Oklahoma Laws of Interest to People Who are Blind

Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services

Did You Know?

White Canes and Dog Guides

Drivers of vehicles must come to a full stop at least 15 feet away from a person using either a white cane or a dog guide wearing a specialized harness. Drivers must take precautions before proceeding to avoid accident or injury to the individual. This law also applies to those who are deaf or hard of hearing who use a signal dog wearing an orange identifying collar or those with physical disabilities who use a service dog. No person, except those who are legally blind, may carry or use on any street, highway or public place a cane which is white or white tipped with red. People who violate this law are guilty of a misdemeanor, which is punishable by imprisonment for up to three months or $100 fine or both. (Oklahoma Statutes Title 7, Sections 11 and 13, July 1949, and Section 12, Nov. 1, 2002)

Admittance with Dog Guides

Any person who is blind and uses a dog guide from a recognized training center shall not be denied admittance because of the dog to any hotel, motel, restaurant, educational facility, government building, public elevator or any other place where the public is invited or served. The person shall be entitled to have a dog guide with him when he is a passenger on any public transportation operating within the state of Oklahoma. The person shall not be required to pay additional charges for his dog guide, but shall be liable for damages done to the premises by his dog. This law also applies to those who are deaf or hard of hearing who use a signal dog wearing an orange identifying collar or those with physical disabilities who use a service dog. Any person, persons, companies and or their agents who violate this law are guilty of a misdemeanor. (Oklahoma Statutes Title 7, Chapter 1, Sections 19.1, effective Nov. 1, 1998 and 19.2, effective Nov. 1,1985)

Voting Rights and Access

Any Oklahoma voter may request absentee ballots, which allow him to vote at home and mail, fax or deliver his own ballot to the county election board by 7 p.m. on Election Day. Voters who are incapacitated or those who care for incapacitated persons are not required to have ballot signatures notarized, but must have their signatures witnessed by two people.

Any voter who requires assistance to vote for reasons of blindness, disability or inability to read or write may be given help by a person of the voter's choice, other than the voter's employer or an agent or officer of the voter's employer or voter's union. The voter, by rules set by the State Election Board, must swear or affirm that assistance is needed and the person who helps the voter must swear or affirm that the ballots are being voted according to the voter's wishes. (Oklahoma Statutes Title 26, Section 7-123-3, effective June 6, 1983)

Voters with disabilities may also use telephones at their polling places to cast ballots in federal elections. These voters may get access codes from county election boards and telephone to hear practice ballots listing candidates for whom they can vote read over the phone. The Oklahoma State Election Board at (405) 521-2391 or www.elections.state.ok.us has more information, including phone numbers and email addresses for county election boards. (Help America Vote Act 2002, Section 301 (a) (3))

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