TOLEDO FIRE & RESCUE DEPARTMENT

C-113 Transporting Service Dogs

Emergency Manual

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Policy/Procedure

Purpose

To assist in understanding the role and expectation of TFRD crews when responding to a patient with a service dog.

Policy/Procedure

Under the ADA, State and local governments, businesses, and nonprofit organizations that serve the public generally must allow service dogs to accompany people with disabilities in all areas of the facility where the public is normally allowed to go including TFRD transport units.

1. When it is not obvious what service a dog provides, only limited inquiries are allowed. Crews may ask onlythese two questions:

- Is the dog a service animal required because of a disability?
- What work or task has the dog been trained to perform?

2. Crews cannot ask about the person's disability, request medical documentation, require special identification card or training documentation for the dog, or ask that the dog demonstrate its ability to perform the work or task.

3. Crews can refuse transport of a service dog for any one of the following reasons:

- The service dog will "fundamentally alter" the crew's ability to provide lifesaving care;
- The service dog is out of control and the handler does not take effective action to control the dog;

- The service dog is not housebroken.

4. Below are considerations when treating a patient with a service dog:

- Allergies and fear of dogs are not valid reasons for denying access or refusing care for people using service animals.
- A person with a disability cannot be asked to remove his service animal from the premises unless (1) the dog is out of control and the handler does not take effective action to control it or (2) the dog is not housebroken.
- A service dog's job is to help the handler. Personal protection is not part of a service dog's responsibility. Dogs that are used for service work are selected for their stable temperament.
- Get handlers permission before touching, feeding, or talking to their service animal. If needed, explain to the handler where their dog would best be positioned and let them move it out of the way.

5. When encountering a patient with any service dog, crews shall consider the following:

- If handler is alone at home and the dog is loose, ask if they have a leash, you can get for them.
- Move slowly, but normally - rushing at the handler may alarm the dog.
- Avoid making direct eye contact with the dog and, if possible, simply ignore it.
- Minimize the number of people that enter the home or surround the handler.
- Keep your tone of voice calm and volume normal.
- Do not grab or reach quickly for the dog, its leash or its harness, especially if the dog is near its handler.

6. When the decision has been made to transport the dog with the patient in the transport unit, crews shall consider the following:

- Offer to get food and any other supplies the dog may need.
- Accommodate the dog as you would a child alone with the patient. Take the dog with you and if the handler is unable to care for the dog at the hospital, attempt to notify a caretaker known to the handler for the dog, if possible.
- If the handler asks you for assistance in getting the dog to and from the rescue transport, hold on to its leash and walk behind the stretcher. If you use the harness instead of the leash, you will likely undo costly specialized training resulting in the animal no longer being able to help its handler.
- Load and unload service animals via the side door. Avoid open diamond plate gratings as they may

injure the dog's paws. If you need to lift the dog, put one arm behind the back legs, the other in front of the chest and gently lift. It is recommended that you load the dog last and unload it first, as this minimizes risk of injuring animal and gives you needed space for maneuvering equipment.

If veterinary care is necessary, a responsible official, or someone given permission by the handler, should transport the service dog to a veterinarian of the handler's choice.

7. Every effort shall be made to keep the service dog with the handler however; there may be times when it may not be possible to keep the team together. In such cases a police officer, TFRD Battalion Chief, paramedic supervisor (#122) or another TFRD crew should transport the animal and reunite the team as quickly as possible.

See Also:

Permanent link:
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