



# NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
February 22, 2011

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## **State Board of Guide Dogs for the Blind hosts panel discussion on changes to Federal ADA definition of service animal**

### ***Businesses accommodating the public, service animal users, law enforcement encouraged to attend***

SACRAMENTO – The State Board of Guide Dogs for the Blind will host a conference on Wednesday, February 23, in Sacramento to discuss impending changes to the legal definition of service animals in the [Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\)](#). The new rules, which become law on March 15, will affect users of service animals, as well as the hospitality industry, retailers and other businesses that accommodate the public. The event is free and the public is invited to attend.

“We’ve had a number of inquiries on this issue,” said Eric Holm, President of the Board. “We know there’s some confusion in the business community and among service dog users about the new rules, so we’ve invited representatives from the [U. S. Department of Justice](#) and the advocacy group [Disability Rights California](#) to discuss the changes and answer questions.”

Key portions of the law to be discussed include the following:

- Only dogs are recognized as service animals, and only dogs that have been trained to perform specific tasks that mitigate the effect of a disability can be a service animal;
- Dogs whose sole function is to provide emotional support are excluded from the definition of service animal;
- There are no limits on breeds of dogs;
- Businesses are generally required to accommodate trained miniature horses as service animals.

State service animal access laws will also be explained. Service animal users, members of the business community and the public are invited to attend the free event, which runs from 9 a.m. to noon at the [Department of Consumer Affairs](#) Sacramento headquarters at 1625 North Market Boulevard, in the First Floor Hearing Room. The conference will be [webcast live](#) [[www.dca.ca.gov](http://www.dca.ca.gov)].