

Rock Valley College

Service Animals – Students

RVC Administrative Procedure (4:10.270)

Overview

Rock Valley College recognizes the importance of allowing people with disabilities who require the use of service animals to receive the benefit of the work or tasks provided by such animals while on campus. As such, it is the College's policy to ensure that all students with disabilities who require the assistance of a service animal have an equal opportunity to access College property, courses, programs, and activities.

These Procedures have been established to help define the role and place of animals relative to students at Rock Valley College, in tandem with Policy 4.10.270.

In implementing these Procedures, the College complies with all federal and State laws pertaining to service animals and accommodations for individuals with disabilities, including but not limited to the following:

- [The Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\) of 1990](#) as amended;
- [Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973](#);
- [The Service Animal Access Act](#); and
- [White Cane Law](#)

Part I: Definitions

Disability

A documented physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, or a record of such an impairment.

Emotional Support Animal

Emotional Support Animals are generally not permitted on College property. Any student of the College seeking an accommodation to allow the student to be accompanied by an Emotional Support Animal (ESA) while on College property must make a request with Disability Support Services. Such request shall be completed in writing by contacting the Director of Disability Support Services, at: RVC-DisabilityServices@rockvalleycollege.edu. Submission of such request does not guarantee its approval. The Vice President of Student Services, or his or her designee, shall engage the student in the interactive process with the goal of determining the student's functional limitations imposed by his or her disability and what accommodations, including the option to bring his or her Emotional Support Animal on campus, are available to reasonably accommodate the student.

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Emotional Support Animals are also sometimes referred to as “Assistance Animals.” Emotional Support Animals are distinct from Service Animals and are not permitted on campus without prior approval through Disability Support Services.

Handler

A person with a disability that a service animal assists or a personal care attendant who handles the service animal for a person with a disability.

Pet

A domestic animal kept for personal enjoyment or companionship and not trained to perform any disability-related function.

Reasonable Accommodation

A modification or adjustment to a class, program, or job requirements that would allow a qualified individual with a disability to participate in the class or program or to perform the essential functions of a position, without fundamentally altering academic, conduct, or performance requirements.

Service Animal

Any dog 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 and meets the definition of “service animal” under the Americans with Disabilities Act (“ADA”) regulations at 28 CFR 35.104. Service animals are working animals, not pets. The work or tasks performed must be directly related to the individual’s disability.

Examples of tasks a service animal may perform include, but are not limited to:

- Assisting individuals who are blind or have low vision with navigation and other tasks
- Alerting individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing to the presence of people or sounds
- Providing non-violent protection or rescue work
- Pulling a wheelchair
- Assisting an individual during a seizure
- Alerting individuals to the presence of allergens
- Retrieving items such as medicine or the telephone
- Providing physical support and assistance with balance and stability to individuals with mobility disabilities
- Helping persons with psychiatric and neurological disabilities by preventing or interrupting impulsive or destructive behaviors.

[Learn more about service animals and the ADA.](#)

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Miniature horses are also permitted, where reasonable, when the miniature horses have been individually trained to do work or perform tasks for individuals with a disability. (Miniature horses generally range in height from 24 inches to 34 inches measured to the shoulders and generally weigh between 70 and 100 pounds.) Factors that the College will consider in determining whether a miniature horse can be accommodated include, but are not limited to: (1) whether the miniature horse is housebroken; (2) whether the miniature horse is under the owner's control; (3) whether the College can accommodate the miniature horse's type, size, and weight; and (4) the impact of the miniature horse's presence on legitimate safety requirements necessary for safe operation of the College.

Part II: Procedures on Service Animals

Presence of Service Animals on Campus

In compliance with applicable law, service animals are generally allowed in all areas of the College's facilities and programs where the handler is allowed to go. Such areas include public areas, public events, classrooms, and other areas where College programs or activities are held.

A service animal may be restricted from a specific area or areas of the College when (1) the service animal's presence in the area(s) would fundamentally alter a program or (2) the College has legitimate safety concerns and/or it is consistent with other College policies, state, and/or federal laws/regulations. Examples of these restricted areas may include but are not limited to:

- Food preparation areas;
- Research facilities/grounds and laboratories;
- Medically sensitive patient and clinic areas; and
- Biologically sensitive or hazardous locations.

If a service animal is restricted from certain areas, Disability Support Services (DSS) will assist in evaluating and providing reasonable accommodations for the student.

Inquiries Regarding Service Animals

College personnel must permit service animal access to property, events and/or activities with its handler when it is readily apparent that the animal is trained to do work or perform tasks for its handler. Examples include (1) a dog guiding an individual who is blind or has low vision, (2) pulling an individual's wheelchair, or (3) providing assistance with stability or balance to an individual with an observable mobility disability.

If the need for the service animal is not apparent, College personnel may only ask the following of service animal handlers:

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1. Is the service animal required because of a disability; and
2. What work or task has the animal been trained to perform.

If the owner states that the animal is required because of a disability and identifies a type of work or task that the animal has been trained to perform, then the service animal must be admitted. If there is any doubt that an animal is a service animal, College personnel should admit the animal and then consult with the Disability Support Services office regarding future access.

College personnel may not ask about the nature of the handler's disability or request medical documentation of disability. Handlers are not required to possess or provide any special documentation, such as proof that the animal has been certified, trained, or licensed as a service animal, or to demonstrate the animal's ability to perform work or tasks.

Specific questions or concerns related to the use of service animals on the RVC campus by visitors can be directed to the DSS Director: L.Shattuck@rockvalleycollege.edu or (815) 921- 2371.

Responsibilities of Handlers

Service animal handlers are not required to register their service animal with the College. However, Disability Support Services does provide a voluntary registration process for interested service animal handlers. Voluntarily registering a service animal could assist the College if any issues arise, or if an emergency situation occurs and emergency personnel need to be notified of where the service animal might be located in the case of an emergency evacuation.

Service animals, while generally allowed in all areas of campus accessible to students, must be under their handler's control at all times. Service animal handlers are expected to comply with the following:

Service Animal Control Requirements

1. The handler must accompany the service animal at all times.
2. The service animal must be under the direct control of the handler at all times, such as by a harness, leash, or other tether. If the use of a harness, leash, or other tether interferes with the service animal's safe, effective performance of work or tasks, or if the owner's disability prevents the use of such devices, then the service animal must be under the handler's control through voice control, signals, or other effective means.
3. The handler is responsible for the behavior of the service animal.
4. To the extent possible, the animal should be unobtrusive to other individuals and the learning, living, and working environment.
5. Identification – It is recommended that the animal wear some type of commonly recognized identification symbol, identifying the animal as a working animal, but not disclosing disability. This will alert others that the animal is working and not a pet.

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6. The handler must ensure all legal requirements have been met for the presence of animals in public places (vaccinations, licensure, ID tags, etc.) mandated by State and/or local ordinances.

Animal Etiquette

The handler should ensure that the animal does not:

1. Sniff people, restaurant tables or the personal belongings of others.
2. Display behaviors or noises that are disruptive to others, except where such behaviors or noises are related to the work or task that the service animal is performing.
3. Block an aisle or passageway for fire egress.
4. Cause any damage or injury to individuals or College property.

Handlers are responsible for any damage or injuries caused by their animals and must take appropriate precautions to prevent property damage or injury. The cost of care, arrangements and responsibilities for the well-being of a service animal are the sole responsibility of the handler at all times.

Waste Cleanup Rule

The handler is solely responsible for cleaning up after the animal. In the event that the handler is not physically able to clean up after the animal, it is then the responsibility of the handler to hire someone capable of cleaning up after the animal. The person cleaning up after the animal should abide by the following guidelines:

- Always carry equipment sufficient to clean up the animal's feces whenever the animal is on campus.
- Properly dispose of waste and/or litter in appropriate containers.
- Contact staff if arrangements are needed to assist with cleanup. Any cost incurred for doing so is the sole responsibility of the handler.

Removal of Service Animals

College personnel may ask service animal handlers to remove their service animal from College premises or from the immediate area under the following circumstances:

1. **Out of Control Animal:** A handler may be directed to remove an animal that is out of control and the handler does not take effective action to control it. If the improper animal behavior happens repeatedly, the handler may be prohibited from bringing the animal into any college facility until the handler can demonstrate that s/he has taken significant steps to mitigate the behavior.
2. **Non-housebroken Animal:** A handler may be directed to remove an animal that is not housebroken.
3. **Direct Threat:** A handler may be directed to remove an animal that RVC determines to be a substantial and direct threat to the health and safety of

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individuals. This may occur as a result of a very ill animal, a substantial lack of cleanliness of the animal, or the presence of an animal in a sensitive area like a medical facility, certain laboratories or mechanical or industrial areas.

4. Fundamental Alteration: A handler may be directed to remove the animal if the animal's presence would fundamentally alter the nature of the College service, program or activity.

Where a service animal is removed pursuant to this procedure, RVC will work with the handler to determine reasonable alternative opportunities to participate in the service, program, or activity without having the service animal on the premises.

Conflicting Health Conditions

Some people may have medical conditions that are affected by animals (e.g. allergies, asthma, respiratory conditions). Students with a health or safety-related concern regarding exposure to a service animal or emotional support animal should contact Disability Support Services. When addressing conflicting health conditions, RVC will consider the needs of both persons in meeting its obligations to reasonably accommodate all disabilities and to resolve the problem as efficiently and expeditiously as possible.

Emergency Response

Emergency Situations – In the event of an emergency, the emergency response team (ERT) that responds should be trained to recognize service animals and be aware that the animal may be trying to communicate the need for help. The animal may become disoriented from the smell of smoke in a fire or laboratory emergency, from sirens or wind noise, or from shaking and moving ground. The handler or animal may be confused from the stressful situation. The ERT should be aware that the animal is trying to be protective and, in its confusion, is not to automatically be considered harmful. The ERT should make every effort to keep the animal with its handler.

However, the ERT's first effort should be toward the handler; this may necessitate leaving the animal behind in certain emergency evacuation situations.

Service Dogs in Training

Per Illinois State law, a dog being trained has the same rights as a fully trained dog when accompanied by a trainer and identified as such in any place of public accommodation (as defined in Section 5-101 of the Illinois Human Rights Act). Handlers of service dogs in training must also adhere to the requirements for service animals and are subject to the removal policies as outlined in this procedure.

Addressing Issues/Concerns

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Rock Valley College is committed to a prompt and effective resolution of any issues or concerns regarding service animals. If the handler has a concern, he/she should contact the Director of DSS.

Concerned College personnel or students should contact DSS in the following situations:

- If any questions or concerns arise relating to service animals;
- If you have an allergy or other medical condition that makes spending time in the same room or facility with a service dog difficult or dangerous;
- If any service animal is out of control, or a handler is mistreating his/her service animal.

Part III: Procedures for Emotional Support Animals

If permitted as an accommodation, an emotional support animal and its owner/handler are subject to the same requirements and restrictions described in these Procedures that are applicable to service animals—namely, Part II, Sections A through D.

Part IV: Grievances

Any person dissatisfied by a decision concerning a service animal or emotional support animal may submit a Disability/Accommodation Grievance to the Director of Disability Support Services, at: RVC-DisabilityServices@rockvalleycollege.edu.

Part V: Public Etiquette towards Service Animals

It is important to understand the role of a service dog, and to follow proper etiquette, so as to not interfere with the tasks the dog is trained to provide. Although it may be tempting to approach a service animal or want to pet one, distracting a service animal in any way (ex., by making noises, offering food, water, toys, or petting) may be dangerous to the animal's handler, especially if the animal is a medical alert animal or brace/mobility support animal. In addition, it is important to show respect to individuals who use service animals by allowing them to go about their business uninterrupted and unbothered.

Simple rules of Etiquette for service animals and their handler:

- Do not feed or pet the service animal when you see them on campus;
- Do not distract the animal in any way;
- Do not try to separate the handler from the service animal;
- Do not harass or startle a service animal, and
- Please ignore the service animal entirely.

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Part VI: Primary College Contacts; Campus Visitors and Service Animals

Students may contact Disability Support Services for additional information and/or guidance regarding these Procedures.

Campus visitors who are not currently enrolled students or employees may be accompanied by a service animal when participating in College programs or accessing College services without requesting an accommodation. Such visitors are welcome to contact the college's Disability Support Services for additional information and/or guidance.

Reference: Board Report #7788

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