

Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service FIRE CHIEF'S GENERAL ORDER

FCGO: 25-03

February 12, 2025

TO: All MCFRS Personnel

FROM: Fire Chief Corey A. Smedley



SUBJECT: Handling Requests for EMS Transport of Service Animals

The Americans with Disability Act (ADA) and Maryland regulations permit individuals with disabilities to have controlled service animals in public spaces, including ambulances and emergency departments. A [service animal](#) is legally defined as a dog or other individually trained animal that performs tasks directly related to a person's disability.

Service animals are allowed in locations that typically prohibit pets. However, "comfort," "therapy," or "emotional support animals" do not meet the definition of a service animal under the ADA or Maryland regulations as they lack specific training for tasks supporting a disability.

In compliance with Federal and State laws and upon request, MCFRS will make every reasonable effort to transport service animals with patients who have a disability. If it is unclear if an animal is a service animal, personnel may ask for information using these two questions:

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

It is not recommended to:

- Request documentation to prove that the service animal is registered, licensed, or certified as a service animal
- Require that the service animal demonstrate its tasks
- Inquire about the nature of the person's disability

If the animal is a legitimate service animal, transport it with the patient.

If it is not a service animal, do not transport it with the patient. If necessary:

- Arrange for the animal to be transported to the patient's home or other secure location even if this requires additional MCFRS resources
- Enlist the help of friends/family/neighbors to care for the animal
- Enlist the help of [Montgomery County Animal Services](#)

For additional information, visit the ADA's website for the most current information regarding service animals.

Questions may be directed to the EMIHS Section Chief