



## **Service animal policy: What you need to know**

When it comes to transporting riders with service animals, drivers on the Lyft platform should remember one thing: Always Say Yes. **You're required by the law and Lyft's policy** to always accommodate service animals, even if you have an allergy, religious or cultural objections, or a fear of them.

We know service animals can raise some questions for Lyft drivers, but they're essential for many people. Lyft drivers like you are in a unique position to help riders with service animals get around effortlessly in their community — thanks for taking this seriously and being there when people need your rides the most.

### **FAQ for Drivers**

#### **What is a service animal?**

Service animals are working animals, not pets. Service animals undergo extensive training to assist individuals with disabilities. They help blind people travel, alert deaf people to sounds, protect persons who are having a seizure, and perform many other tasks to help individuals with disabilities.

Service animals are not required to wear a tag or vest or be registered. Riders with service animals do not need to display any kind of proof that their animal is a service animal. In other words, if a rider with a dog says it is a service animal, the driver should transport the rider.

#### **As an independent contractor, isn't it my choice to accommodate service animals?**

We created Lyft for people who love flexibility and freedom, and that's still the case. But even independent contractors have to follow the law. For example, it's Lyft policy and the law that you and your riders wear a seatbelt while driving with Lyft. Similarly, it's Lyft policy and the law that you accommodate service animals.

#### **What are the consequences for refusing to take a rider with a service animal?**

If a driver refuses a rider with a service animal, the driver could face immediate and permanent deactivation if an investigation into the alleged denial verifies a wrongful denial.

#### **How can I tell if a service animal is a true service animal? What if I think a passenger is misrepresenting their dog as a service animal?**

The good news is that cases of service-animal fraud are rare in our community and will put passengers at risk of deactivation. But if you want, you may ask two questions of riders who report their animals are service animals: (1) Is the animal required because of a disability? And (2) what work or task has the animal been trained to perform? These questions will usually prove to you that the animal in question is a service animal.

That said, we don't want you to risk your own deactivation by guessing incorrectly. Some passengers use service animals for reasons that aren't obvious, like epilepsy or heart conditions. Not all service animals wear tags, and they come in all shapes and sizes. For these reasons, it's best that you accommodate animals when they're reported to you by riders as being service animals.

If you have a question about the policy or would like to report a rider who you suspect is abusing the policy, you should contact Lyft Support and the Service Animal Hotline **after** you've completed the ride.

### **I'm a driver with a service animal — what are the rules?**

It's Lyft's policy that drivers are permitted to ride with their service animals. However, this may limit the number of passengers you can carry, and some passengers may be uncomfortable or allergic around your service animal and will ask you to cancel their request. It's advised that you call the passenger in advance to notify them of the service animal. If they're unable to ride with your service animal, you must cancel the ride so they can request another driver. Pro-tip: If the request came from nearby, sign out of driver mode for a minute so that you don't receive the passenger's next request.

To report a Service Animal Policy violation, call 1-844-554-1297 or select 'Contact Support' in the Lyft app or through the Help Center.

### **What about Shared Lyft? What if a rider in my Shared Lyft has an allergy or objection to the service animal?**

Passengers who request a Shared Lyft should be aware they are more than likely to be riding in a closed environment with another person. Sometimes that means encountering a service animal, just like you might in an elevator, an airplane, or small office.

If a rider's allergies or objections to the service animal are severe, the rider may ask to request a different ride. If necessary, you may cancel the non-service animal rider's ride without penalty. If you ever have a problem as a driver — or concerns about your rating — reach out to Lyft through the Help Center and we'll guide you through it after the ride.

### **What if there's no room on a Shared Lyft for a service animal?**

Service animals often ride at their owners' feet, so you shouldn't need an extra seat. If they do, we've found that other passengers are understanding and will make room for them when necessary. (Note: It's rare that a Shared Lyft will be at capacity at the same time you get a request from someone with a service animal. It's also rare that you'll get a ride with a service animal to begin with.)

### **Am I required to transport animals that aren't service animals?**

If you ask the two questions above and the rider tells you that the animal is not a service animal, you have control to cancel the ride and let support know — it won't impact your cancel rating.

Although we encourage you to take all animals, emotional support animals aren't covered under our Service Animal Policy or the law so you're not required to accommodate them.

### **What's the best way to transport a service animal?**

Riders must be permitted to have their service animal with them at all times and should not be asked to place their service animals in the back or trunk of a vehicle. Many service animals are trained to ride in vehicles or sit on the floor of the rear seat. Some drivers like to carry a towel or blanket in their vehicle and place these items on the seats to protect them.

### **How do I report a service animal problem?**

Call the Service Animal Hotline at 1-844-554-1297 and we'll assist you. Passengers and drivers who prefer to report a problem in writing may report an issue in the Lyft app or through the Help Center.

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## **Service Animal Policy**

State and federal law prohibit drivers providing transportation services arranged through the Lyft App from denying service to riders with service animals because of the service animals, and from otherwise discriminating against riders with service animals. Drivers who engage in discriminatory conduct in violation of this legal obligation will lose access to the Lyft platform.

### **I. What is a service animal?**

A service animal is an animal that is trained to work or perform tasks for an individual with a disability. There are many types of service animals. Most service animals are dogs. Common types of service animals include guide dogs, which help blind people travel, and signal dogs, which alert deaf people to relevant sounds. There is no requirement that a service animal wear a tag, be registered, or display any kind of proof that it is a service animal.

### **II. Legal obligations of drivers**

Drivers have a legal obligation to transport Riders with Service Animals with no exception for allergies, religious objections, fear of Service Animals, or any other reason not expressly authorized by the ADA. If a driver refuses to drive a rider with a service animal because of the service animal, the driver is in violation of the law and the Lyft Terms of Service to which the driver has agreed.

The driver may not request that the rider present documentation proving that the rider's animal is a service animal. The law provides that there are only two questions that a driver may ask to confirm that a rider's animal is a service animal: (1) is the animal required because of a disability? And (2) what work or task has the animal been trained to perform?

### **III. Consequences for drivers who unlawfully refuse to transport riders with service animals**

If Lyft determines that a driver knowingly refused to transport a rider with a service animal because of the service animal, the driver will be permanently removed from the Lyft platform and prohibited from providing transportation arranged through the Lyft platform.

If Lyft receives Service Animal Complaints that plausibly allege more than one instance where a Driver either (a) refused to transport a Rider with a Service Animal because of the presence of a Service Animal, or (b) threatened, harassed, ridiculed, provided inferior service, or was antagonistic to a Rider or another person in the Rider's party because of the presence of a Service Animal, that driver will be permanently removed from the Lyft platform.

#### **IV. Reporting service animal complaints**

Riders may report service animal issues, including denials of transportation services, harassment, other mistreatment, or improper cleaning fees, to Lyft. Complaints may be filed in writing or by calling the Service Animal Complaint Hotline at [1-844-554-1297](tel:1-844-554-1297). To submit a complaint in writing through the Lyft app: click on "Help" under the main menu; click on the "Service Animal" link; click on the "report a service animal issue" button. A link to the complaint form is also available on the Service Animal page <https://help.lyft.com/hc/en-us/articles/214589657-Service-Animal-Policy> or may be reported through a general complaint form at <https://help.lyft.com/hc/en-us/requests/new>.

Lyft will investigate service animal complaints and will take appropriate action in accordance with Lyft's Terms of Service and this service animal policy. Lyft will notify the rider within two weeks of the date of the complaint about the outcome of the investigation and the actions that Lyft has or will take to resolve the complaint.

#### **V. Rights of riders with service animals**

A rider cannot be denied service because he or she travels with a service animal. A rider will be refunded any trip cancellation charges or other charges imposed because a driver denied a rider service because of a service animal.

Riders will be informed by Lyft of what action Lyft takes in response to their complaints about discrimination on the basis of a service animal, including whether Lyft has ended its business relationship with the driver involved.

Lyft will provide each rider who submits a plausible service animal complaint concerning discriminatory treatment by a driver on the Lyft platform in the United States with an account credit of no less than \$5 for use on the Lyft platform.

#### **VI. Cleaning fees**

Riders cannot be charged cleaning fees for shedding by their service animals. Riders will be refunded any cleaning fees charged for shedding by their service animals.

A rider can be charged a cleaning fee if a driver provides compelling photographic evidence showing that a service animal in the rider's party urinated, defecated, or vomited in the driver's vehicle. The rider may contest that such mess occurred. If a rider contests a cleaning fee, Lyft will evaluate the dispute and will determine within two weeks whether to refund the cleaning fee. Lyft will provide the rider with a written explanation of its decision if requested by the rider.