

**December 2, 2020**

## **U.S. Department of Transportation Announces Final Rule on Traveling by Air with Service Animals**

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of Transportation today announced that it is revising its Air Carrier Access Act (ACAA) regulation on the transportation of service animals by air to ensure a safe and accessible air transportation system. The final rule on Traveling by Air with Service Animals can be found here. <https://www.transportation.gov/briefing-room/us-department-transportation-announces-final-rule-traveling-air-service-animals>

The Department received more than 15,000 comments on the notice of proposed rulemaking. The final rule announced today addresses concerns raised by individuals with disabilities, airlines, flight attendants, airports, other aviation transportation stakeholders, and other members of the public, regarding service animals on aircraft.

### **The final rule:**

- *Defines a service animal as a dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of a person with a disability;*
- *No longer considers an emotional support animal to be a service animal;*
- *Requires airlines to treat psychiatric service animals the same as other service animals;*
- *Allows airlines to require forms developed by DOT attesting to a service animal's health, behavior and training, and if taking a long flight attesting that the service animal can either not relieve itself, or can relieve itself in a sanitary manner;*
- *Allows airlines to require individuals traveling with a service animal to provide the DOT service animal form(s) up to 48 hours in advance of the date of travel if the passenger's reservation was made prior to that time;*
- *Prohibits airlines from requiring passengers with a disability who are traveling with a service animal to physically check-in at the airport instead of using the online check-in process;*
- *Allows airlines to require a person with a disability seeking to travel with a service animal to provide the DOT service animal form(s) at the passenger's departure gate on the date of travel;*
- *Allows airlines to limit the number of service animals traveling with a single passenger with a disability to two service animals;*
- *Allows airlines to require a service animal to fit within its handler's foot space on the aircraft;*
- *Allows airlines to require that service animals be harnessed, leashed, or tethered at all times in the airport and on the aircraft;*
- *Continues to allow airlines to refuse transportation to service animals that exhibit aggressive behavior and that pose a direct threat to the health or safety of others; and*
- *Continues to prohibit airlines from refusing to transport a service animal solely based on breed.*

**The final rule will be effective 30 days after date of publication in the Federal Register.**