

MECA Service Animal Policy

Service Animals

This policy outlines the rules that apply to the presence of service animals on the Maine College of Art (“MECA”) campus and, if applicable in Residence Halls, as defined by Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (“ADA”) and its amendments. Service animals are permitted in campus settings that are open to the public. Service animals are defined as dogs that are individually trained to do work or perform specific tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability. Other animals, whether wild or domestic, trained or untrained, are not service animals for the purposes of this definition. Examples of work or tasks performed by service animals include, but are not limited to, assisting an individual who is blind or has low vision with navigation and other tasks, alerting an individual who is deaf or hard of hearing to the presence of people or sounds, pulling a wheelchair, assisting an individual during a seizure, retrieving items such as medicine or the telephone, providing physical support and assistance with balance and stability to an individual with mobility disabilities, calming a person with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) during an anxiety attack, or performing other duties.

Service animals are working animals, not pets, and the work performed must be directly related to the person’s disability. Dogs whose sole function is to provide comfort or emotional support do not qualify as service animals under the ADA. The crime deterrent effects of an animal’s presence and the provision of emotional support, well-being, comfort or companionship do not constitute work or tasks for the purposes of this definition.

As stated in the ADA, service animals must be harnessed, leashed, or tethered while in public, 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 sounds. Service animals may be removed from any campus premises if the dog is out of control, aggressive to others, significantly disruptive (e.g. barking excessively, running around, jumping on people, etc.), not housebroken, or excessively unclean (e.g. shedding excessively, foul smelling, flea infested, etc.). If a service animal has been excluded from the premises for any of the foregoing reasons, the handler may participate in the service, program or activity without the service animal. Conflicts between animals and others’ severe allergies, phobias, etc., will be addressed on a case-by-case basis.

Handlers are responsible for any damage caused by their animal and must take appropriate precautions to prevent property damage or injury. The care, supervision, and well-being of animals are the sole responsibility of their handlers at all times. Handlers are responsible for meeting legal requirements regarding

vaccinations, licensing, and the disposal of waste. Handlers must ensure that animals receive adequate care and treatment.

Service Animals in Training

A dog is being trained as a service dog when, accompanied by its trainer, the animal is undergoing individual training to provide specific disability-related work or service for an individual with a disability. This does not include obedience training or socialization of puppies that may later become service animals. Instead, service animals in training begin their training only after this period of socialization, generally 15-18 months long. Only adult dogs are recognized as being “in training” to provide disability-specific assistance after they have completed an earlier period of socialization (obedience training, being house broken, getting acclimated to public places and every day activities as pets). An especially trained service dog trainer may bring such a dog onto campus and interact with campus community in public areas, campus offices, etc. Service animals in training must wear a vest identifying them as a “Service Animal in Training” when in public.

Maine College of Art has established that generally service animals in training cannot be in-residence in MECA housing, except as an approved reasonable accommodation for a qualified student with a disability. Similarly, puppies who are being raised/trained in preparation for participating in formal service animal training are not permitted in College housing nor in any campus building.

In short, only dogs can be used as service animals by people in a public setting and the service animal must be specifically trained to do work or perform tasks for the person with a disability. Other types of animals (in addition to dogs) may be used by people with disabilities who live in MECA’s Residence Halls, often referred to as assistance animals or emotional support animals. These types of animals are excluded from the definition of service animal under the ADA. Questions about emotional support animals should be directed to the campus Disability Services Coordinator.

Service Animals in Residence in MECA Housing

If the handler is planning to have the service animal in residence in MECA housing, sufficient notice of the intent must be given to Student Life to be able to make appropriate arrangements regarding placement, roommates, etc.

Service animals are expected to meet the following requirements:

- The animal cannot pose a direct threat to the health and safety of persons on the university campus.
- The animal must be in good health and be well-groomed and cared for. College personnel are not required to provide care or food for the animal.

- Local ordinances regarding animals apply to service animals, including requirements for immunization, licensing, noise, restraint, and at-large animals. Dogs must wear a license tag and a current rabies vaccination tag.
- The handler is required to clean up after and properly dispose of the animal's waste in a safe and sanitary manner. The handler should always carry equipment and bags sufficient to clean up and properly dispose of the animal's waste. Handlers who are not physically able to pick up and dispose of waste are responsible for making all necessary arrangements for assistance. The College is not responsible for these services.

An individual with a disability may be charged for any damage caused by his or her service animal beyond reasonable wear and tear to the same extent that it charges other individuals for damages beyond reasonable wear and tear. The College strongly recommends that the handler have appropriate liability insurance in the event of an animal bite, scratch, etc. Upon the handler vacating the residence hall or removal of the animal, the condition of the room/suite shall be assessed for necessary cleaning and if there is damage that exceeds normal wear and tear, the handler will be charged.

The handler's living accommodations may also be inspected for fleas, ticks or other pests if necessary as part of the College standard or routine inspections. If fleas, ticks or other pests are detected through inspection, the residence will be treated using approved fumigation methods by a College-approved pest control service. The handler will be billed for the expense of any pest treatment above and beyond standard pest management in the residence halls. The College shall have the right to bill the handler's account for unmet obligations under this provision.

It may be necessary to ask that a service animal be removed from the premises if the dog is out of control, aggressive to others, or significantly disruptive and the handler does not take proper action to control the animal, or if the dog is not housebroken. If it is necessary to ask that the dog be removed, every effort will be made to assure that the handler still has access to the programs or services of the institution without the animal.

Policy reviewed and updated: May 2019

I _____ (student name) have read the Service Animal Policy, reviewed with the Disability Services Coordinator, and understand my responsibilities regarding damages to residential housing (if applicable), waste removal, vaccination tags, and animal removal guidelines.

_____ Student Signature Date

This policy is subject to revision and will be reviewed on an annual basis.