



HOUSING AND RESIDENTIAL LIFE

OSU Housing and Residential Life Service Animal Policy and Responsibilities

Oklahoma State University Housing and Residential Life (HRL) supports students with disabilities who require Service Animals to have equal access to housing. This policy explains how to notify housing, register, and care for Service Animals in university housing in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Fair Housing Act.

A Service Animal is a dog or miniature horse individually trained to perform tasks or work for the benefit of an individual with a disability. Service Animals are recognized and protected under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Service Animals are permitted in the resident's assigned university housing unit and may accompany the handler in most other areas of the university, including classrooms, dining facilities, libraries, labs, and other campus buildings, except where specific health, safety, or legal restrictions apply. Service Animals must always remain under the control of their handlers and may not disrupt the educational environment or pose a threat to others.

Housing Notification & Process

HRL requests students to provide notification when a Service Animal will reside in university housing. This notification allows HRL to maintain accurate records and support the safety, access, and well-being of all residents and animals in university housing.

This process is not a mandatory registry and is not used to approve or deny a Service Animal. HRL does not require documentation, medical records, certification, or proof that an animal is a Service Animal, or proof of need of a Service Animal as part of this process. Notification is specific to university housing and does not limit or delay a student's rights under the ADA to be accompanied by a Service Animal.

HRL maintains records of Service Animals in housing for the following purposes:

1. Emergency planning and safety protocols;
2. Logistics and roommate coordination (navigating shared spaces, etc.);
3. Managing conflicting access needs (placing a student with an ESA away from one with a service animal);
4. Voluntary connection to resources;
5. Avoiding misidentification of an unauthorized animal in University Housing; and/or
6. Staff preparedness and response in emergencies

Animal Information on File with HRL

- Animal Housing Process and Agreement
 - Signed Service Animal Policy and Responsibilities
 - Standard of Care Acknowledgment
 - Emergency Handler Information
 - Animal Information: species, breed, weight, age, vaccination records (including rabies)
- Animal Identification Form: animal name, birthdate, photo
- Roommate Notification

This information is not used to determine whether an animal qualifies as a Service Animal and will not result in denial of access.

Note: Students are encouraged to notify and submit registration information to HRL as soon as possible to support housing coordination and emergency planning. This process does not delay or restrict a student's right to have a Service Animal in university housing.

Owner/Resident Responsibility and Rules

The owner of the Service Animal is solely responsible for the care, control, and behavior of their animal. Failure to follow these rules may result in removal of the animal, and/or disciplinary action:

- **General Responsibilities**
 - Follow all city, county, and state laws and ordinances related to animal care, including vaccination and registration, before bringing the Service Animal to campus;
 - Provide the Service Animal's daily needs, including food, water, grooming, and general care. Roommates, friends, or other residents may not care for the Service Animal;
 - Ensure the Service Animal does not pose a threat or unreasonably disturb others; and
 - Any evidence of neglect or abuse may result in immediate removal of the Service Animal and referral to disciplinary action without warning.
- **Supervision and Control**
 - Service Animals must either accompany their owner or remain safely contained in the assigned room when the owner is away, for the welfare of the animal and safety of the housing environment.
 - If maintenance or repairs are needed in the assigned space, the owner must inform HRL Facilities in advance and coordinate a time that ensures the Service Animal is not in the workspace at the time of the maintenance and/or repairs.
 - Animals found loose, unattended, or not under the handler's control may be captured, confined, and removed by university staff or local animal control personnel.
- **Time Away and Breaks**

- For animal welfare in university housing, Service Animals should not be left alone for extended periods of time.
 - Dogs should not be left alone for more than six (6) hours.
- All animals, whether Service Animals or otherwise, must be removed from university housing during extended breaks if the owner is not present. Allowing another individual to watch or care for a Service Animal while the owner is not permitted.
- **Emergency Care Plan**
 - Owners of Service Animals are required to provide an off-campus emergency contact who can retrieve their Service Animal within six (6) hours if the owner is unavailable.
 - The emergency contact must be prepared to coordinate with HRL staff to gain access to the residential space, including contacting the appropriate office and presenting identification if required.
 - If the emergency contact is unreachable or unwilling to assume care, and the owner fails to retrieve or arrange alternative care, HRL may consider the animal abandoned and place it with a local shelter or appropriate authority at the owner's expense.
- **Cleanliness and Waste**
 - The owner must clean up after their Service Animal at all times, both inside and outside.
 - Animal waste must be picked up and disposed of in an outdoor dumpster or designated animal waste station.
 - Animals must use appropriate outdoor areas (grass only; not sidewalks, flowerbeds, or building areas).
- **Health and Inspections**
 - University housing staff may inspect rooms for cleanliness, pests, and animal care at any time.
 - If fleas, ticks, or other pests are found, the space will be treated. The owner will be charged with any additional costs.
- **Damages and Charges**
 - The owner is responsible for any damage caused by the animal beyond normal wear and tear.
 - This may include, but is not limited to:
 - Flea Treatment
 - Carpet/Tile replacement
 - Furniture Damage
 - Odor removal or deep cleaning
 - All charges will be billed to the owner's Bursar Account and notified via their university email.

- **Animal Removal/Violation**
 - **Minor or Correctable Violations**
 - Residents may receive up to two (2) verbal warnings from hall staff for minor or correctable violations, followed by email documentation.
 - If the behavior continues, a final written warning will be issued.
 - Continued violations after the final warning will result in a meeting with the assistant director of residential living, and outcomes will be determined on a case-by-case basis.
 - **Written warnings** (may be issued for, but are not limited to the following):
 - Non-compliance with HRL policies or guidelines; and/or
 - Excessive damage to the residence caused by the Service Animal (for example, flooring replacement due to odor/stains, unreparable furniture damage, replacement of university property or fixtures).
 - **Serious Violations and Service Animal Removal**
 - HRL may require removal of the Service Animal for:
 - Direct threat to the health or safety of others or unmanageable behavior despite reasonable interventions;
 - Substantial property damage, as assessed by HRL or Facilities Management;
 - Neglect or abuse of the Service Animal; and/or
 - Community disruption or interference with the living environment.
 - **Procedures for Removal of a Service Animal**
 - Removal may be immediate in cases of abuse, neglect, or serious safety concerns.
 - Decisions are based on the Service Animal's actual behavior, not on speculation or fear.
 - HRL will provide written notice of removal to the owner and, if applicable, the Office of Student Conduct. HRL may work with Student Accessibility Services during this process.
 - The owner remains responsible for housing obligations and fees, even if the Service Animal is removed.
 - In the event of abuse or neglect, HRL may take additional measures to prevent contact between the Service Animal and the party thought to be responsible for the abuse or neglect at the owner's expense.
 - Service Animal removal decisions may be appealed to the Associate Director of Residential Living.

Housing & Room Assignment Considerations

- HRL may assign or reassign housing to reasonably accommodate the Service Animal and community needs.

- Roommate consent is not required for the Service Animal; however, roommates will be notified. HRL will address conflicts through reassignment, if needed.
- If a conflict arises (such as allergies or safety concerns), HRL will work with all residents to find a reasonable solution, which may include reassignment. To request a room change, submit a Room Change Request Form. HRL will consider the Service Animal when reviewing the request.
- In rare cases, maintenance or other emergencies may make a room unsafe or unavailable. If this occurs, the resident and the Service Animal may be temporarily reassigned until the issue is resolved. No transfer fee will be charged. However, residents remain responsible for any damage caused by the Service Animal.
- Students are asked to confirm their Service Animal still lives in university housing annually. This information helps HRL keep records up to date for safety and emergency planning. This confirmation does not require proof or paperwork and does not affect a student's rights under the ADA.

Liability & Risk Acknowledgement

- The owner assumes full responsibility for any injury, damage, or loss caused by their Service Animal and agrees to hold OSU and its personnel harmless.
- OSU personnel are not responsible for care, injury, or loss of the Service Animal.
- Residents are encouraged to carry renters or animal liability insurance.

Non-Retaliation

OSU will not retaliate against any resident who seeks, requests, or receives reasonable accommodation.

Student Confirmation

By signing below, I confirm that I have read and understand the **OSU Service Animal Policy and Responsibilities**. I agree to follow all rules and requirements related to having an animal in university housing.

I understand and agree to the following:

- Complete all required steps and receive confirmation of notification before bringing my Service Animal to campus;
- Care for, supervise, and control the Service Animal at all times;
- Ensure my Service Animal does not pose a threat or cause damage;
- Follow all local, state, and federal laws, including licensing and vaccination requirements;
- Remain responsible for all care, behavior, cleanliness, and damage caused by my Service Animal;
- Respond to HRL staff requests and cooperate with university policies;
- Accept that violations may result in Service Animal removal and/or student conduct action; and
- Annually confirm that my Service Animal still lives in university housing to assist HRL in keeping records up to date for safety and emergency planning.

I understand failure to follow these rules may result in losing the ability to keep my animal in university housing. I also understand HRL may update these policies as needed.

I understand that in the event of an emergency (including but not limited to fire alarms, evacuations, severe weather, or other urgent situations), HRL staff and emergency personnel are not responsible for the care, evacuation, or safety of my Service Animal.

I acknowledge it is my responsibility to have an emergency plan in place for my Service Animal, including arranging for its safe removal, if I am unable to do so.

Signature: