



VALOR GAMES FAR WEST

Service Dogs and the Valor Games

A note from the Organizing Committee:

At the Valor Games Far West, our number one priority is participant safety.

For individuals who will attend the Valor Games Far West with their service animals, please know that we will do our best to ensure that all rights afforded to you under the Americans with Disabilities Act are preserved.

We would like to clarify some of the ADA guidelines we follow, as well as point out some of the Assistance Dog International (an industry standard) guidelines for Public Access Testing of Service Dogs.

The following excerpts were taken directly from the U.S. Department of Justice Civil Rights Division Disability Rights Section in referring to the Americans With Disabilities Act.

“Service animals are defined as dogs that are individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities. Examples of such work or tasks include guiding people who are blind, alerting people who are deaf, pulling a wheelchair, alerting and protecting a person who is having a seizure, reminding a person with mental illness to take prescribed medications, calming a person with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) during an anxiety attack, or performing other duties. Service animals are working animals, not pets. The work or task a dog has been trained to provide must be directly related to the person’s disability. Dogs whose sole function is to provide comfort or emotional support do not qualify as service animals under the ADA.”

We understand that, at times, individuals need to have the emotional support of their animal. However, for safety reasons, we cannot have animals attend that do not meet certain industry standards. While Public Access Testing is not mandatory for Service Animals to pass, it is one tool that organizations across the country use to gauge the readiness of their service dogs to be placed with persons with disabilities. Emotional Support dogs have no identified industry standard in which to gauge their ability to perform in the public sector. Nor are we sure that Emotional Support Animals have been exposed to other animals, crowds, loud noises, and various other stimuli that are possible at the Valor Games Far West. **For these reasons we ask that you leave your Emotional Support Animal at home.**

Pets are prohibited from attending the event not only for their safety but the safety of



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other participants. This includes leaving them in vehicles while participating in scheduled events. Given the fluctuations in weather and temperature, it is extremely dangerous to leave your pet unattended.

For those participants who may require additional emotional support, we are thrilled to once again partner with a local organization that will bring therapy dogs to the event. These are specially trained animal-handler teams that are often seen in schools, nursing homes, hospitals, and airports and provide comfort to those who may need it.

The Americans with Disabilities Act also provides us structure in dealing with service animals that may come into question due to acting aggressively towards another service animal or human, begging for food at the tables, urinating inside and other potential behavioral issues.

The ADA states:

“A person with a disability cannot be asked to remove his service animal from the premises unless: (1) the dog is out of control and the handler does not take effective action to control it or (2) the dog is not housebroken. When there is a legitimate reason to ask that a service animal be removed, staff must offer the person with the disability the opportunity to obtain goods or services without the animal’s presence.”

The handler of a service animal will be asked to correct the behavior if they have not already done so. If the behavior of the service animal persists the handler will be asked to remove the service animal from the event. The handler will still be allowed to participate in the event.

*Thank you for your cooperation,
Valor Games Far West Organizing Committee*