

Service Dogs not only provide a lifeline, helping people adapt and function in their day-to-day lives, but also unfettered companionship.

Service Dogs are trained to perform specific tasks to assist people in adapting and functioning in their environments. Some examples of Service Dogs include but are not limited to:

- Service dogs (e.g., guide dogs, hearing or signal dogs)
- Assistance dogs (e.g., balance assistance, mobility assistance)
- Medical alert dogs (e.g., diabetes, seizure, cardiac dysfunction)

Service Dogs are unique in that they are often asked to perform jobs and behaviors that do not come naturally to them. Although their bodies often adapt to these tasks, asking a body to do things it's not naturally designed to do can lead to stress on joints, tendons/ligaments, muscles, etc. Physical stressors and repetitive injuries can lead to both physical and mental changes in service dogs (e.g., chronic pain, attitude or personality changes, decreased ability to perform necessary tasks). Routine physical and mental conditioning can help reduce the effects of repetitive stress as well as help in rehabilitation.

The VSC K9 ReC Center highly recommends routine specialized exams for your Service Dog that take into consideration the demands of their job both physically and mentally. Injury prevention is important, especially for Service Dogs, so that their downtime is minimized. Service dogs are typically quite stoic and often do not show overt signs of soreness or injury. Service dogs that experience soreness or injury require careful evaluation to detect dysfunction or injury, treatment, and rehabilitation that respects their job and returns them to duty effectively and efficiently. At the VSC K9 ReC Center, we understand that treating and maintaining a Service Dog's physical and mental health and comfort is vital for them maintaining their ability to function effectively as Service Dogs. It is an essential part of healthy career longevity.

Rehabilitative medicine can be beneficial as the first line of defense to evaluate and develop an integrative plan for conditioning or treating and recovering your Service Dog from stress, strain, or injury (physical or mental). **VSC K9 ReC Center does not require a referral from your regular veterinarian.** You can make an appointment directly with us at any time. *Please ask for the K9 Team in Rehab* when setting up your appointment.

If you would like an evaluation to discover if your SSAW Dog is comfortably performing at his or her peak, please schedule an evaluation with our K9 ReC Center.

Veterinary Specialty Center is guided by the belief that companion animals deserve state-of-the-art medical care in a kind and comforting environment. The courage of our patients, the loyalty of their human families, and the devotion of our referral veterinarians inspire our vision. It is sustained by the contributions of our compassionate, knowledgeable and dedicated staff and built upon a tradition of providing unsurpassed healthcare for animals.
