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# Service animals vs pets on Airbnb

What you can ask, what you can charge, and what to say. Keep it by your phone.

## ASK ONLY THESE TWO QUESTIONS (IN THE AIRBNB MESSAGE THREAD)

**1. "Do you require your animal because of a disability?"**

**2. "What work or task has the animal been trained to perform?"**

No papers, ID cards, vests or registries. No questions about the disability. No demonstrations. If it is obvious (a guide dog), don't ask. No answer can be treated as a "no"; you may ask again.

## SORT THE ANSWERS (AIRBNB POLICY, HELP CENTER 4239)

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| Disability + trained task | **SERVICE ANIMAL: accept, no fees, same rules** |
| Disability, no trained task | **EMOTIONAL SUPPORT ANIMAL: see below** |
| No, or no answer | **PET: your listing's pets rule applies** |

## EMOTIONAL SUPPORT ANIMALS

Most places: can be treated as a pet (pet fee, or decline in a no-pets listing). Must be accepted, with no pet or cleaning fee, for home stays in 17 US states: Alaska, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Dakota and Washington.

## FEES

Service animals always stay free: no pet fee, no hair or dander cleaning fee. Ask Airbnb to reimburse extra hair and dander cleaning (keep the cleaner's time log and photos). Real damage beyond normal wear and tear: send a request through Airbnb. Pet fee for real pets: can't be more than your nightly base rate.

## EVERY GUEST WITH AN ANIMAL: THE ANIMAL MUST NOT BE

left alone without your prior OK · out of control · not housebroken · in areas off-limits to all guests · unleashed in shared spaces. You can ask that animals stay off furniture and beds (unless it gets in the way of a service animal's work).

## SINCE NOV 20, 2026 (AIRBNB HOUSE RULES POLICY)

Pets is a standard rule: set it in the Listing editor. Any animal requests go in the listing before booking, worded for every animal. No new rules after booking (message, sign or in person). No fines. No cleaner tasks for guests.

## DON'T SAY > SAY INSTEAD

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|---|---|
| "Can I see the ID or certificate?" | **"Do you require your animal because of a disability?"** |
| "Service dogs pay the pet fee." | **"There's no extra fee for [dog's name]."** |
| "$250 fine for any pet." | **Pets rule in the listing + damage request if needed.** |
| A new pet-rules message after booking | **Practical info only: grassy area, bowls, vet.** |

## UNDISCLOSED ANIMAL AT CHECK-IN

Stay calm. Ask the two questions, then repeat them in the Airbnb thread. Task described: welcome them. Pet in a no-pets listing: contact Airbnb; a guest who breaks a house rule can be cancelled without fees. Never remove a guest yourself. Review behavior, not the person or their disability.

## EXEMPTION

Limited: e.g. the animal is a direct threat to the health of a host or household member who lives in the listing. Ask Airbnb support; disclose it in the listing description if granted.

Sources: airbnb.com/help/article/4239 · /3623 · /4168 · ada.gov/resources/service-animals-faqs (fetched Nov 19, 2026).
Not legal advice; laws differ by state and city. Full guide + messages: halivs.com/airbnb-service-animals-vs-pets

Next step: the Halivs Host Kit, $19 one-time · halivs.gumroad.com/l/host-kit-complete →