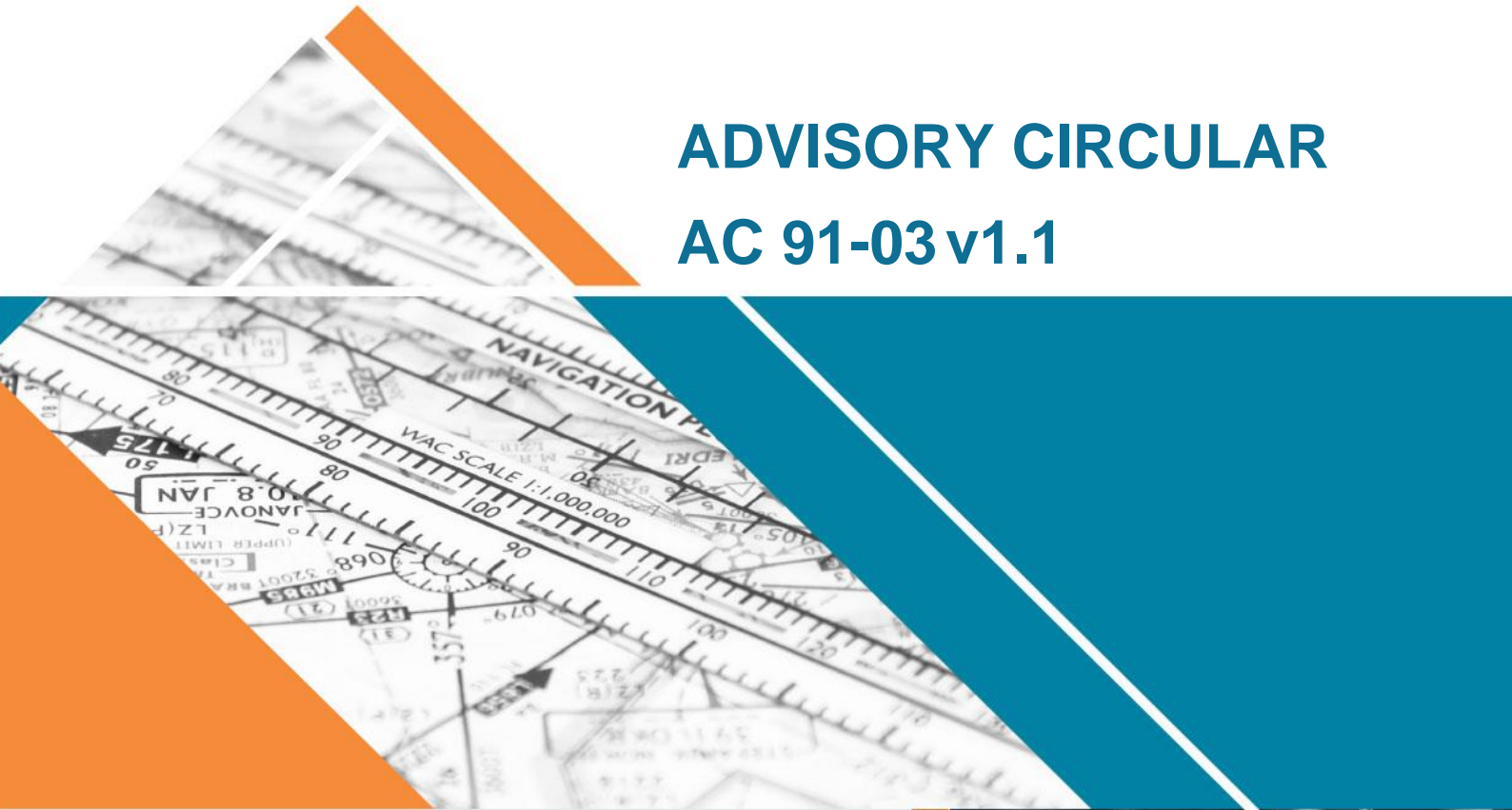




ADVISORY CIRCULAR

AC 91-03 v1.1



Carriage of assistance animals



Date September 2024
File ref D24/387181

Advisory circulars are intended to provide advice and guidance to illustrate a means, but not necessarily the only means, of complying with the Regulations, or to explain certain regulatory requirements by providing informative, interpretative and explanatory material.

Advisory circulars should always be read in conjunction with the relevant regulations.

Audience

This Advisory Circular (AC) applies to aircraft operators generally, but it is intended to apply primarily to:

- aircraft operators
- pilots
- cabin crew
- ground operational personnel
- passengers who travel with assistance animals on passenger transport aircraft
- persons who train animals to qualify as assistance animals for carriage on passenger transport aircraft.

Purpose

The purpose of this AC is to provide information that will assist pilots and operators in understanding the requirements for the carriage of assistance animals. Guidance is provided on considerations for the carriage of animals in the cabin, and the procedures to be followed for the carriage of assistance animals and their owners/handlers and trainers. This guidance is aimed at promoting a consistent approach within the aviation industry regarding the carriage of assistance animals.

For further information

For further information, contact CASA's Operations Standards (telephone 131 757).

Unless specified otherwise, all subregulations, regulations, Divisions, Subparts and Parts referenced in this AC are references to the Civil Aviation Safety Regulations 1998 (CASR).

Status

This version of the AC is approved by the Branch Manager, Flight Standards.

Note: Changes made in the current version are annotated with change bars.

Version	Date	Details
v1.1	September 2024	Minor referencing updates.
v1.0	May 2021	Initial AC.

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1 Reference material

1.1 Acronyms

The acronyms and abbreviations used in this AC are listed in the table below.

Acronym	Description
AC	Advisory Circular
ADI	Assistance Dogs International
CAR 1988	<i>Civil Aviation Regulations 1988</i>
CASA	Civil Aviation Safety Authority
CASR 1998	<i>Civil Aviation Safety Regulations 1998</i>
DDA	<i>Disability Discrimination Act</i>

1.2 Definitions

Terms that have specific meaning within this AC are defined in the table below.

Term	Definition
Assistance Animal (<i>Disability Discrimination Act 1992</i>)	<p>a dog or other animal:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. accredited under a law of a State or Territory that provides for the accreditation of animals trained to assist a person with a disability to alleviate the effect of the disability, or 2. accredited by an animal training organisation prescribed by the regulations for the purposes of this paragraph, or 3. trained: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. to assist a person with a disability to alleviate the effect of the disability, and b. to meet standards of hygiene and behaviour that are appropriate for an animal in a public place.

1.3 References

Legislation

Legislation is available on the Federal Register of Legislation website <https://www.legislation.gov.au/>

Document	Title
CASR 91.215	Authority and responsibilities of pilot in command
CASR 91.620	Carriage of animals
CASR 121.355	Procedures relating to carriage of animals
CASR 133.285	Procedures relating to carriage of animals
CASR 135.320	Procedures relating to carriage of animals
CASR 138.330	Procedures relating to carriage of animals

Document	Title
Disability Discrimination Act 1992	<i>Disability Discrimination Act 1992</i>

2 Background

- 2.1.1 With the commencement of Part 91 of CASR, it will no longer be a requirement that an operator hold written permission from CASA to carry assistance animals on a flight. Regulation 91.620 permits a person to take an animal on board an aircraft with the permission of the pilot in command.
- 2.1.2 Regulation 91.620 does require the pilot in command to take reasonable steps to ensure the safety of flight is not adversely affected. This is particularly important if the animal is to be carried in the cabin of the aircraft.
- 2.1.3 Animals carried during flight generally fall into one of two categories:
- the transportation of livestock (horses, domestic pets, snakes etc.)
 - the carriage of assistance animals.
- 2.1.4 This AC describes some of the factors that should be considered before giving permission for an assistance animal to be carried in the cabin of the aircraft.

3 Considerations

3.1 Permission to carry assistance animal in the passenger cabin

3.1.1 When determining whether to grant permission for the carriage of an animal in the aircraft cabin, the following considerations are relevant:

- the reason for the carriage of the animal and whether the animal is in the company of its owner/handler
- whether the animal has been trained to a standard of behaviour and hygiene that is appropriate for travel in the passenger cabin of the aircraft
- whether the owner/handler/trainer has been trained and will be able to control the animal on board the aircraft
- what documentation or other evidence is required to help inform decisions on the above matters
- excreta containment
- adequate restraint of the animal at different stages of flight
- access to emergency exits
- passengers with allergies to, or phobia of animals.

3.1.2 While most pilots and aircraft operators would be familiar with the need for a person with sight or hearing impairment to be assisted by a guide or hearing dog, there are other disabilities where the person may be aided by other types of assistance animals. Examples include medical alert dogs, psychological support dogs, and dogs that provide mobility assistance.

4 Disability Discrimination Act 1992

- 4.1.1 The objectives of the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* are to eliminate, as far as possible, discrimination against persons with a disability in many areas, one of which is in the provision of services.
- 4.1.2 It aims not only to ensure that, as far as practicable, a person with disabilities has the same rights to equality under the law as the rest of the community, but also to promote recognition and acceptance that persons with disabilities have the same fundamental rights as the rest of the community.
- 4.1.3 Despite that, the pilot in command of a flight has final authority over the aircraft¹ and may refuse carriage of an assistance animal if they believe there may be an adverse effect on the safety of the flight.

¹ CASR 91.620(3)

5 Training and accreditation of assistance animals

5.1.1 When establishing procedures for the carriage of assistance animals in the passenger cabin on passenger transport aircraft, aircraft operators need to consider whether the animal and its owner/handler have undergone appropriate training.

5.1.2 To this end, operators may consider whether the animal has:

- been trained and accredited under the laws of the Commonwealth or of any Australian state or territory, or are recognised under these laws for use on public transport e.g.
 - o *Guide, Hearing and Assistance Dogs Amendment Act 2015, Act No. 21 of 2015* (Queensland)
 - o *Dog and Cat Management Act 1995* (South Australia)
 - o *Dog Act 1976* (Western Australia).
- been trained and accredited under comparable training and accreditation programs under foreign legislation or recognised by foreign legislation
- been trained and accredited under a prescribed training organisation
- been appropriately trained to alleviate the effect of the disability and meet standards of hygiene and behaviour that are appropriate for an animal in a public place.

5.1.3 In addition to the above, standards for guide dogs, hearing dogs, and other types of service dogs, as well as standards for their behaviour in public, are published by Assistance Dogs International (ADI). Operators may require assistance dogs to meet or exceed the training standards published by ADI.

6 Operational procedures

6.1 General

- 6.1.1 Air transport operators are required to have procedures in their exposition for the carriage of animals².
- 6.1.2 It is recommended that the procedures include, but are not limited to:
- acceptance of animals for carriage in the cabin of the aircraft
 - how the animal will be restrained and controlled so that it will not adversely affect the safety of the aircraft or the safety of persons on board
 - how excreta from the animal, or water or other fluids provided for the animal, are contained so that these do not escape and present a risk to the safety of the aircraft and its systems.

6.2 Seating arrangements

- 6.2.1 It is recommended that passengers with assistance animals be seated as close to an exit as possible. While exit rows and bulkhead rows may provide more space to accommodate an assistance animal, operators are reminded of the need to ensure that regulatory requirements in relation to emergency exits and safety are complied with³.
- 6.2.2 Operators should be aware and sensitive to seating a passenger with an assistance animal near small children or other nearby passengers who may have a physical or psychological aversion to being near animals of the kind being carried.
- 6.2.3 The following are relevant considerations when determining the required amount of floor space to provide for an assistance animal:
- The space allows the animal to assume other positions besides curling up and avoids them having to remain in a “tight curl” for any significant period, especially on long flights.
 - The entry path of seat rows is wide enough for the animal to get in and out of the row without having to be squeezed through the space. An entry path for this purpose is measured from the front of the seat cushion to the back of the seat in front, and affects the space available for an assistance animal to lie down.
 - There is sufficient space to allow the passenger to sit with his or her legs and feet in a position that will not result in the assistance animal lying on the person’s feet or legs.
 - The passenger is able to avoid having to place his or her legs over the animal, which may result in injury to the person if the animal is startled or gets up quickly for any reason.
 - The assigned seat for the passenger has minimal impediments under the seat (e.g. electrical boxes, entertainment and safety equipment, footrests, and seat fasteners) to reduce the chance that the animal will become injured or accidentally damage equipment.

² CASR 119.205

³ CASR 133.230, 135.270, 121.275

6.3 Restraint and controlling the animal

- 6.3.1 It is recommended that operators require written evidence from the passenger that the assistance animal has been trained and accredited. This documentation may be issued by the training organisation or by the relevant government body.
- 6.3.2 Procedural considerations include sufficient restraint of the animal at all stages of flight and always being under the control of the passenger. It is important that the method of restraint and equipment used be adequate, and that the passenger be able to control the animal.
- 6.3.3 Assistance animals may be tethered to a seat rail, seatbelt or other means determined as suitable.

6.4 Controlling the leakage of excreta and water

- 6.4.1 Further consideration for the carriage of animals is that excreta from the animal and water or other fluids provided for the animal are securely contained and do not escape. This is usually most readily done by placing the animal on an absorbent mat beside the passenger. If water is provided from the water supply on the aircraft, it is recommended that the water receptacle be made available to the animal for the shortest practicable time, be removed from the seating or other area when the animal has taken the water, and any spillage be wiped up immediately.