



**AMERICAN
KENNEL CLUB®**

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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THE AMERICAN KENNEL CLUB LAUDS RELEASE OF FINAL RULE ON SERVICE DOG AIR TRAVEL

New York, NY-The American Kennel Club™ (AKC), the largest purebred registry in the world and leading advocate for dogs, lauds the U.S. Department of Transportation on yesterday's release of a final rule on travel by air with service dogs.

"We are very pleased by the DOT's strong statement that recognizes the value of properly trained service dogs and the tasks they perform to mitigate an individual's disability," said Dennis Sprung, AKC President and CEO. "We also appreciate the clarification that service dogs come in many shapes and sizes, and that no properly trained, working service dog should be denied a flight because of its breed or appearance."

The new rule, which begins in 30 days, addresses issues associated with the increase in poorly trained service dogs and emotional support animals that have been brought into airports and on aircraft in recent years, putting the health and safety of other passengers – especially those with properly trained service dogs, the crew and aircraft at risk.

Among other changes to federal rules for air transport of service dogs, this rule aligns the definition of service dog in the Air Carrier Access Act with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Psychiatric Service Dogs will be treated as individually trained service dogs. Emotional Support Animals will be treated as pets.

The AKC has shared concerns that passengers wishing to travel by air with their pets may falsely be claiming that their pets are service animals in order to travel, by bringing a pet into aircraft cabins or avoid paying fees for their pets. We strongly oppose the practice of characterizing dogs as service animals when they are not or attempting to benefit from a dog's service dog status when the individual handling the dog is not a person with a disability.

The AKC has been particularly concerned about the unjust impact that poorly trained dogs and misrepresentation of pets as service dogs has had on undermining the ability of individuals with disabilities who truly need properly trained service dogs to conduct their daily activities. To assist in finding a solution to this issue, AKC is a founding partner in the American Service Dog Access Coalition, a charitable organization that works across industries to establish recognized, voluntary standards certification for service dogs.

For more information, contact Brandi Hunter or Sheila Goffe at <mailto:communications@akc.org>.

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About the American Kennel Club

Founded in 1884, the American Kennel Club is a not-for-profit organization, which maintains the largest registry of purebred dogs in the world and oversees the sport of purebred dogs in the United States. The AKC is dedicated to upholding the integrity of its registry, promoting the sport of purebred dogs and breeding for type and function. Along with its more than 5,000 licensed and member clubs and its affiliated organizations, the AKC advocates for the purebred dog as a family companion, advances canine health and well-being, works to protect the rights of all dog owners and promotes responsible dog ownership. More than 22,000 competitions for AKC-registered purebred and mixed breed dogs are held under AKC rules and regulations each year including conformation, agility, obedience, rally, tracking, herding, lure coursing, coonhound events, hunt tests, field and earthdog tests. Affiliate AKC organizations include the AKC Humane Fund, AKC Canine Health Foundation, AKC Reunite and the AKC Museum of the Dog. For more information, visit www.akc.org.

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