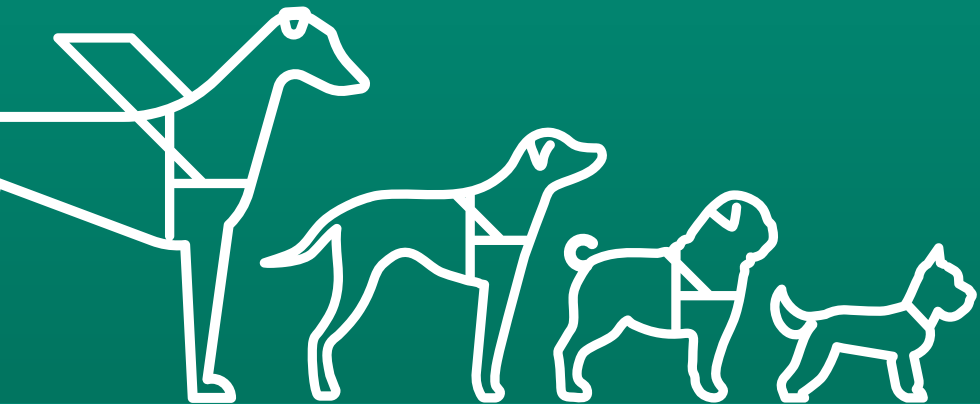




# Information for **trainers**



Guide, Hearing and Assistance Dogs Act 2009  
[www.qld.gov.au/ghad](http://www.qld.gov.au/ghad)





**Guide, hearing and assistance dogs are an essential part of our community, particularly for people with disability.**

The Guide, Hearing and Assistance Dogs Act 2009 (the Act) is administered by the Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services (the department) and ensures the quality and accountability of dog training services and protects your access rights as a trainer and the rights of people with disability.

This booklet contains information about becoming an approved trainer or training institution and meeting your obligations as a trainer.

# Contents

<b>Definitions</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>The legislation</b>	<b>5</b>
Public access	6
Lawful refusal of entry	8
<b>Getting approved</b>	<b>8</b>
Benefits	8
Applications	9
Criminal history screening	11
<b>Obligations</b>	<b>12</b>
Trainer identity cards	12
Complaints and allegations	15
Record keeping	15
<b>Public access test</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Certification of dogs</b>	<b>16</b>
Issuing handler identity cards	17
<b>Contact information</b>	<b>18</b>

# Definitions

**Guide dogs** provide guidance for people who are blind or vision impaired, to help them move freely in the home and community.

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**Hearing dogs** alert people who are deaf or hearing impaired to specific sounds, such as a phone ringing, alarm sounding or a baby crying.

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**Assistance dogs** help people with various disabilities and specific medical conditions by performing tasks such as opening and closing doors, picking up dropped items, flicking light switches or providing bracing to help a person get up after a fall. They can alert a person in response to a medical condition such as diabetes and reduce a person's need for support.

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**The handler** of a certified guide, hearing or assistance dog is either a primary handler or alternative handler of the dog.

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**The primary handler** is a person with disability who relies on the dog to reduce their need for support.

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**The alternative handler** is an adult who supports the primary handler to physically control the dog if the primary handler is unable to. They could be a family member, carer or teacher.

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## The legislation

The Queensland Guide, Hearing and Assistance Dogs Act 2009 (the Act) commenced on 1 July 2009 and was further amended in 2013 and 2016.

The Act is an opt-in scheme for trainers and training institutions to protect the rights of people with disability and trainers by regulating the processes for training status approval and providing for trained dog identification.

As a trainer, it's your responsibility to uphold the obligations outlined in the Act. You can access the Act from the following websites.

- [www.qld.gov.au/disability/out-and-about/choosing-ghad/](http://www.qld.gov.au/disability/out-and-about/choosing-ghad/)
- [www.legislation.qld.gov.au/LEGISLTN/CURRENT/G/GuideHADA09.pdf](http://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/LEGISLTN/CURRENT/G/GuideHADA09.pdf)



## Public access

An approved trainer, employee trainer or puppy carer may be accompanied by a guide, hearing, assistance or trainee support dog in public places, public passenger vehicles and places of accommodation. This includes restaurants, cafes, hotels, retail stores, taxis, buses, trams, ride-booking services, booked hire vehicles, theatres, concert halls, private rental arrangements and holiday accommodation.

However, there are some exceptions. A guide, hearing, assistance or trainee support dog may not enter:

- certain parts of health service facilities:
  - in-patient wards
  - labour wards
  - procedure rooms
  - recovery areas
  - areas where the standard of hygiene is maintained at a significantly high level to prevent infection or spread of disease
  - areas for isolating people to prevent the movement of pathogens
  - parts of health service facilities where the presence of a dog is likely to significantly impair the safe or effective provision of a health service
- ambulances
- parts of a public place or public passenger vehicle where food is ordinarily prepared.

Approved trainers, employee trainers and puppy carers must not be separated from their dog or denied access or service because they are accompanied by the dog.

People in control of public places, public passenger vehicles or places of accommodation who fail to comply with these requirements may face a fine.



## Lawful refusal of entry

The Act does not prevent a person in control of a public place, public passenger vehicle or place of accommodation from performing their normal duties. They may lawfully refuse entry to a person accompanied by a guide, hearing, assistance or trainee support dog if the refusal is reasonable in the circumstances and does not relate to the dog's presence.

For example, a person accompanied by a guide dog may be required to leave a shopping centre because the centre is closing.

## Getting approved

**Trainers can operate as individual trainers or training institutions that employ individuals to train dogs (known as employee trainers).**

An individual trainer or training institution may apply to the department for approval as one or more of the following:

- guide dog trainer
- hearing dog trainer
- assistance dog trainer.

## Benefits

Approved trainers and training institutions are recognised by the Queensland Government as providing a consistently high standard of dog training service for people with disability who rely on guide, hearing or assistance dogs.

Only approved trainers and training institutions can certify guide, hearing and assistance dogs.

The department can provide approved and employee trainers with identity cards to identify themselves when accompanied by a guide, hearing, assistance or trainee support dog in public places.



## Applications

### **Applicant trainers and training institutions must provide evidence of and demonstrate their ability to:**

- train reliable guide, hearing or assistance dogs that are:
  - able to perform identifiable physical tasks and behaviours for the benefit of a person with disability; and
  - safe and effective in public places and public passenger vehicles; and
- select dogs that can meet the individual needs of a person with disability; and
- provide ongoing and regular support to the handlers of the guide, hearing or assistance dogs they have trained.

Trainer application forms are available at: <https://www.dsdsatsip.qld.gov.au/our-work/disability-services/disability-connect-queensland/guide-hearing-assistance-dogs/trainers>

Email your completed form to [ghad@qld.gov.au](mailto:ghad@qld.gov.au).

The department assesses whether or not the applicant (and any employee trainer they may have) has:

- qualifications, knowledge or experience in:
  - dog obedience training
  - understanding the needs of people with disability
- appropriate training methods
- membership of an organisation that promotes standards of dog training—for example, International Guide Dog Federation or Assistance Dogs International
- positive criminal history screening results to demonstrate they are suitable to work with people with disability and animals
- sound record-keeping procedures
- policies and procedures for confidentiality, privacy and complaints handling
- public liability insurance cover of at least \$10 million.

The department may impose conditions on the approval if they are considered to be reasonable and relevant.

If you are unsatisfied with the department's decision, you can apply for a review of the decision.



## Criminal history screening

**To gain or maintain approved trainer status under the Act, all trainers and employee trainers must:**

- consent to a criminal history check
- provide a disclosure of criminal history.

Criminal history screening forms are available at: <https://www.dsdsatsip.qld.gov.au/our-work/disability-services/disability-connect-queensland/guide-hearing-assistance-dogs/trainers>

Immediately after starting employment as an employee trainer, the person must disclose to the department whether or not they have a criminal history and if they do, their complete criminal history.

**If an approved or employee trainer has a change to their criminal history, they must immediately disclose the change in the approved form.**

Failure to comply with these requirements may result in a fine.

# Obligations

By certifying a guide, hearing or assistance dog, an approved trainer or training institution takes responsibility for providing ongoing and regular support to the handler of the trained dog.



## Trainer identity cards

All approved and employee trainers must display their identity card if requested by a person exercising control of a public place, public passenger vehicle or place of accommodation.

A certified or trainee dog must wear the blue-and-white approved badge on its coat or harness. Dogs are permitted to wear other badges or branding as well.

The department supplies identity cards and approved dog badges.

If an approved trainer's identity card is damaged, lost or stolen, they can apply for a replacement. If a trainer's approval has been cancelled or surrendered, they must return their identity card within seven days, unless they have a reasonable excuse. A fine may apply.

Approved training institutions issue identity cards to their employee trainers and puppy carers, although the department supplies these identity cards.









## Complaints and allegations

To investigate, monitor or enforce compliance with the Act, an authorised officer may require an approved or employee trainer to assist with their inquiries to manage complaints. They may be required to:

- provide information about the delivery of a training service
- assist with the search of a relevant premise
- provide certain documents for inspection or copying.

Approved or employee trainers that fail to comply without a reasonable excuse may face a fine.

Approved or employee trainers who give false or misleading statements or documents, or obstruct an authorised officer, may face a fine.

## Record keeping

Every approved trainer and training institution must keep the following records for a relevant seven-year period depending on the type of record.

For each trainee and certified dog, the trainer must keep a record of the dog's:

- name and breed
- date of birth or approximate age
- training history, including if a public access test (PAT) has been conducted and if the dog passed each element of the test
- veterinary history
- owner's (or future owner's) name, if known
- training category (i.e. guide, hearing or assistance).

Trainers must also keep a copy of:

- all documents sent to, and received from, the department
- any written complaints received about the training service
- each dog handler's certificate of disability.

Approved trainers and training institutions must also prepare, maintain and implement policies about:

- the confidentiality of personal information of training service clients
- handling complaints about the training service.

## Public access test (PAT)

**All dogs must pass a PAT to become certified. This ensures they are safe and effective in public places and public passenger vehicles and can be controlled by their handler.**

Dogs will not pass the PAT if they:

- display aggressive or uncontrollable behaviour, such as growling or biting
- toilet indiscriminately in a building.

## Certification of dogs

**An approved trainer or training institution can only certify a dog if it:**

- can do one of the following:
  - guide a person with a vision impairment
  - aid a person with a hearing impairment
  - perform identifiable physical tasks or behaviours to reduce a person with disability's need for support
- has passed a PAT conducted by the approved trainer or training institution within seven days before being certified
- is not a restricted dog breed defined under the Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Act 2008 or declared a dangerous dog under a local law
- is de-sexed and vaccinated.



## Issuing handler identity cards

Following certification of the dog, the approved trainer or training institution must gather the following identification information to issue the handler identity card:

- a certificate of disability from a registered health practitioner (see here: <https://www.qld.gov.au/disability/out-and-about/ghad/certification-public-access-test>)
- a certified passport-sized photograph of the primary and alternative handler/s
- a passport-sized photograph of the guide, hearing or assistance dog
- a certified, current copy of the handler's identification document, which must be one of the following:
  - birth certificate
  - driver's licence
  - 18 plus card
  - Medicare card
  - passport.

Note: The above is consistent with part C, section 3 of Form GHA-8.

## **For further information:**

**Phone:** 13QGOV (13 74 68)

**TTY:** 133 677

**Email:** [ghad@qld.gov.au](mailto:ghad@qld.gov.au)

**Postal:** Locked Bag 3405, Brisbane QLD 4001

**Website:** [www.qld.gov.au/ghad](http://www.qld.gov.au/ghad)

## **Lodging a complaint**

**Phone:** 07 3097 7203

**Email:** [ghad@qld.gov.au](mailto:ghad@qld.gov.au)

### **Postal:**

Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services

### **Guide, Hearing and Assistance Dogs Team**

Locked Bag 3405

Brisbane QLD 4001