

Nile Swim Club Service Animal & Pet Policy

Rev 03/2025

General Policy

- Pets are **not allowed** unless they are **service animals** as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- **Emotional Support Animals (ESAs)** are **not permitted** as they do not have public access rights under the ADA or Pennsylvania law. (*Source: Pennsylvania Emotional Support Animal Laws, 2023*)

Definition of a Service Animal (*Source: ADA.gov*)

A **service animal** is a **dog** that is individually trained to perform specific tasks or work for a person with a disability. These tasks must be directly related to the person's disability.

Examples include:

- Guiding individuals who are blind
- Alerting individuals who are deaf
- Assisting individuals in wheelchairs
- Alerting and protecting individuals experiencing seizures
- Reminding individuals to take prescribed medication
- Calming individuals with PTSD during anxiety attacks
- Performing other trained tasks directly related to a disability

Dogs whose sole function is to provide comfort or emotional support **do not qualify** as service animals under the ADA.

Rights & Responsibilities

- Public accommodations in Pennsylvania must comply with both **state and federal** laws.
- A **service dog owner cannot be charged extra** for bringing their service animal. However, they are **responsible for any damage** caused by the animal.
- Businesses and staff **may deny entry** if the service animal:
 - **Poses a direct threat** to health or safety (e.g., aggressive behavior such as snarling or snapping)
 - Is **not under control** and the handler does not correct the behavior
 - Is **not housebroken**

Staff Interaction Guidelines

When the service animal's role is **not obvious**, staff may ask only two questions:

1. **Is the dog required because of a disability?**
2. **What work or task has the dog been trained to perform?**

Staff cannot ask:

- ⊘ About the person's disability
- ⊘ For medical documentation
- ⊘ For special identification or certification for the dog
- ⊘ For the dog to demonstrate its trained task

Special Considerations

- **Allergies and fear of dogs** are **not valid reasons** to deny access. If necessary, reasonable accommodations should be made to separate individuals with allergies from service animals.
- **Food establishments** must allow service animals in public areas, even if state or local health codes prohibit animals on the premises.
- People with disabilities who use service animals **cannot be treated differently** from other patrons, isolated, or charged pet fees.
- If a business charges guests for damages, the same policy applies to customers with service animals.

Pool Area Policy

- **Service animals are allowed** on pool grounds and pool decks.
- **Service animals are NOT allowed in the water.**