

Harness & Leash

Edition 36

Message from David Locklin, Director of Programs

The question on everyone's minds these days is "When will campus re-open for training?" I sincerely wish I could provide a specific date, but I cannot. What I can tell you is that we continue to deliver services in-home where Covid numbers are on the decline (as I write this, that includes 20 states). We are servicing guide dog clients from across the U.S. and O&M clients within a day's drive to campus.

Don't let our current circumstances stop you from getting an application started if you are considering retiring your current dog, are deciding to get your first dog or want to get O&M training. Start the application process now so you're approved for training when we re-open campus.

Remember, the client services department is always your first point of contact with questions or concerns. You can reach our client services coordinators at 888-777-5332 or clientservices@leaderdog.org.

Air Carrier Access Act (ACAA) Revised

On January 11, 2021 the latest revision of the Air Carrier Access Act (ACAA) went into effect. The revision addresses concerns raised by individuals with disabilities, airlines, flight attendants,

airports, other aviation transportation stakeholders, and other members of the public, regarding service animals on aircraft.

The revision defines a service animal as a dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of a person with a disability.

- Psychiatric service dogs are included as service animals
- Emotional support dogs *are not* included as service animals

Under the latest revision, airlines are allowed to:

- Require the handler to submit forms developed by the Department of Transportation (DOT) verifying a service animal's health, behavior and training, and for long flights verifying that the dog can either not relieve itself or can relieve itself in a sanitary manner
- Require the handler to provide the DOT service animal form(s) up to 48 hours in advance of the date of travel if the airline reservation was made two or more days before the flight
- Require the handler to provide the DOT service animal form(s) at the departure gate when boarding a flight
- Require a service animal to fit within its handler's foot space on the aircraft
- Limit a handler to traveling with no more than two service animals at one time
- Require the service animal to be harnessed, leashed, or tethered at all times in the airport and on the aircraft

- Refuse transportation to service animals that exhibit aggressive behavior and that pose a direct threat to the health or safety of others

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Airlines are not allowed to:

- Require a handler to physically check-in at the airport instead of using the online check-in process
- Refuse to transport a service animal solely based on breed

IMPORTANT NOTE: Last week an airline contacted us to verify that the individual who filled out the DOT service animal form was a legitimate Leader Dog client. As a member of the Council of US Dog Guide Schools (CUSDGS) and Assistance Dogs International (ADI) we're looking to discuss this process with the airlines to make it as easy as possible for guide dog handlers to travel by air.

Because we do not want to delay air travel for any LDB clients, we will confirm current client status when requested by an airline. If you are asked to provide Leader Dog contact information for confirmation of status, provide 888.777.5332 extension 1 for client services.

To read the entire ruling and Frequently Asked Questions, go to <https://www.transportation.gov/briefing-room/us-department-transportation-announces-final-rule-traveling-air-service-animals>

Below are links to the service dog requirement pages for several major airlines. All have links to the forms needed to fly with your Leader Dog. We suggest that you review the requirements well in advance of your travel date.

American <https://www.aa.com/i18n/travel-info/special-assistance/service-animals.jsp>

Delta <https://www.delta.com/us/en/accessible-travel-services/service-animals>

Frontier <https://www.flyfrontier.com/travel/travel-info/special-services/?mobile=true>

Jet Blue <https://www.jetblue.com/at-the-airport/accessibility-assistance/service-dogs-animals>

Southwest <https://www.southwest.com/html/customer-service/traveling-with-animals/index-pol.html>

United <https://www.united.com/ual/en/us/fly/travel/special-needs/disabilities/assistance-animals.html>

Air Canada

<https://www.aircanada.com/ca/en/aco/home/plan/accessibility.html>

A Great Partnership with CNIB

In November, the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB) Guide Dogs reached out to us because the pandemic created a critical shortage of guide dogs in Canada. They needed dogs to train for their clients because their supply of puppies dramatically

dwindled. On November 17, we took six dogs (three which were prison-raised) to a rest stop in Port Huron, Michigan to meet CNIB personnel to hand over the dogs. CNIB still needs to train these dogs before giving them to CNIB clients.

It's a two-way street as CNIB has assisted Leader Dog by conducting follow-up visits with our clients who live in Canada as we have been unable to do so due to COVID border restrictions. This partnership allows both CNIB and Leader Dog to help more people who are visually impaired to travel independently and safely with a guide dog.

O&M Corner – Winter Walking Tips

The snow and cold of winter can often leave us feeling like we should stay indoors. It is important to give ourselves a bit of encouragement to get out and walk in the winter months to keep our O&M skills in peak performance. Here are some tips for going on a walk in the winter.

1. Walk like a penguin - slowly, small steps and point your toes out slightly to be more stable on icy paths.
2. Keep your head up and do not lean forward. Keep your hands out of your pockets to improve your balance. Find a path around snow or ice when available.
3. If sidewalks are unpassable, use rural travel techniques. Follow the shoulder of the road, walking against traffic. Wear visible clothing so drivers can see you.

4. Invest in a pair of Yaktrax or a similar snow grip, ice-traction device. Over-the-sole shoe devices keep your grip when walking in winter conditions. Use these devices outdoors only.
5. A Hot Glove Mitt (used for tennis and pickleball) or an ice scraper mitt (remove the scraper) both have a small hole in the fingertip end that is the perfect spot for a cane to fit. You can keep your hand warm and maintain direct contact with the grip to have the best sensitivity to your cane.
6. When snow obscures your usual tactile clues and landmarks, shift your focus to auditory information for orientation. Listen for intersections, the end or beginning of building lines and other auditory clues unique to your environment.
7. If you are shoveling your own drive or walkway, remember that a newly shoveled surface can be more slippery than a snowy one. If you are shoveling without your cane or dog, use the shovel as an improvised mobility device to preview the surface.

If you want to improve your O&M skills or know someone else who does, please email our client services department at clientservices@leaderdog.org or call 888-777-5332 extension 1. Our client services team will be happy to answer your questions or get your application started.

Victor Reader Trek Updates

HumanWare has released Victor Reader Trek 2.1 software that has important improvements and new features. One new feature

is “HERE” maps that provide a better navigation experience, address precision and street name accuracy. The new software also has a simpler way to install and access world maps.

A new map browsing mode allows you to virtually explore any map area installed on your device. You can familiarize yourself with an area before you physically arrive at a new location allowing you to explore a neighborhood, prepare for a trip, find points of interest, and create new landmarks from the comfort of your home.

The revamped routine engine includes improved instructions for more accurate guidance in pedestrian and motorized modes, accurate pronunciation of street names, fast and accurate address search, and improved “What’s around” feature.

Get your free upgrade & maps at

http://support.humanware.com/en-sa/support/victor_reader_trek

Alumni Hour

On February 3, 2021 we held our first online LDB Alumni Hour!

Alumni Hour is a fantastic way to meet other LDB alumni, hear from LDB team members and share your personal experiences. This event will be held on the first Wednesday of every month at 3 p.m. EST.

LDB Alumni Hour will begin with a quick update or topic presented by a LDB team member and then provide an open platform for questions and connections.

This event is exclusive for LDB alumni, so do not share the link. We look forward to sharing this platform with you and hearing what you have to say!

If you haven't already joined the Leader Dogs for the Blind Alumni group on Facebook, join today! It's a great way to get supportive resources from your fellow alumni.

You can join LDB Alumni Hour via Zoom online or by phone. To join online, copy the link below and paste it into your browser:

<https://leaderdog-org.zoom.us/j/95644864327?pwd=bkdON0s5TzZ2TVlhbnZEUFN0eIFvdz09>

To join by cell phone, dial: 1-646-558-8656, meeting ID: 95644865327, passcode: 061366

If you have a long-distance plan on your home phone, choose the phone number below for the location closest to you:

New York 646-558-8656

Washington DC 301-715-8592

Chicago 312-626-6799

San Jose 669-900-9128

Tacoma 253-215-8782

Houston 346-248-7799

Meeting ID: 95644864327

Passcode: 061366

We're looking forward to connecting with you!

Gift Shop Offers Discount

All clients receive 15% off from our online gift shop. Enter code "15OFF" at checkout to claim your discount. If you have questions or issues with the gift shop website, contact Kim Thomas, gift shop coordinator, at 888-777-5332.

Contact Us by Phone, Email or Text

Your first point of contact for assistance is always the client services department. You can reach them by calling 888-777-5332, or email or text them at clientservices@leaderdog.org.

Questions, Comments or Suggestions

Please send comments to UpdateEditor@leaderdog.org or call 888-777-5332 ext. 1158.