



Guide Dogs  
of America



Tender Loving  
Canines

ESTABLISHED 1948

# Interacting with Guide and Service Dog Teams

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## DOs and DON'Ts

- You can expect to see guide and service dog teams just about anywhere. The Federal Americans with Disabilities Act and state laws explicitly grant the right of access everywhere the public is allowed.
- Never grab the harness or leash from the handler—you can disorient or confuse the team. If the handler looks like they need help, offer your assistance, and take your cue from their response.
- If you believe someone is in a dangerous situation, do voice your concern in a calm manner. Do not push, pull, or grab the person.
- Don't pet, call out (bark, meow or cluck) or otherwise distract a working guide dog.
- Guide and service dog teams legally have the right of way.
- If you are in a car, please don't honk the horn or yell at a working guide or service dog team.
- Never feed a guide or service dog.
- Speak to the person, not the dog.
- Always ask for permission before petting a guide or service dog team. Be respectful if the handler says no.



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# When You Meet a Person Who is Blind or Visually Impaired

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## ETIQUETTE

- Introduce yourself when entering a room, and let the person know when you are leaving. Say the person's name, if you know it, so they know you are speaking to them.
- If you are leaving a person who is blind alone in an unfamiliar area, verbally give them a point of reference or physically show them a counter, wall, or piece of furniture.
- When speaking to a person who is blind, make an effort to be verbally descriptive. Try to give a more detailed picture of things, such as "the door is 30 paces in front of you" or describe direction as "it is at your 3 o'clock."
- When offering guidance to someone who is blind or visually impaired, ask them if they would like to take your arm or if they would prefer to use their cane or guide dog.
- People who are blind are just like you and me. Don't be concerned about saying things like "See you later," or "Looking good!" These common phrases are part of our verbal culture, and blind people use them too. Be friendly, considerate, and speak directly to them, not the people who they may be with.
- Speak to the person, not the dog.
- Always ask for permission before petting a guide or service dog. Be respectful if the handler says "no."