



Guidelines for Guide or Service Dogs at Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Blind Rehabilitation Centers (BRCs)

Dog handlers' responsibilities while attending BRC training:

- Veterans are responsible for ensuring that they have documentation of appropriate inoculations, including rabies shots, as well as information for emergency veterinary care for their dog, available at all times.
- Veterans are responsible for affixing identification tags with the name of their dog and a point of contact telephone number.
- Veterans should provide the BRC Admissions Coordinator with a written plan for their dog in the event of an emergency. This information sharing should occur during the admissions process.
- Veterans are responsible for arranging veterinary services in advance of their arrival at a BRC.
- Veterans are responsible for all medical bills related to their dog. Dogs must be registered with the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Prosthetic and Sensory Aids Service (PSAS) at their local VA facility, allowing surgical and other selected services to be funded by PSAS.
 - By registering the dog, the appropriate training school can be contacted if any issues arise.
- Veterans are responsible for relieving their dog in designated relief areas.
 - Veterans will be oriented to the designated relief area and trash receptacles.
 - Veterans can relieve their dog based on the dog and handler's schedule.
 - Veterans are responsible for picking up after their dog.
- Veterans who choose not to use the designated relief area are responsible for bringing their own plastic bags and picking up after their dog.
- Veterans must ensure that their dogs are groomed and maintain behavioral training standards so that no physical or health risks are posed to others.
- Veterans whose dogs have been removed will be given an opportunity to complete training without their dog or be discharged and returned to training at a later date.
- Veterans must plan ahead to ensure that the nutritional needs of their dog will be met by bringing and/or making plans to obtain suitable food and water and to subsequently store both. These items will not be available through the BRC.
- Veterans are responsible for walking their dog during their stay.
- Veterans who are temporarily unable to care for their dog while at a BRC may request help from staff to call for care assistance. BRC staff members are not permitted to handle dogs. If more than a short (one-day) respite is to occur, one of the following arrangements must be made:
 - Have the dog picked up by a trusted caretaker ("alternate handler").
 - Have the dog kenneled at a licensed facility.
 - Have the dog returned to the training school.
- Veterans must be approved for safe travel by an Orientation and Mobility Instructor.
- Veterans choosing not to bring their dog to BRC training classes must secure the dog in their room.
- Veterans must maintain full control of their dog at all times. Dogs are not permitted to roam freely.
- Veterans must prevent their dogs from entering sterile areas within the medical facility, including the BRC linen storage room; chemically or pathogenically dangerous areas; and other areas designated by policy.