

GUIDELINES FOR LIVE ANIMALS AT THE AVMA CONVENTION

There are three categories of animals permitted at the AVMA Convention:

- 1) [Service animals](#) (as defined by the ADA- includes only dogs and miniature horses; animals whose sole function is to provide comfort or emotional support do not qualify)
- 2) Animals on exhibit or at AVMA sponsored events during AVMA Convention
- 3) Animals participating in AVMA Convention scheduled interactive labs or required for teaching or training (must be included on a protocol approved by the AVMA IACUC)

Note: If there is a conflict between these guidelines and federal, state, or local law, then these guidelines shall be interpreted and applied so as to comply with applicable law.

Attendees and exhibitors are not permitted to bring pets, animal companions or emotional support animals into the Convention Center or AVMA-sponsored events. Every nonservice animal within the convention facilities must complete the Submission Process for Live Animals at the AVMA Convention for review prior to admittance. Approved owners and handlers will be provided an AVMA issued registration ribbon to be displayed from their handler's badge. The submission process requires the following information: animal identification information, responsible person, their phone number, active email, and [certificate of veterinary inspection \(CVI\)](#) issued by an accredited veterinarian within 30 days of Convention. The CVI must include verification of core vaccines through the dates of Convention consistent with the most recent AAHA, AAFP or AAEP vaccination guidelines. Horses also require a negative Coggins test performed within one year of the event.

Nonservice animals' handlers without a badge ribbon will be denied access to convention facilities. Security will be advised that if someone brings an animal into any part of the convention, including the exhibit hall, the responsible person will be asked to show their registration badge. If there is no ribbon, all authorized nonservice animals must register on-site. Service animals are exempt from the approval process, but it is recommended that an AVMA issued registration badge ribbon is worn while within convention facilities. These ribbons may be obtained on-site at the registration desk. Emotional support animals are not service animals as defined by the ADA and are not permitted at AVMA Convention.

I. BACKGROUND

The AVMA wishes to assure the health, safety, and welfare of all participants and attendees to AVMA-sponsored events and activities at the AVMA Convention - this includes human presenters and exhibitors, animal participants, and all attendees. The AVMA follows the [AVMA Companion Animal Care Guidelines](#) and applicable regulations or standards relevant to the categorization of animal use defined above.

1) **Service Animals.** According to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA):

- In general, businesses that serve the public must permit service animals to accompany people with disabilities in all areas where members of the public are allowed to go.
- Service animals are defined by the ADA as dogs or miniature horses that are individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities.
- There is no requirement for the service animal or handler to be licensed or certified by a state or local government.
- There is no requirement that service animals wear specific identification (e.g. collar, harness, or vest) that recognizes them as a service animal.
- Emotional Support Animals (ESA) whose sole function is to provide comfort or emotional support are not Service Animals as defined by the ADA.

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- See Attachment for additional items.
- 2) **Animals on exhibit or at AVMA sponsored events during AVMA Convention.** Animals may be used for exhibition as long as such use does not cause pain or distress to the animal or pose a health or safety concern to humans. No anesthesia or sedation of animals is permitted in the exhibit hall or in conjunction with AVMA Convention activities other than scheduled interactive laboratories in accordance with an IACUC approved protocol. The exhibitor is responsible for collecting, containing and disposing of waste in receptacles off of the Exhibit Hall floor and in accordance with convention center and local authority policies and regulations. The exhibit must also comply with all federal, state and local laws and regulations, and facility rules governing the use of animals in public areas. This includes, but is not limited to, the Animal Welfare Act and Endangered Species Act.
 - 3) **Animals Participating in AVMA Convention Scheduled Interactive Labs or required for teaching or training.** Live animals may be utilized as part of an AVMA Interactive Laboratory in accordance with an IACUC approved protocol. All interactive laboratories involving the use of live animals or cadavers must be approved in advance by the AVMA IACUC whether the laboratory is conducted at the host city Convention Center or at an off-site location. The [AVMA Animal Care Guidelines](#) and applicable regulations or standards apply to these activities.

II. PROCEDURES

Animals required for exhibition or participating in AVMA Convention interactive laboratories must be approved following the Submission Process for Live Animals at AVMA Convention prior to admittance. Requests for approval should be made during the online convention registration process. Approvals may be authorized by the AVMA Animal Welfare Division Director or member on the IACUC. On-site, the on-call veterinarian or an AVMA staff veterinarian may verify the animal's Certificate of Veterinary Inspection (CVI) as part of the submission process. Each approved animal's handler is required to wear a registration badge ribbon identifying them as approved for admittance.

Security will be advised that if someone brings an animal into any part of the convention, including the exhibit hall, the handler will be asked to show their registration badge ribbon. If there is no ribbon, nonservice animals must register on-site. Admittance will be determined by the submission process. Questions regarding proper registration and approval of individual animals should be directed to the AVMA Animal Welfare Division Director or member on the IACUC.

Additional Notes on Service Animals:

- AVMA representatives may only ask if the animal is required for a disability; and if so, what task(s) is the animal trained to perform. *This inquiry is allowed only if it is not obvious what service the animal provides.*
- Service animals must be harnessed, leashed, or tethered, unless these devices interfere with the service animal's work or the individual's disability prevents using these devices. In that case, the individual must maintain control of the animal through voice, signal, or other effective controls.
- A service animal may be denied access, or continued access, if it is out of control and the handler does not take effective action to control it, or the animal is not housebroken. When there is a legitimate reason to ask that a service animal be removed, the AVMA will offer the individual with the disability the opportunity to participate in the event without the animal's presence.

