

MCRD MUSEUM ANIMAL POLICY

A question museum visitors frequently ask is “May I bring my dog into the museum? The answer is yes, if your dog is a genuine service dog, but pets or emotional support/comfort dogs are not allowed.

According to DepO P5400.29D.8003, only Military Working Dogs in performance of official duties, the Depot mascot and clearly identified service dogs are permitted in the museum. The U.S. Department has identified two questions that can be asked to clearly establish the validity of the claim of a service dog. Is the dog required because of disability? And, what is it trained to do to mitigate the disability?

Certification does not mean an individual dog is a service dog. Neither do registration letters, ID cards or vests. Many businesses sell fake certification, registration and IDs over the internet. Not a single one of those businesses tests the dogs they certify, register, or ID. They do nothing to verify the dog's training or the owner's disability. All that is required to get these products is that the purchaser fill out a form with the information for the certificate and where to mail it, and include payment.

Defined by Title II and Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), a service dog means any dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability. The **dog** must not be a pet, but be specially trained to assist the **handler** with something directly related to his or her disability. (Aug 12, 2019) Dogs whose sole function is to provide emotional support, comfort, therapy, companionship, therapeutic benefits, or to promote emotional well-being are not service dogs. Current ADA and California laws do not recognize “comfort or emotional support dogs” as service animals. Fraudulently misrepresenting a service dog is a misdemeanor under California Penal Code 365.7a. ¹

Genuine service dogs may be brought into the museum but they must be kept under the direct control of their handler at all times. If they behave inappropriately, by disrupting business, behaving aggressively, interfering with other patrons or clients (say by sniffing them or jumping up on them), or toileting inappropriately, it doesn't matter whether they are service dogs or not. Their handlers will have to remove them from the museum. They and pets/emotional support/comfort dogs cannot be left in vehicles or tethered outside the museum while their handler remains in the building.

¹ Service Animals and Emotional Support Animals
<https://adata.org/publication/service-animals-booklet>