



Businesses

Guide, Hearing and Assistance Dogs Act 2009

The [Guide, Hearing and Assistance Dogs Act 2009](#) (the Act) requires businesses, public passenger vehicles and places of accommodation that serve the public to allow people with disability to bring their certified guide, hearing or assistance dog onto business premises or on public passenger vehicles in whatever areas customers are generally allowed. Handlers must not be separated from their dog.

Does the Act apply to my business?

The Act applies to businesses including restaurants, cafes, hotels, retail stores, taxis, buses, trams, ride-booking services, booked hire vehicles, theatres, concert halls, private rental arrangements and holiday accommodation.

The law prohibits such businesses from discriminating against individuals with disability who are accompanied by a certified guide, hearing or assistance dog.

What must I do when an individual accompanied by a certified guide, hearing or assistance dog comes to my business?

You must permit the certified guide, hearing or assistance dog to accompany the individual to all areas of the business where customers are normally allowed to go.

An individual with a certified guide, hearing or assistance dog must not be separated from their dog. This also applies to public passenger vehicles and places of accommodation such as a private rental arrangement or holiday accommodation.

What if a person does not have an obvious disability?

Not all forms of disability are obvious. The person may have, for example, a psychiatric disability, a sensory disorder or diabetes. Their dog may be a highly specialised seizure alert/response/signal dog.

I thought this only applied to guide dogs. Is this true?

No. The Act protects all people with disability and provides individuals with assistance dogs the same rights as individuals with guide and hearing dogs.

How can I tell if a dog is really a certified guide, hearing or assistance dog?

All certified guide, hearing and assistance dogs are required to display an approved badge on their coat or harness. You can confirm a dog's legitimacy by asking the person it is accompanying to show their handler identity card. Almost any breed can be guide, hearing and assistance dogs, not just Labradors and Retrievers, so look for the approved badge, rather than the breed. Exercise common sense when assessing situations.

I operate a private taxi or ride-booking service and I don't want animals in my vehicle. Am I violating the Act if I refuse to pick up someone with a disability who has a guide, hearing or assistance dog?

Yes. Taxi companies, ride-booking services and their individual drivers cannot refuse service to individuals because they are accompanied by a guide, hearing or assistance dog.

Fines for individuals and for corporations apply under the Act. The executive officers of a corporation must ensure their corporation complies.



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I have a clearly posted 'no pets' policy. Do I still have to allow service dogs?

Yes. A guide, hearing or assistance dog is not a pet, but a highly trained working animal, and the Act provides accompanied handlers the right of access to public places, public passenger vehicles and places of accommodation. These dogs will clearly display an approved guide, hearing and assistance dog badge.

Am I responsible for the dog while the person with disability is in my business?

No. The care and supervision of a guide, hearing or assistance dog is solely the responsibility of the person it accompanies. You are not required to provide care, food or a special location for the dog.

What if a dog barks or growls at other people, or otherwise acts out of control?

You may exclude a guide, hearing or assistance dog from your facility if that animal's behaviour poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others.

For further information:

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