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Assistance dogs

Part 1: Vocabulary

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National foreword

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The UK participation in its preparation was entrusted to Technical Committee AT/452, Assistance animals and animal training competencies.

A list of organizations represented on this committee can be obtained on request to its committee manager.

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European foreword

This document (EN 17984-1:2024) has been prepared by Technical Committee CEN/TC 452 “Assistance Dogs”, the secretariat of which is held by UNI.

This European Standard shall be given the status of a national standard, either by publication of an identical text or by endorsement, at the latest by April 2025, and conflicting national standards shall be withdrawn at the latest by April 2025.

Attention is drawn to the possibility that some of the elements of this document may be the subject of patent rights. CEN shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights.

This document will be read in conjunction with prEN 17984-2, prEN 17984-3, prEN 17984-4 and EN 17984-6 as the series is technically linked and to be read conjointly.

This document is part of a series of standards under the general title *Assistance Dogs*, which will comprise the following parts:

— *Part 1: Vocabulary*

— *Part 2: Lifetime welfare*

— *Part 3: Competencies for assistance dogs’ professionals*

— *Part 4: Pre-training, training and tasks*

— *Part 5: Client services*

— *Part 6: Accessibility and universal access*

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Introduction

Assistance dog (in some countries referred to as service dog) is the umbrella term for a wide variety of dogs that are specifically trained to perform tasks to increase independence and to mitigate limitations of a person with a disability. In order to qualify as an assistance dog, the dog is permanently paired with a person with a disability to perform tasks on a one-to-one basis or to perform these tasks under the guidance of an additional support person. In this document, the currently existing types of assistance dogs have been incorporated. However, this listing is not complete and probably never will be. The assistance dog sector is constantly evolving, and new types of dogs will in all probability be trained that potentially qualify as assistance dogs according to the above-mentioned requirements. These new types of dogs as they occur, can be introduced in future revisions of the European Standards in a series. This, however, should be based on a well-established professional practice.

In drafting this document, the members of CEN/TC 452/WG 1 'Terminology' came across cultural and geographical differences. A good example of this is the use of the term 'beneficiary', 'client' or 'user'. If such differences occurred the – by the majority – preferred term has been chosen. The other commonly used terms were added in notes to entry or as an alternative term. This will be the procedure when this occurs in future additions.

In this document:

— "shall" indicates a requirement;

— "should" indicates a recommendation;

— "may" indicates a permission;

— "can" indicates a possibility or a capability.

Information marked "NOTE" is for guidance in understanding or clarifying the associated sentence.

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1 Scope

This document specifies the terms and definitions that apply to:

— different types of assistance dogs;

— the beneficiary and client services;

— health and disabilities;

— assistance dog service providers;

— assistance dog training staff and related professionals;

— the socialization and training processes;

— conformity assessment, identification and registration;

— accessibility.

2 Normative references

There are no normative references in this document.

3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the following terms and definitions apply.

ISO and IEC maintain terminology databases for use in standardization at the following addresses:

— ISO Online browsing platform: available at https://www.iso.org/obp

— IEC Electropedia: available at https://www.electropedia.org/

3.1 Terms related to different types of assistance dogs

3.1.1
assistance dog
dog specifically trained to perform tasks to increase independence and to mitigate limitations of a person with a disability

Note 1 to entry: A person is officially diagnosed by a qualified healthcare professional or by a state qualified board with one or more disabilities. In this document, 'with a disability' can be replaced by 'with one or more disabilities'.

Note 2 to entry: An assistance dog is permanently paired with a person with a disability to perform on a one-to-one basis tasks to mitigate the limitations of this person or to perform these tasks under the guidance of an additional support person such as a parent or a spouse. If the third partner in the assistance dog team is also legally responsible for the dog and the person with a disability, the team is called a triad team.

Note 3 to entry: Assistance dog is the umbrella term. Examples of assistance dogs are autism assistance dogs, developmental disorder assistance dogs, diabetes assistance dogs, guide dogs, hearing dogs, medical alert/response assistance dogs, mobility assistance dogs, PTSD assistance dogs, seizure assistance dogs. Annex B shows an infographic that provides information on the different types of assistance dogs and how these relate to the umbrella term 'assistance dog'.

Note 4 to entry: The requirements for assistance dogs are specified in EN 17984-2 through EN 17984-61.

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Note 5 to entry: A dog that offers personal defence, regardless of other tasks the dog performs, does not qualify as an assistance dog. A dog that offers only emotional support and/or comfort does not qualify as an assistance dog.

Note 6 to entry: In some countries, an assistance dog is referred to as a service dog.

Note 7 to entry: To provide clarity to the readers of this document, the terms and definitions for other types of dogs that are not included in the Scope of CEN/TC 452 are listed in Annex A.

3.1.2
developmental disorder assistance dog
dog trained to assist a person with a mental, behavioural or neurodevelopmental disorder by supporting mobility, community engagement and acquisition of skills to manage challenging situations by providing interventions to reduce anxieties and increase safety, and therefore independence

Note 1 to entry: Mental, behavioural or neurodevelopmental disorders are syndromes characterized by clinically significant disturbance in a person's cognition, emotional regulation or behaviour that reflects a dysfunction in the psychological, biological or developmental processes that underlie mental and/or behavioural functioning. These disturbances are usually associated with distress or impairment in personal, family, social, educational, occupational or other important areas of functioning. For further information, see: International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems (WHO, 11th revision 2019) – ICD-11, Chapter VI 'Mental and behavioural disorders'.

Note 2 to entry: A specific subtype of a developmental disorder assistance dog is an autism assistance dog (see 3.1.2.1).

Note 3 to entry: The requirements for training a developmental disorder assistance dog are specified in EN 17984-4.

Note 4 to entry: Developmental disorder assistance dogs are often matched with children and therefore working within a triad team under the supervision of a supervising handler (see 3.2.6.1).

3.1.2.1
autism assistance dog
dog trained to assist a person with autism spectrum disorder by mitigating limitations in mobility and community engagement, and therefore enhances independence

3.1.3
dual-purpose assistance dog
dog specifically trained to perform a combination of tasks to increase independence and to mitigate the limitations of a person with more than one disability

Note 1 to entry: Examples of more than one disability are a visual impairment with a hearing impairment or a visual impairment with a motor disability.

Note 2 to entry: The requirements for training a dual-purpose assistance dog are specified in EN 17984-4.

3.1.4
guide dog
dog trained to assist a person with a visual impairment by helping to navigate the environment and therefore improve mobility and independence

Note 1 to entry: Blind or visually impaired includes "sight loss", "vision impaired" and "partially sighted".

Note 2 to entry: The requirements for training a guide dog are specified in EN 17984-4.

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3.1.5
hearing dog
dog trained to assist a person who is deaf or hearing impaired by alerting this person to specific sounds in order to increase communication and safety, and therefore independence

Note 1 to entry: The requirements for training a hearing dog are specified in EN 17984-4.

3.1.6
medical alert/response assistance dog
dog trained to assist a person with a medical condition by alerting that the onset of a critical medical event caused by the condition is imminent and/or demonstrating specific behaviour before, during and immediately after that medical event, in order to increase independence

Note 1 to entry: Specific subtypes of a medical alert/response assistance dog are a diabetes assistance dog (see 3.1.6.1) and a seizure assistance dog (see 3.1.6.2).

Note 2 to entry: A medical alert/response assistance dog can activate an emergency response system, stimulate a person to help them be aroused from an unconscious state after a seizure and/or retrieve a phone or medication. An example of a medical alert/response assistance dog is an Addison assistance dog.

Note 3 to entry: The requirements for training a medical alert/response assistance dog are specified in EN 17984-4.

3.1.6.1
diabetes assistance dog
dog trained to assist a person with diabetes by alerting that a pronounced drop or increase in blood sugar level is imminent and/or demonstrating specific behaviour before and during a hypo/hyperglycaemia episode, in order to increase independence

Note 1 to entry: The requirements for training a diabetes assistance dog are specified in EN 17984-4.

3.1.6.2
seizure assistance dog
dog trained to assist a person by alerting that the onset of a seizure is imminent and/or demonstrating specific behaviour before, during and immediately after that seizure, in order to increase independence

Note 1 to entry: Seizures can be caused by, for example, epilepsy or heart conditions.

Note 2 to entry: The requirements for training a seizure assistance dog are specified in EN 17984-4.

3.1.7
mobility assistance dog
dog trained to assist a person with a motor disability or a condition which affects the person's motor abilities by mitigating mobility limitations to increase independence

Note 1 to entry: A mobility assistance dog can perform tasks such as opening/closing doors, removal of clothing, assisting with balance/stability and retrieving objects.

Note 2 to entry: The requirements for training a mobility assistance dog are specified in EN 17984-4.

Note 3 to entry: The requirements for welfare of mobility assistance dogs are specified in EN 17984-2.

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3.1.8
owner-trained assistance dog under supervision
assistance dog owned and trained by a person with a disability, under the supervision of an assistance dog trainer or assistance dog instructor

Note 1 to entry: In some countries these are referred to as 'team-trained assistance dogs'.

3.1.9
owner-trained assistance dog
assistance dog owned and trained by a person with a disability, without the supervision of an assistance dog trainer or assistance dog instructor

3.1.10
PTSD assistance dog
dog trained to assist a person with posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) by mitigating PTSD impact, and therefore enhancing independence

Note 1 to entry: A PTSD assistance dog can perform tasks such as nightmare interruption, supporting a person by securing sufficient personal space and developing pressure to reduce anxiety.

Note 2 to entry: A PTSD assistance dog is not trained to protect a person in a manner that is aggressive to other persons and animals.

Note 3 to entry: The requirements for training a PTSD assistance dog are specified in EN 17984-4.

3.1.11
successor dog
dog that succeeds the first or subsequent assistance dog of a specific beneficiary

3.2 Terms related to beneficiary and client services

3.2.1
applicant
person with a disability, or person legally responsible, who contacts an assistance dog service provider with the intention to apply for an assistance dog

3.2.2
application process
process by which the assistance dog service provider goes through the requirements necessary to qualify for an assistance dog

3.2.3
assistance dog team
working combination of a beneficiary, an assistance dog and possibly a supervising handler

Note 1 to entry: Assistance dog team is sometimes referred to as 'partnership' or 'team'.

Note 2 to entry: If the third partner, the supervising handler, in the assistance dog team is (also) legally responsible for the dog and the person with a disability, the team is called a triad team.

3.2.4
beneficiary
user
person with a disability receiving assistance in an assistance dog team

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Note 1 to entry: In many countries, a beneficiary is referred to as user.

3.2.5
client
person with a disability who could or does receive an assistance dog that is intended for or required by this person

Note 1 to entry: This term relates to the assistance dog service provider and the client. The client is the beneficiary or applicant beneficiary of an assistance dog team. The term client is used to describe the contractual relationship between the assistance dog service provider and the beneficiary.

Note 2 to entry: If the beneficiary is legally incapable, the contractual rights and responsibilities shall be confirmed by the supervising handler.

3.2.6
handler
person who is responsible for the care and control of the assistance dog

Note 1 to entry: A handler can be the person with the disability with whom the assistance dog is paired, the support person, the supervising handler, a puppy raiser, the assistance dog trainer, or the assistance dog instructor.

3.2.6.1
supervising handler
person who is legally responsible for the beneficiary of the assistance dog and the dog

Note 1 to entry: If the beneficiary cannot be held legally responsible, the person legally responsible for the beneficiary is added to the team as supervising handler. Typically, this can be a parent or caregiver. The supervising handler is the legally responsible party in the contractual relationship with the assistance dog service provider.

3.2.7
household
person(s) living under one roof or occupying a separate housing unit, having either direct access to the outside, or to a public area

3.2.8
support person
person that assists the beneficiary with tasks associated with the care of the assistance dog

Note 1 to entry: Another term for support person is caregiver or carer.

3.3 Terms related to health and disabilities

3.3.1
activity
execution of a task or action by an individual

Note 1 to entry: It represents the individual perspective of functioning.

3.3.2
activity limitation
difficulty an individual may have in executing activities

Note 1 to entry: An activity limitation may range from a slight to a severe deviation in terms of quality or quantity in executing the activity in a manner or to the extent that is expected of people without the health condition.

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