



Ask Fred

The question of whether or not an animal is truly a service animal or a pet comes up frequently.

Question: I'm a community association manager for a medium-sized community in Florida and I've received several complaints from members that a particular resident's service dog is really her pet and doesn't actually perform any tasks related to a disability. Am I allowed to ask for proof that the dog is a real service animal?

Answer: The question gets asked a lot, "Can I ask for documentation that an animal is a service animal?" The answer is no, and is found in section 413.08(b), F.S., which states that documentation that the service animal is trained is not a precondition for providing service to an individual accompanied by a service animal. To determine the difference between a service animal and a pet, you may ask if an animal is required because of a disability and what work or tasks the animal has been trained to perform. So although you may not ask for documentation of the dog's training as a service animal, you may ask what work or tasks the dog has been trained to perform.

Thanks for asking, Fred Gray

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