

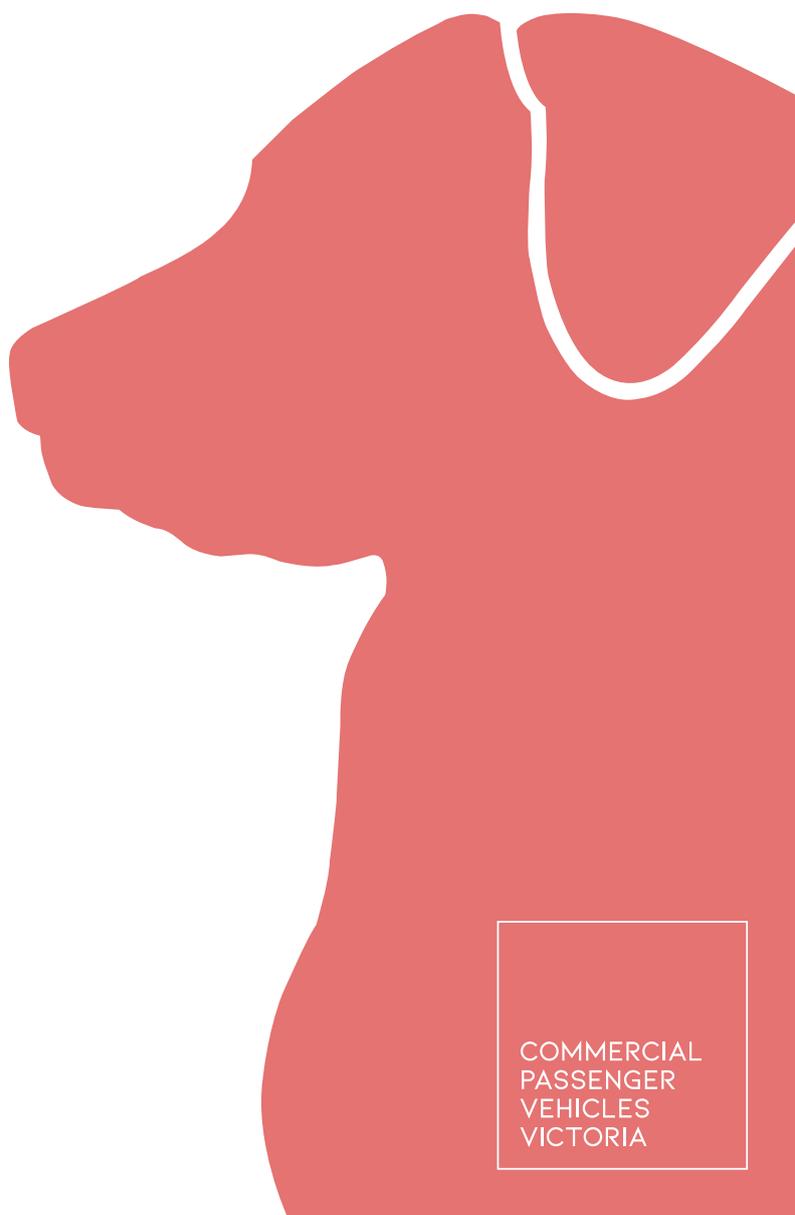
Helping passengers with an assistance animal

What is an assistance animal?

Assistance animals are trained to help a person with their disability. They are working animals, not pets, and can be different colours, shapes, sizes and breeds.

Some disabilities you can see and some you can't. You won't always immediately know if an animal is an assistance animal. People in Victoria don't need to have identification for their assistance animal. They only need to tell or show you how the animal is trained to help them.

We've developed this guide to help you learn more about assistance animals, so you and your passenger have a hassle-free journey.



Helpful hints and tips

We understand you may not know how to ask a passenger about their assistance animal, so here are some tips to help you:

- Be polite and speak to your passenger, not the animal. Assistance animals are allowed in commercial passenger vehicles, even if they are not clearly identified.
- Ask for more information if you can't tell whether the animal is an assistance animal. You can politely ask, "Is your animal an assistance animal?" or, "Can you please tell me how the animal is trained to help you?"
- Politely tell the passenger if you are afraid of dogs. You may say "I'm sorry if I'm nervous around your animal, I am scared of dogs". The passenger will often face the dog away from you to make you feel more comfortable.
- Don't make eye contact with the dog. Just like you, dogs don't like to be stared at.
- Ask the passenger if they would like any assistance before you help them. If they would, wait for them to tell you how, or gently hold their arm to guide them to the vehicle door. Remember to walk slowly.



- Let the owner choose where they want to sit with the animal in the commercial passenger vehicle – most people will place the animal in the foot well in between their feet. You might want to have a towel or sheet available to cover the seat if needed.
- Assistance animals are well cared for and are clean. They have been trained not to make a mess in the vehicle.
- Assistance animals are very well trained and will never bite, lick, or jump on you.
- Please don't touch, stare, feed or make noises at the animal. Assistance animals should not be distracted from their job.
- Do not ask about a person's disability. It is rude to ask questions like: "What is wrong with you?", "What happened to you?", "Will you dirty my cab?", "Why do you look that way?", or "Why do you need that animal?"
- Think about how it would feel to be the passenger. Treat the passenger the way you would like to be treated.

For more information on assistance animals, visit cpv.vic.gov.au



How to identify an assistance animal

Some animals wear a jacket or badge to identify they are a working animal. If you are unsure speak to the owner.

Below is a chart to help you identify some common assistance animals.

Guide Dogs Victoria

Dogs wear a harness and a gold medal on their collar.



Lions Club Hearing Dogs

Dogs wear an orange collar, lead and jacket.



Service Dog In Training

Dogs wear a blue jacket and owners carry an ID badge.



Seeing Eye Dogs Australia

Dogs sometimes wear a blue jacket and a harness.



Seeing Eye Dogs Australia

Dogs wear a blue jacket.



Other types of service dogs

There are many types of service dogs. Not all dogs wear ID.



Remember

If the animal has no ID, politely ask: Is your animal an assistance animal? Could you please tell me how it is trained to assist you?



What if I refuse to take a passenger with an assistance animal?

Drivers of commercial passenger vehicles are required to take passengers accompanied by assistance animals under Regulation 26 of the Commercial Passenger Vehicle Industry Regulations 2018.

Commercial Passenger Vehicles Victoria may fine you up to \$413 for refusing to take a passenger accompanied by an assistance animal.

Alternatively, you may be charged with this offence and the Court can impose a maximum fine of up to \$1,652 (10 penalty units).

The passenger may also make a complaint to the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission.