

Trained service animals

A fully trained service animal, typically a dog, cat, or miniature horse, is individually trained to perform a task(s) or work for a person with a physical and/or mental disability.

Southwest Airlines welcomes trained service animals onboard our flights when a Customer is able to provide credible verbal assurance that his/her animal is a trained service animal. Southwest Airlines does not accept unusual or exotic species of animals.

NOTE: A service animal vest, harness, ID card, or registration is not accepted as the sole indication an animal is a trained service animal.

An animal must be trained to behave properly in a public setting and under the control of the handler at all times. An animal that poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others, causes a significant disruption of cabin service, or engages in disruptive behavior will be denied boarding. Examples of disruptive behavior include (but are not limited to):

- Scratching, excessive whining or barking
- Growling, biting, lunging
- Urinating or defecating in the cabin or gate area

NOTE: Therapy animals, which provide affection or comfort to members of the public and are not trained to perform a specific task(s) for an individual related to a disability, may be eligible to travel in accordance with our [Pet Policy](#) for a fee.

Booking a reservation

We strongly encourage a Customer to notify us in advance if he/she will be traveling with a trained service animal. When booking a new reservation, a Customer may use the "Special Assistance" link (situated on the Passenger & Payment Info page) to indicate that he/she will be traveling with a trained service animal.

If a reservation has already been created, click on the "FLIGHT | HOTEL | CAR" link located on the top of our home page. Then, select "Manage Reservations" from the "Flight" column, input the required information, and select "Continue." From that page, click on the "Special Assistance" link. After selecting an option(s), click "Continue" and the information will be saved to the reservation.

A Customer traveling with an animal(s) that is unable to be accommodated in the space of a single seat may be required to purchase an additional ticket or rebook onto a later flight. The additional ticket is not eligible for a refund after travel. Contact us about any disability-related travel needs or questions by calling 1-800-I-FLY-SWA (1-800-435-9792) prior to travel.

If an animal does not meet the qualifications to travel as a trained service animal, the animal may be eligible to travel in accordance with our [Pet Policy](#) for a fee.

A Customer traveling with a trained service animal is solely responsible for researching and complying with applicable laws, requirements, and/or procedures of each location on the Customer's itinerary with respect to the acceptance of the animal. See more information for travel to [Hawaii](#), [Puerto Rico](#), or [international locations](#).

At the airport

In order to accept an animal as a trained service animal, airlines must determine both that the Customer seeking travel is an individual with a disability and that the animal is trained to perform a task(s) or work related to the disability. A Customer traveling with a trained service animal must check in with a Ticket Counter or Gate Agent to complete this process.

If a Customer's status as an individual with a disability is unclear (for example, if the disability is not clearly visible), our Employees may ask fact-finding questions to determine whether an animal is a trained service animal, emotional support animal, or eligible to be accepted as a pet. For example, we may ask how an animal has been trained to assist with a disability or what work it has been trained to perform. A Customer may be asked about the nature of the animal at different points throughout the journey.

Onboard

In accordance with federal safety regulations:

- A Customer traveling with a trained service animal cannot sit in an [emergency exit seat](#).
- The animal must be positioned so as not to obstruct Customers' expeditious evacuation in the unlikely event of an emergency.
- If a Customer opts to transport his/her trained service animal in a carrier, the carrier must be properly stowed for taxi, takeoff, and landing under the seat in front of the Customer.

- An animal can be placed on the Customer's lap (provided the animal is no larger than a child under the age of two) or on the aircraft floor.

Animals must not:

- Extend into the aircraft aisle
- Occupy an aircraft seat
- Occupy a tray table
- Encroach upon a neighboring seat

Service Animal Relief Areas

Service animal relief areas are available at each of the locations we serve. Southwest Airlines Employees will direct a Customer to these areas upon request.