



DISASTER RECOVERY PROJECT

Assistance Animals in Emergency Shelter Settings¹

Introduction

In the event of a disaster, can you bring your assistance animal to an emergency shelter? There are two types of assistance animals: service animals and emotional support animals (ESAs). Let's look at some differences between them.

What is an Assistance Animal?

Service Animal: trained to do a job

- Detects a seizure
- Pulls a wheelchair
- Picks up dropped items
- Provides protection
- Reminds you to take medicine

ESA: provides Comfort + Support

- Offers calming distractions
- Provides a healing touch
- Improves how you are feeling

What Does this Mean for You?

Service Animals: In Any Location

1. Your service animal goes with you wherever you need to go.
2. You and your animal cannot be separated from each other or from anyone else.
3. You don't have to provide proof - only state what job your animal does for you.

ESAs: In Emergency Shelters

1. Your support animal might not be able to go wherever you go.
2. Show the shelter volunteers a note from your doctor saying why you need your ESA.

ESAs: In Temporary Housing

1. Your support animal goes with you wherever you need to go.
2. You might need to show proof of why you need your ESA.
3. A note from your doctor will work.

¹ For more detailed information, please see DRNC's fact sheet, "Assistance Animals in Emergency Shelter Settings."

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Get Help

For more information about the Disaster Project, visit disabilityrightsncc.org, or call [\(919\) 856 2195](tel:9198562195)

To get assistance during a disaster, please call the AskDRNC hotline at [\(800\)-626-4959](tel:8006264959), which is available during a declared state of emergency