

## **Service and Emotional Support Animal Procedures**

**Service Animal:** An animal individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a physical, intellectual, and/or mental disability.

**Emotional Support Animal:** An animal providing some therapeutic benefit to a person with a mental or psychiatric disability, requiring no specific training. The mere presence of this animal mitigates the effects of the emotional or mental disability.

### **Purpose**

University Housing accommodates “service animals” as defined by the Fair Housing Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; updated Feb. 2011. Rules, policies, and practices have been modified to permit the use of an assistance animal as a reasonable accommodation in housing when its use may be necessary to afford a person with a disability an equal opportunity to use and enjoy a dwelling, common areas of a dwelling, or participate in, or benefit from, any housing program receiving federal financial assistance from HUD, unless an exception applies.

This policy applies to all residents and their approved service animals who live in Armstrong residential facilities. For the purpose of this policy, the term “service animal” refers to “service animals” and “assistive animals” as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act and Fair Employment and Housing Act respectively. According to this definition, service animals are considered as “any guide dog, signal dog, or other animal (miniature horse) individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including, but not limited to, guiding individuals with impaired vision, alerting individuals who are hearing impaired to intruders or sounds, providing minimal protection or rescue work, pulling a wheelchair, or fetching dropped items.” {28 C.F.R. 36.302(c) (1)}

According to the Georgia statute amended on July 1, 2007, any person engaged in the training/raising of a service animal such as a dog as a guide shall “have the same right to be accompanied by such dog [being trained/raised for training] as the totally or partially blind person, deaf person, or physically disabled person.” {OCGA 30-40-2} Therefore, any resident requesting permission to train/raise a service animal will be expected to abide by the guidelines as explained within this policy.

### **Procedure**

After the Director of Disability Services has approved the accommodation of a service or emotional support animal the student is responsible for submitting the approved Service and Emotional Support Animal Procedure Acknowledgement and Information Form to the Director of University Housing.

In addition, the resident must notify the Director of Disability Services and the Director of University Housing (in writing) if the service animal is no longer needed as a service animal or the animal is no longer in residence. To replace a service animal with a new service animal, the resident must file a new request with the Director of Disability Services and follow the same procedures as before.

No animal will be permitted in University Housing that:

1. Is not approved by the Director of Disability Services
2. Is not approved by the Director of University Housing
3. Poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others
4. Would cause a substantial physical damage to the property of the University and other residents
5. Would pose an undue financial and administrative burden to the University
6. Would fundamentally alter the nature of the University's housing operations

### **Standards for Approval**

All roommates, suitemates, or apartment mates of the owner must agree to allowing the service animal to reside with them. In the event that one or more roommates do not approve, either the owner and service animal or the non-approving roommates, as determined by University Housing, may be reassigned to a more suitable location. Sensitivity to individuals with allergies and to those who fear animals is important to ensure the integrity of the academic and residential community.

All approved service or assistance animals must comply with applicable laws regarding animals and their treatment and care and also meet the following standards:

#### **Dogs**

1. All required immunizations must be up-to-date and a copy of the immunizations must be on file with University Housing.
2. Dogs must be licensed and a copy of the license must be on file with University Housing.
3. Dogs must be spayed or neutered. A copy of the veterinarian's report must be on file with University Housing.
4. Collars and tags must be worn at all times. The dog must be kept on a leash at all times when outside the residence hall or apartment. Dogs must never be allowed to run freely.
5. Dogs must possess friendly and sociable characteristics. A specific dog can be restricted from the premises by the Director of Housing based on any confirmed threatening behavior.

#### **Domestic Cats**

1. All required immunizations must be up-to-date and a copy of the immunizations must be on file with University Housing.
2. Cats must be licensed and a copy of the license must be on file with University Housing.

3. Cats must be spayed or neutered. A copy of the veterinarian's report must be on file with University Housing.
4. Collars and tags must be worn at all times. The cat must be kept on a leash at all times when outside the residence hall or apartment. Cats must never be allowed to run freely.

### **Any other animal**

To be considered on a case by case basis.

### **Standards of Behavior**

1. Animals require daily food, water, and attention, as well as daily assessment of their general health, behavior and overall welfare.
2. Animals cannot be left unattended overnight at any time. If the owner must be away, they must either take the animal with them or make arrangements for them to be cared for elsewhere.
3. Emotional support animals must not be taken into the residence hall or apartment offices, administrative offices, common space or student living areas. Emotional support animals are not allowed in the bedrooms of the other residents. If all roommates consent in writing, an animal may be allowed in the common living space of the apartment. When the owner is not in the residential facility, the emotional support animal must be kept in the owner's bedroom.
4. Animal feces, defined as cat litter box contents and any solid animal waste, must be disposed of properly. It is the owner's responsibility to remove feces from University grounds, dispose of it in a plastic bag, and then place the bag in a garbage dumpster outside.
5. Residents with cats must properly maintain litter boxes. In consideration of the health of the cat and occupants of the apartment or residence hall room, cat litter box contents must be disposed of properly and regularly. The litter box must be changed with new cat litter regularly as outlined by the manufacturer.
6. Animal accidents within the residence hall room or apartment must be promptly cleaned up using appropriate cleaning products.
7. The owner is financially and legally responsible for the actions of the service animal such as bodily injury or property damage including, but not limited to, any replacement of furniture, carpet, drapes, or wall coverings, etc.
8. Any flea infestation must be attended to promptly by scheduling a professional extermination company under University contract at owner's expense. Owners are expected to promptly notify housing staff and arrange for extermination when a flea problem is noted. Animal owners must take precautionary measures such as: flea medications prescribed by veterinarians, flea and tick collars, and taking your animal to the veterinarian for flea and tick baths. Animal owners will be responsible for all extermination costs.
9. Regular and routine cleaning of floors, kennels, cages, and litter boxes must occur. The odor of an animal emanating from the residence hall room or apartment is not acceptable.

10. Animals must not be allowed to disrupt others (e.g., barking continuously, growling, yowling, howling, etc.). Residents, staff, and faculty may complete an animal grievance form through the Office of Housing and Residence Life to document disruptive or threatening animal behavior. Animals which constitute a threat or nuisance to staff, residents or property, as determined by the Director of Housing must be removed within seven (7) days of notification. If the Director of Housing determines that the animal poses an immediate threat, animal control may be summoned to remove the animal. If the behavior of an animal can be addressed by the owner and the owner can change the behavior of an animal so that the animal does not have to be removed, then a written action plan must be submitted by the owner. The action plan must outline the action that will take place to alleviate the problems and also must give a deadline as to length of time the plan will take. Any action plan must meet the approval of the Director of Housing. After the established deadline for removal from the apartment, University staff will do a residence hall room or apartment inspection to check damages and infestation and then the mandatory cleaning and extermination will be scheduled.
11. An animal must not be involved in an accident where a person experiences either the threat of or an actual injury as a result of the animal's behavior.
12. The animal owner will take all reasonable precautions to protect university staff and residents, as well as the property of the University and of the residents.
13. The owner will notify University Housing if the animal has escaped its confines and is unable to be located within two (2) hours.
14. All liability for the actions of the animal (bites, scratches, etc.) is the responsibility of the owner.
15. University Housing has the ability to relocate the owner and the service animal as necessary per current contractual agreements.

### **Cleaning and Damages**

1. When the resident moves out of his/her apartment or residence hall room, or no longer owns the animal, the apartment or residence hall room will be assessed to determine if damage to residential property can be attributed to the animal. University Housing conducts health and safety inspections in the residential facilities periodically and may check additional items during these inspections (i.e. litter box) if the student has an animal. Housing staff maintains the right to conduct apartment or residence hall room inspections each semester for the purpose of assessing damage caused by the animal or otherwise determine the resident's compliance with this procedure.
2. The animal owner has an obligation to make sure that the apartment or residence hall room is as clean as the original standard. If the apartment or room has carpeting, this also includes regular vacuuming and spot cleaning. Damages and extraordinary cleaning caused by the animal are the responsibility of the resident who owns the animal. Replacement or repair of damaged items will be the sole financial responsibility of the student owner.