

## GUIDELINES FOR LIVE ANIMALS AT THE AVMA CONVENTION



There are three categories of animals permitted at the AVMA Convention:

- 1) Service animals (as defined by the ADA- includes only dogs and miniature horses that are individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities; service-animals-in-training and animals whose sole function is to provide comfort or emotional support do not qualify)
- 2) Animals on exhibit or at AVMA-sponsored events during AVMA Convention
- 3) Animals participating in AVMA Convention scheduled interactive labs or required for teaching, training, or demonstration (must be included on a protocol approved by the AVMA institutional animal care and use committee—IACUC)

Attendees and exhibitors are not permitted to bring pets, animal companions, service-animals-in-training or emotional support animals into the convention center or AVMA-sponsored events. In addition to these guidelines, attendees and exhibitors must comply with all rules and regulations of the convention center, which may contain additional prohibitions and restrictions.

The AVMA wishes to assure the health, safety, and welfare of all participants and attendees to AVMA-sponsored events and activities at the AVMA Convention—this includes human presenters and exhibitors, animal participants, and all attendees. The AVMA follows the [AVMA Companion Animal Care Guidelines](#) and applicable regulations or standards relevant to the categorization of animal use defined above.

**Note:** If there is a conflict between these guidelines and federal, state, or local law, then these guidelines shall be interpreted and applied so as to comply with applicable law.

- 1) Service animal handlers may opt-in to part or all of the Submission Process for Live Animals (see #2 below for details) but are not required to provide paperwork or wear a ribbon. A ribbon should be offered to service animal handlers to minimize stops by security personnel. If there is a question whether a dog (or miniature horse) is a service animal, AVMA representatives may only ask if the dog is a service animal required for a disability; and if so, what work or task(s) the dog is trained to perform. This inquiry is allowed only if it is not obvious what service the animal provides. Questions should not inquire about a person's disability or request the dog perform the work or task.

According to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA):

- In general, businesses that serve the public must permit service animals to accompany people with disabilities in all areas where members of the public are allowed to go.
- There is no requirement for the service animal or handler to be licensed or certified by a state or local government.
- There is no requirement that service animals wear specific identification (e.g. collar, harness, or vest) that recognizes them as a service animal.
- The dog must already be trained before it can be taken into public places, so service-animals-in-training are not considered service animals under the ADA.
- If a handler is using more than one service animal to perform different tasks or needs two service animals for the same task (such as assistance with stability when walking), more than one service animal should be accommodated whenever possible.
- Service animals must be harnessed, leashed, or tethered, unless these devices interfere with the service animal's work or the individual's disability prevents using these devices. In that case, the individual must maintain control of the animal through voice, signal, or other effective controls.

- A service animal may be denied access, or continued access, if it is out of control and the handler does not take effective action to control it, or the animal is not housebroken. When there is a legitimate reason to ask that a service animal be removed, the AVMA will offer the individual with the disability the opportunity to participate in the event without the animal's presence.
- 2) Animals may be used for exhibition as long as such use does not cause distress to the animal or pose a health or safety concern to humans. The exhibitor is responsible for collecting, containing, and disposing of waste in receptacles off of the Exhibit Hall floor and in accordance with convention center and local authority policies and regulations. The exhibit must also comply with all federal, state, and local laws and regulations, and facility rules governing the use of animals in public areas. This includes, but is not limited to, the Animal Welfare Act and Endangered Species Act. No anesthesia or sedation of animals is permitted in the exhibit hall. Animals intended for use in demonstrating techniques or equipment fall under category #3 and must be part of an approved IACUC protocol.

Animals intended for exhibit within the convention facilities must be approved following the Submission Process for Live Animals at the AVMA Convention and any additional process required by the convention center prior to admittance.

- Requests for approval should be made during the online convention registration process.
  - Approvals may be authorized by the AVMA Animal Welfare Division director or member on the AVMA IACUC.
  - Approved owners and handlers will be provided an AVMA issued registration ribbon to be displayed from their handler's badge.
  - The submission process requires the following information:
    - Animal identification information
    - Responsible person, their phone number, and active email
    - [Certificate of veterinary inspection \(CVI\)](#) issued by an accredited veterinarian within 30 days of Convention. The CVI must include verification of core vaccines through the dates of Convention consistent with the most recent AAHA, AAEP or AAEP vaccination guidelines. Horses also require a negative Coggins test performed within one year of the event.
  - On-site, the on-call veterinarian or an AVMA staff veterinarian may verify the animal's certificate of veterinary inspection (CVI) as part of the submission process. Each approved animal's handler is required to wear a registration badge ribbon identifying them as approved for admittance.
- 3) Animals (live animals or cadavers) required for teaching, training, or demonstration must be included on a protocol approved in advance by the AVMA IACUC. This process should be started in the spring and can be initiated by contacting the IACUC coordinator at [animalwelfare@avma.org](mailto:animalwelfare@avma.org).

Live animals may be utilized as part of an AVMA interactive laboratory in accordance with an IACUC approved protocol. All interactive laboratories involving the use of live animals or cadavers must be approved in advance by the AVMA IACUC whether the laboratory is conducted at the host city convention center or at an off-site location.

Security will be advised that if someone brings an animal into any part of the convention, including the exhibit hall, the handler will be asked to show their registration badge ribbon. If there is no ribbon, only service animals will be permitted. These ribbons may be obtained on-site at the registration desk. Service animals are exempt from the approval process, but it is recommended that an AVMA-issued registration badge ribbon is worn while within convention facilities. Animals intended for exhibit whose handlers have begun the submission process may complete registration on-site to obtain a ribbon. Admittance will be determined by the submission process.

Questions regarding proper registration and approval of individual animals should be directed to the AVMA Animal Welfare Division director or member on the IACUC.