



Use of Service Animals in California State Parks

It is the policy of California State Parks that service animals be allowed into all areas that are open to the public. Service animals are animals that are individually trained to perform tasks for persons who have qualifying disabilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

A service animal is 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. Other species of animals (except as noted below), whether wild or domestic, trained or untrained, are not considered to be service animals. The crime deterrent effects of an animal's presence and the provision of emotional support, well-being, comfort, or companionship do not constitute work or tasks and as such do not meet the definition of a service animal under the ADA.

Pursuant to the ADA, a miniature horse that has been individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability is a valid service animal. If you plan to visit a park unit with a miniature horse that has been trained as a service animal, please contact the park unit in advance so that staff may assess (1) whether the miniature horse is housebroken; (2) whether the miniature horse is under the owner's control; (3) whether the park facility can accommodate the miniature horse's type, size, and weight; and (4) whether the miniature horse's presence will compromise legitimate safety requirements necessary for safe operation of the park facility.

Service animals shall be under the control of the owner, and restrained or on a leash at all times with few exceptions. Exceptions may include persons in wheelchairs who cannot operate the chair and manage a leash, or an animal that is retrieving an item for its owner. In such cases, the animal must otherwise be under the handler's control through voice, signals, or other effective means.

A person claiming to be training a service animal must have documentation that they are licensed/authorized to train service animals and the animal must be leashed at all times and wearing some form of identification denoting that it is a service animal in training.

California Penal Code Section 365.7 makes it a misdemeanor, punishable by imprisonment in a county jail not exceeding six months, by a fine not exceeding one thousand dollars (\$1,000) or by both that fine and imprisonment, for any person who knowingly and fraudulently represents himself or herself, through verbal or written notice, to be the owner or trainer of any canine licensed as, to be qualified as, or identified as, a service dog.

Some park units may have further restrictions regarding the use of a service animal in order to protect a threatened species. Please visit the California State Parks [webpage](#) for current information about each park.