



## Dear Property Guy

By Mike Zoormajian

Dear Property Guy, I have a “no-pets” policy in my rental. I have a new tenant who just announced that her emotional support dog would be joining her. She also showed me some paperwork that said I had to take it. What’s the deal here?

— No. Just no.

Dear No:

Welcome to the glamorous world of being a rental owner. Because your property just became a dog-friendly zone.

Before we get started, please know that it could be worse. In addition to dogs: cats, goats, horses, rabbits, snakes, pigs, and hedgehogs can all be emotional support animals (ESA). Most recently a dustup between an airline passenger, her emotional support peacock, and United Airlines, led the Department of Transportation (DOT) to begin restricting service animals on airplanes. So we got that going for us.

This whole deal all starts with the Federal Fair Housing Act (FHA), which bans discrimination in housing on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, familial

## Emotional support animal?

status, and disability. FHA requires landlords to make reasonable accommodations to give tenants equal opportunity to use and enjoy a dwelling. Keep the disability part in mind here.

Next, we have the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The ADA prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in all areas of public life. The ADA defines a person with a disability as a person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities.

Finally, we get to how assistance animals are defined, which is: an animal that works, provides assistance, or performs tasks for the benefit of a person with a disability, or that provides emotional support that alleviates one or more identified effects of a person’s disability.

So you smash this all together and you get the fact any disabled person can’t be turned away from housing because of their service or emotional support animal. You don’t have to like it. But there it is.

A property owner does have the right to ask for documentation proving the owner is in need of the emotional support animal. This is normally an Emotional Support Assistance letter from a licensed mental-health professional. Key word “Licensed.” There are about a million online sites from which one can order a bogus ESA letter.

To all the other follow-up questions, the answer is “No.” No, you cannot charge additional rent. No you cannot charge additional deposit. No, you cannot ask about their disability. No, you cannot ask or require the animal to have specific training. And, no, you cannot refuse them because their insurance doesn’t cover the animal.

You can refuse them if their animal would create an “undue financial or administrative burden.” The exact meaning of that phrase is very case-by-case.

My best advice? Go meet your new friend. Bring some doggie snacks, be thankful it’s not a goat, and enjoy the ride.

— Mike

Mike Zoormajian is principal at WetDog Properties in Sisters. Questions, comments: [letters@wetdogpnw.com](mailto:letters@wetdogpnw.com). Free legal advice is worth what you pay for it. Consult a real attorney before doing anything crazy.

## COMMUNITY: Reach out to help others in our small community

Continued from page 6

Parents with children may need you to make a grocery run for them, or a trip to the pharmacy.

An elderly person might need you to get their mail or maybe just drag their garbage pails to the curb.

If thoughts of helping other people overwhelm you, try to help just one neighbor — that person can look out for you, too. Think about the people closest to your home, on your block, in your neighborhood.

A “Get Well Soon” note can brighten a person’s day.

Volunteer: this county has many great organizations that could use an extra hand supporting those who are ill or recovering.

If you have the means, donate to a useful organization.

Clean your home or place of work and be relentless at keeping surfaces sanitary. Pay extra attention to those places that you or others touch frequently such as counters, chairs, phones, door handles, keypads, remote controls and of course, restroom surfaces.

If you touch something, leave it cleaner than before you touched it.

Cold and flu season generally comes to a halt sometime in April and there are several theories as to why: more people are outside, which offers us the healing power of vitamin D from the sun. It also means we spend less time in confined areas where a virus can more easily spread.

So dress properly for the weather and go for a walk or a hike — even a drive in the country with the windows rolled down a bit can help your attitude.

And help those people whom you can help the most.

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## BUDGET COMMITTEE MEMBER NEEDED

### COCC Board of Directors

The Central Oregon Community College Budget Committee consists of the seven elected COCC Board members and seven other citizens representing the geographic zones in the District. The Budget Committee meets two to three times a year and recommends an annual operating budget for the College to the COCC Board of Directors. Budget Committee members are appointed by the Board for three-year terms. COCC is looking for individuals interested in serving on the Budget Committee. The position representing Zone 6 (northwest Deschutes County including Sisters, Tumalo, Black Butte Ranch and the north part of Bend) is currently open.

Zone 6 – Sisters, Tumalo and Black Butte Ranch areas (precincts 13, 14, 15, 22, 30, 31, 37 and 45) and north part of Bend (precincts 1, 7, 11, 20 and 35).

Anyone interested in applying is asked to send a cover letter and resume to the COCC Board of Directors, Central Oregon Community College, 2600 NW College Way, Bend, Oregon 97703 or email [rparadis@cocc.edu](mailto:rparadis@cocc.edu). Include your voter precinct in your letter.

Applications must be received by Wednesday, March 25, 2020.

Board/Budget Committee meetings scheduled for 2020:  
Wednesdays, April 8 and May 13.

Questions  
**541.383.7599**