp Policy

It is the intent of the Golden Spread Council to welcome all registered scouts, leaders, and others to our camps and to keep everyone safe and be able to have an enjoyable experience. We do not allow personal pets of any kind on the camp other than personal pets of the onsite Ranger.

We understand the importance of service animals and we would like to be as accommodating as possible. Using guidance from the American Camping Association (ACA) the following is provided:

Service animals must be dogs. Importantly, the work or tasks performed for the camper by the service animal must be directly related to the camper's disability. A service dog is a dog "trained to perform tasks for an individual with disability — including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, or intellectual disability." Examples of tasks include, but are not limited to, assisting individuals who are blind or have low vision; alerting individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing; providing nonviolent protection or rescue work; pulling a wheelchair; assisting an individual during a seizure; alerting individuals to the presence of allergens or a change in blood sugar levels; retrieving items; providing physical support and assistance with balance and stability; and helping persons with psychiatric and neurological disabilities by preventing or interrupting impulsive or destructive behaviors.⁹

In determining whether the animal qualifies as a service animal, the camp is allowed to ask only two questions:

1. Is the animal required by the camper because of a disability?
2. What work/task has the animal been trained to perform?

Note that an emotional support animal whose purpose is to provide comfort (that does not otherwise qualify as a service animal) is not considered a service animal and is not authorized to be on the camp.

The camper is allowed to take the service animal in all areas of the facility/place where the program participants, etc., are allowed to go. The exception is the kitchen at camp. No animals will be allowed in that area of the facility. In the dining hall, the dog must remain next to the camper at all times and not allow to roam/visit other campers or eat inside the facility.

The service animal is subject to local dog licensing and registration requirements and must be compliant with public health laws (required vaccinations, etc.). The camp will not ask for or require proof of a service animal's certification or licensing (as a service animal), and the animal is not required to wear a vest or other indicator verifying its status as a service animal.

The service animal must be tethered (harness, leash, or other tether), unless, because of a disability, the handler is unable to use a tether, or a tether would interfere with the service animal's safe and effective performance of the work. If tethering isn't an option, the animal must be under voice control, hand signals, or other effective means.

The camp may charge the owner for damages caused by the camper's service animal.

The camp is not responsible for the care or supervision of the service animal. The handler is responsible for these tasks, including care, feeding, toileting, veterinary care, etc. If a camper is a young child, or otherwise unable to manage the task of "handling," the handler may be someone other than the camper. **Note:** BSA overnight rules for events and BSA registration requirements and Youth Protection takes precedence over this.

The camp may ask the camper/camper family to remove the service animal from the camp premises if:

- The animal is out of the handler's control and the handler does not take action to control it;
- The animal is not housebroken.

Note though, that if the animal is removed, the camper will be given the opportunity to continue to access the camp's services or activities without the service animal present.

Other, more general limitations applicable to service animals — broadly accepted in the ADA as grounds for limiting modifications for those with disabilities — include:

- If the camp can demonstrate that allowing a service animal would "fundamentally alter the nature" of the goods, services, etc., offered by the camp;
- If the presence of the service animal would pose a "direct threat" to the safety or health of the camper or others;
- If allowance for the modification poses an "undue burden" (significant difficulty or expense) on a camp

The camper must always keep the service dog by them. The dog cannot be left alone in a building or tent for any reason without the camper being present. All food/snacks for the dog must only be put out while the dog is eating and placed in a secure closed container when not being offered to the dog. This is due to other animals located on the property who may smell the food and enter camping areas to gain access thus putting campers in danger. All feces will be picked up immediately by the camp and properly disposed of in the camp dumpster.

Campers should **not** be allowed to pet the dog as this may endanger them if the dog senses any type of aggression. The service dog is just that.