



Cottonwood Area Transit

Service Animals on Cottonwood Area Transit Buses and at Cottonwood Area Transit Bus Stops and Other Facilities

1. Policy Statement

- 1.1 Cottonwood Area Transit ("CAT") is committed to taking reasonable measures to ensure that all passengers and the public are able to utilize CAT's public transportation services and facilities with ease and comfort. CAT has developed this policy to assist those qualified individuals with disabilities who use service animals on the fixed-route bus services, paratransit services and CAT facilities. In addition, this policy will enable CAT employees and contractors to facilitate utilization by such individuals of CAT's services and facilities.
- 1.2 Service animals play an important role in ensuring the independence of individuals with disabilities, and it is CAT's policy to welcome any service animal that is trained to assist an individual with a disability on our buses, paratransit vehicles, and at all CAT facilities. This policy is designed to assist CAT employees and qualified individuals with disabilities in complying with all State and Federal laws, including the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 ("ADA") and its amendments.

2. APPLICABILITY

- 2.1 This policy is applicable to CAT employees, contractors, and all qualified individuals with disabilities who travel on CAT buses, and paratransit vehicles or who visit CAT bus stops, shelters, and other facilities.

3. DEFINITIONS

- 3.1 "**Direct Threat**" means a significant risk of substantial harm to the health and safety of other individuals.
- 3.2 "**Person with a Disability**" means an individual who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities of the individual; an individual with a record of such impairment; or being regarded as having such an impairment.
- 3.3 "**User/Owner**" means an individual with a disability who requires assistance with one or more daily life activities from a service animal, or service animals.
- 3.4 "**Service Animal**" means any dog, or other animal, individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of a qualified individual with a disability, including psychiatric, cognitive or mental disabilities. Possible tasks that service animals may perform include but are not limited to, guiding individuals who are blind or have low vision, alerting individuals who are deaf or hearing impaired to

the presence of people or sounds, pulling a wheelchair, fetching dropped items, assisting an individual during a seizure, retrieving medicine or alerting the individual to a telephone call, providing physical support to assist with balance and stability to individuals with mobility disabilities and assisting individuals including those with cognitive disabilities with navigation. A service animal is **not** a pet or a comfort animal.

- 3.5 **“Companion Animal”** (also referred to as “comfort animal” or “therapy animal”): means an animal which may provide a sense of well-being, comfort or companionship to a person (including individuals with disabilities) but which is not individually trained to perform specific tasks of daily living to assist people with disabilities. Companion animals are subject to CAT’s policies and procedures for transporting pets. Companion animals are not the same as service animals, and they do not have the same rights as service animals to board and ride CAT buses or Paratransit vehicles.

4. STANDARDS

- 4.1 Owners/users of service animals are welcome in all CAT facilities and on-board all CAT buses and Paratransit vehicles. Companion, comfort and therapy animals are not permitted in CAT facilities or on CAT buses and paratransit vehicles unless they can be stowed within an enclosed pet carrier that fits on the customer’s lap or on the floor beneath the customer’s seat.
- 4.2 Employees of CAT may ask the following questions to verify that an animal traveling with a CAT passenger is a service animal:
- 4.2.1 Is the animal a service animal?
 - 4.2.2 What specific tasks is the animal trained to perform?
- 4.3 The user/owner boarding a CAT vehicle with a service animal may not be charged an extra fee for the service animal.
- 4.4 The user/owner is not limited in the number of service animals he/she may have as each may provide a different type of service.
- 4.5 The user/owner must be in control of the service animal(s) at all times.
- 4.6 The service animal(s) must be appropriately trained and be able to perform its tasks for the benefit of the user/owner.
- 4.7 There is no specific requirement about how to board a service animal onto the bus or paratransit vehicle. The vehicle operator should ask the user/owner how he/she would like to board with his/her service animal(s), and follow the requested procedures, if appropriate. An operator may call Dispatch for assistance.
- 4.8 Users/owners with service animals may not be required to sit in a specified area.
- 4.9 Service animals must sit or lie at their owner’s feet or may be held in the owner’s lap.



- 4.10 Service animals may not occupy a seat or block any aisle, vehicle entrance or exit.
- 4.11 A person's right to travel with a service animal may not be denied even if there is another passenger who is afraid of animals or who has an allergy to the service animal. In such instances, the passenger with the service animal may board as normal, and the passenger who is allergic to, or afraid of, the service animal may board the bus at a different door and sit or stand in a location as far from the service animal and its owner/user as possible.
- 4.12 A service animal may be barred from CAT facilities, buses and/or paratransit vehicles when:
 - 4.12.1 The animal causes damage to CAT buses or facilities.
 - 4.12.2 The animal poses a direct threat to the health or safety of other passengers or employees.
 - 4.12.3 The owner/user is unable to maintain verbal or physical control over the animal.
- 4.13 CAT may not bar access to a service animal based on experience with other service animals of the same type or breed, or on an unreasonable fear that is not related to the service animal's actual behavior.
- 4.14 Other passengers are requested not to call, touch or interfere with a service animal without the consent of its owner/user.
- 4.15 Any individual who violates this policy may be required to exit CAT facilities, buses and/or Paratransit vehicles.

5. OWNER/USER RESPONSIBILITIES

- 5.1 Read and become familiar with CAT's service animal policies
- 5.2 Be prepared to explain whether or not your animal is a service animal and what task(s) of daily living your animal(s) is/are trained to perform
- 5.3 Know the best way to safely board and ride with your service animal(s)
- 5.4 Maintain continuous verbal and/or physical control over your service animal(s) at CAT facilities or when riding CAT buses and/or Paratransit vehicles
- 5.5 Immediately control any inappropriate or threatening behavior exhibited by your service animal while visiting CAT facilities or when riding CAT buses or paratransit vehicles.
- 5.6 Request drivers or other CAT personnel to provide assistance when boarding, riding or disembarking the bus or paratransit vehicle with your service animal(s)
- 5.7 Reimburse CAT for any damage which your service animal causes when visiting CAT facilities or riding CAT buses and/or paratransit vehicles.

6. TRAINING FOR COTTONWOOD AREA TRANSIT EMPLOYEES

- 6.1 All front-line employees of CAT, including drivers, supervisors, dispatchers, Customer Service Representatives and key management personnel, will be provided with training regarding the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), ADA service animal requirements, applicable state or local service animal laws or regulations regarding this policy. CAT will also provide refresher training as warranted.

7. COMPLAINTS

7.1 General Complaints

7.2 If an individual believes that CAT has violated this policy, the individual may file a general complaint describing the alleged violation. A Manager at CAT will research the matter, take appropriate actions to address any areas of alleged poor performance, and advise the passenger (if requested) of any findings and/or actions taken. General complaints may be filed by:

7.2.1 Calling CAT's Customer Service Department at (928) 634-2287

7.2.2 Sending an email to cat@cottonwoodaz.gov

7.2.3 Filing a complaint on-line at

<http://www.cottonwoodaz.gov/161/Cottonwood-Area-Transit-CAT>

7.2.4 General complaints usually are answered within 10 business days

7.3 ADA-specific Complaints

7.4 If an individual believes that CAT is systematically violating the ADA requirements regarding passengers who use service animals, the individual can file an ADA complaint with CAT. CAT will research ADA complaints, identify any legal violations which may have occurred, identify the actions to be taken to correct the performance and contact the complainant with findings and next steps. ADA complaints may be filed:

7.4.1 On-line at <http://www.cottonwoodaz.gov/161/Cottonwood-Area-Transit-CAT>.

7.4.2 In writing at Cottonwood Area Transit, 340 Happy Jack Way, Cottonwood, AZ 86326

7.4.3 Assistance with the on-line form can be provided at (928) 634-2287

7.4.4 In accordance with federal law, ADA complaints must be addressed within 45 calendar days.

7.5 Individuals may also file ADA complaints (including complaints alleging discrimination based on the presence of a service animal) with the Federal Transportation Administration (FTA), Office of Civil Rights.

7.5.1 By phone: Toll-free at 1 (888) 446-4511

7.5.2 By TTY/TDD – The Federal Relay Service toll-free at (800) 877-8339

7.5.3 On-line at

http://www.fta.dot.gov/civilrights/ada/civil_rights_3889.html.