

Accessibility Matters: Assistance Animals & Emotional Support Animals

Websites claiming:
 “National Service Registry”
 “Emotional Support Dog Registration”
 “Official Service Dog Registry”
 “US Emotional Support Dog Registry” or “US Service Dog Registry” are handing out false information & are asking for payment for a false document.

There is no law stating that ESA must wear a vest!

Vancouver Eco Village does not certify ESA for individuals. But they are certified to provide an ESA at the community level, ie. Hospital visits for recuperating patients, with school counsellors to help students cope with stress.

Facts:

Guide/Service Dogs

Can help people with **visual impairments, hearing impairments, muscle impairments and epilepsy**. Help people with disabilities avoid hazards, navigate through public areas, alert them to sounds, open doors or perform other tasks.

Accredited schools in BC: Pacific Assistance Dogs Society (PADS) or BC & AB Guide Dog Services, Vancouver Island Compassion Dogs.

Regulated by... Guide Dog & Service Dog Act which regulates how guide/service dogs and their handlers are certified. Increasing public safety, raises training standards, and improves public access for dog and handler teams.

Ways to get certified... get a trained dog from an accredited dog school or pass a public safety test. Ensuring that only dogs who behave well in a variety of environments get certified. School must be accredited by Assistance Dogs International(ADI) or International Guide Dog Federation(IGDF). A handler must submit the following to Guide & Service Dogs Information Contact: a completed application for a guide dog certificate, written confirmation from the accredited school, a passport size quality photograph of yourself, a copy of valid government issued photo ID.

Can also submit an Application for a Dog-in-training, Trainer & Re-tired Dog Certificate completed by an authorized representative of an ADI or IGDF to Guide & Service Dogs Information Contact.

Visitors to BC

Enjoy the same access under the Guide Dog and Service Dog Act, encouraged that visiting dog and handler get certified. Apply to get certified through filling out an Application for a Guide or Service Dog Certificate form for Guide & Service Dogs Information. Contact information below.

* Individuals receiving provincial disability assistance are eligible to receive a Guide Animal Supplement of \$95. Call (toll-free) 1-866-866-0800. ESA are not eligible for this full supplement, but with a letter from a psychiatrist a person can get partial supplement for feeding the animal.



Facts:

Therapy & Emotional Support Animals

Are used to minimize the negative symptoms of the persons emotional and psychological impairments. Could be any type of animal, not only dogs. In BC, Therapy and ESA's are not eligible for certification, because they do not have to be trained.

But... for an animal to be qualified as a therapy or ESA, a qualified mental health professional must write a letter indicating the impairment in the DSM-IV or DSM-V. Your therapist will assess your mental state and write the letter if they think you can benefit. Important to always have it with you where you are taking the animal.

For ESA there are Canadian Transportation Agency & Air Transportation Regulations. Air Transportation Regulations & Air Craft Accessibility require you show your letter and give a 48 hrs notice prior to bringing the animal for travelling with you. Some airlines request vet forms and other forms, so please double check with airline prior to boarding your flight. Before travelling out of country, make sure foreign animals are allowed inside the country.

West Jet allows ESA to sit on lap of passenger during flight, if below the size of a two year old toddler baby, if not then you need the appropriate sized carrier, but if too large the animal may be asked to go into cargo.

Housing Laws: Could fall under the Guide Dog and Service Dog Act, but there is currently no legislation specifically to ESA.

Could also be known as: companion dog.

If the animal is unruly, aggressive, or puts other dogs/animals in danger, then laws do not apply.

If the pet has lived with you for over a year and no one has complained about noise/allergies then a person can apply to the Residential Tenancy Branch to have an eviction dismissed.

Contacts:

- Guide & Service Dogs Information Contact, Toll free - 1 855 587-0185 (press option 5), fax: 250 387-4454, ph: 250-387-6414, e-mail: guideandservicedogs@gov.bc.ca, mail: Security Programs Division, PO Box 9217 Stn Prov Govt. Victoria, B.C. V8W 9J1
- Pacific Assistance Dogs Society (PADS), Burnaby, BC (main campus) 9048 Stormont Ave. Burnaby, BC V3N 4G6, Ph: 604-527-0556 (toll free)1-877-292-1765 , Fax: 604-527-0558 Office Hours: Mon-Fri, 9:00-4:00. Alberta Puppy-Raising Program, 2309 Centre Ave. SE, Calgary, AB T3E 0A9, Ph: 1-877-292-1765 (toll-free) (Option 4). Okanagan Puppy Raising Program, Box 77, Enderby, BC V0E 1V0, Ph: 1-877-292-1765 (toll-free) (Option 6). website: <https://pads.ca/>
- BC & Alberta Guide Dog Services, BC Greater Vancouver (Head Office): 7061 Ladner Trunk Rd. Delta, BC V4K 3N3 Ph: 604-940-4504 (toll-free NA)1-877-940-4504, Fax: 604-940-4506, E-mail: info@bcguidedog.com BC Vancouver Island Office: 1027 Pandora Ave. Victoria, BC V8V 3P6 Ph: 250-413-3095 (Please call ahead prior to visit) E-mail: info@bcguidedog.com Calgary Office: #11 6115-4th St. SE, Calgary, AB T2H 2H9 Ph: 403-258-0819 (toll-free AB)1-877-258-0819, E-mail: info@albertaguidedog.com website: <https://bcandalbertaguidedogs.com/>
- Vancouver Island Compassion Dogs (for veterans), 104-166 West First Ave. Qualicum Beach, BC V9K 1G9 Ph: 250-909-0090 website: <https://vicompassiondogs.ca>
- More information about Emotional Support Animals in Canada contact: CertaPet toll-free: 1-877-207-0561, website: <https://www.certapet.com/emotional-support-animal-canada>