

**DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**  
**OFFICIAL CODE**

**TITLE 7.**  
**HUMAN HEALTH CARE AND SAFETY.**

**CHAPTER 10.**  
**RIGHTS OF BLIND AND PHYSICALLY DISABLED**  
**PERSONS.**

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**DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA OFFICIAL CODE**  
**CHAPTER 10. RIGHTS OF BLIND AND PHYSICALLY**  
**DISABLED PERSONS.**

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**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

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[§ 7-1001. Equal access to public places.](#)

[§ 7-1002. Equal access to public accommodations and conveyances.](#)

[§ 7-1003. Architectural barrier-free design requirements.\[Repealed\]](#)

[§ 7-1004. Safety standards for drivers of motor vehicles.](#)

[§ 7-1005. Discrimination in employment prohibited.](#)

[§ 7-1006. Equal access to housing.](#)

[§ 7-1007. Penalties.](#)

[§ 7-1008. White Cane Safety Day.](#)

[§ 7-1009. Definitions.](#)

# CHAPTER 10. RIGHTS OF BLIND AND PHYSICALLY DISABLED PERSONS.

## § 7-1001. EQUAL ACCESS TO PUBLIC PLACES.

The blind and other persons with physical disabilities have the same right as the able-bodied to the full and free use of the streets, highways, sidewalks, walkways, public buildings, public facilities, and other public places in the District of Columbia.

(Oct. 21, 1972, 86 Stat. 970, Pub. L. 92-515, § 1; Apr. 24, 2007, D.C. Law 16-305, § 25(a), 53 DCR 6198.)

### *HISTORICAL AND STATUTORY NOTES*

#### *Prior Codifications*

1981 Ed., § 6-1701.

1973 Ed., § 6-1501.

#### *Effect of Amendments*

D.C. Law 16-305 substituted "other persons with physical disabilities" for "the otherwise physically disabled".

#### *Legislative History of Laws*

For Law 16-305, see notes following § 7-531.01.

## § 7-1002. EQUAL ACCESS TO PUBLIC ACCOMMODATIONS AND CONVEYANCES.

(a) The blind and other persons with physical disabilities are entitled to full and equal accommodations, advantages, facilities, and privileges of all common carriers, airplanes, motor vehicles, railroad trains, motor buses, streetcars, boats, or any other public conveyances or modes of transportation in the District of Columbia, hotels, lodging places, places of public accommodation, amusement, or resort, and other places to which the general public is invited in the District of Columbia, subject only to the conditions and limitations established by law or in accordance with law applicable alike to all persons.

(b) Every blind person or deaf person shall have the right to be accompanied by a dog guide, in any of the places, accommodations, or conveyances listed in subsection (a) of this section, without being denied access because of the dog guide and required to pay an extra charge for the dog guide; but any blind person or deaf person so accompanied shall be liable for any damage done to the premises or facilities by such dog.

(c) Every service animal trainer who is training an animal to be a service animal shall have the same access and liability conferred upon a person who is blind or deaf pursuant to subsection (b) of this section when accompanied by a service animal in training.

(Oct. 21, 1972, 86 Stat. 971, Pub. L. 92-515, § 2; Mar. 5, 1981, D.C. Law 3-144, § 2(a), 27 DCR 4659; Apr. 24, 2007, D.C. Law 16-305, § 25(b), 53 DCR 6198; May 22, 2010, D.C. Law 18-146, § 2(a), 57 DCR 2549.)

### *HISTORICAL AND STATUTORY NOTES*

#### *Prior Codifications*

1981 Ed., § 6-1702.

1973 Ed., § 6-1502.

#### *Effect of Amendments*

D.C. Law 16-305, in subsec. (a), substituted "other persons with physical disabilities" for "the otherwise physically disabled".

D.C. Law 18-146 added subsec. (c).

*Legislative History of Laws*

Law 3-144, the "Deaf and Audio Handicapped Amendments Act of 1980," was introduced in Council and assigned Bill No. 3-127, which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary. The Bill was adopted on first and second readings on September 16, 1980 and September 30, 1980, respectively. Signed by the Mayor on October 14, 1980, it was assigned Act No. 3-265 and transmitted to both Houses of Congress for its review.

For Law 16-305, see notes following § 7-531.01.

Law 18-146, the "Service Animal Amendment Act of 2010", was introduced in Council and assigned Bill No. 18-207, which was referred to the Committee on Public Safety and the Judiciary. The bill was adopted on first and second readings on February 2, 2010, and March 2, 2010, respectively. Signed by the Mayor on March 18, 2010, it was assigned Act No. 18-329 and transmitted to both Houses of Congress for its review. D.C. Law 18-146 became effective on May 22, 2010.

## **§ 7-1003. ARCHITECTURAL BARRIER-FREE DESIGN REQUIREMENTS.[REPEALED]**

(Mar. 21, 1987, D.C. Law 6-216, § 12(a)(8), 34 DCR 1072.)

*HISTORICAL AND STATUTORY NOTES*

*Prior Codifications*

1981 Ed., § 6-1703.

*Legislative History of Laws*

Law 6-216, the "Construction Codes Approval and Amendments Act of 1986," was introduced in Council and assigned Bill No. 6-500, which was referred to the Committee of the Whole. The Bill was adopted on first and second readings on November 18, 1986 and December 16, 1986, respectively. Signed by the Mayor on February 2, 1987, it was assigned Act No. 6-279 and transmitted to both Houses of Congress for its review.

## **§ 7-1004. SAFETY STANDARDS FOR DRIVERS OF MOTOR VEHICLES.**

The driver of a vehicle in the District of Columbia approaching a blind pedestrian who is carrying a cane predominantly white or metallic in color (with or without a red tip) or a deaf pedestrian, either of whom is using a dog guide shall take all necessary precautions to avoid injury to such blind or deaf pedestrian, and any driver who fails to take such precautions shall be liable in damages for any injury caused such pedestrian. A blind pedestrian in the District of Columbia not carrying such a cane or a deaf pedestrian, either of whom is not using a dog guide in any of the places, accommodations, or conveyances listed in §§ 7-1001 and 7-1002 shall have all of the rights and privileges conferred by law on other persons, and the failure of such a blind pedestrian to carry such a cane or the failure of a blind or deaf pedestrian to use a dog guide in any such places, accommodations, or conveyances shall not be held to constitute nor be evidence of contributory negligence.

(Oct. 21, 1972, 86 Stat. 971, Pub. L. 92-515, § 3; Mar. 5, 1981, D.C. Law 3-144, § 2(b), 27 DCR 4659.)

*HISTORICAL AND STATUTORY NOTES*

*Prior Codifications*

1981 Ed., § 6-1704.

1973 Ed., § 6-1503.

*Legislative History of Laws*

For legislative history of D.C. Law 3-144, see Historical and Statutory Notes following § 7-1002.

## **§ 7-1005. DISCRIMINATION IN EMPLOYMENT PROHIBITED.**

The blind and other persons with physical disabilities shall be employed by: (1) every individual, partnership, firm, association, or corporation, or the receiver, trustee, or successor thereof (exclusive of the government of the United States or any agency thereof), doing business, and employing any individual for the purpose of such business, in the District of Columbia; and (2) the government of the District of Columbia, the Board of Education of the District of Columbia, the Board of Trustees of the University of the District of Columbia, the Board of Higher Education of the District of Columbia, and the Executive Officer of the District of Columbia courts, and all other employers supported in whole or in part by appropriations for the District of Columbia, on the same terms and conditions as the able-bodied, unless it is shown that

the particular disability prevents the performance of the work involved.

(Oct. 21, 1972, 86 Stat. 971, Pub. L. 92-515, § 4; Apr. 24, 2007, D.C. Law 16-305, § 25(c), 53 DCR 6198.)

#### *HISTORICAL AND STATUTORY NOTES*

##### *Prior Codifications*

1981 Ed., § 6-1705.

1973 Ed., § 6-1504.

##### *Effect of Amendments*

D.C. Law 16-305 substituted "other persons with physical disabilities" for "the otherwise physically disabled".

##### *Legislative History of Laws*

For Law 16-305, see notes following § 7-531.01.

## **§ 7-1006. EQUAL ACCESS TO HOUSING.**

(a) Blind persons and other persons with physical disabilities shall be entitled to full and equal access, as other members of the general public, to all housing accommodations offered for rent, lease, or compensation in the District of Columbia, subject to the conditions and limitations established by law or in accordance with law and applicable alike to all persons.

(b) Every blind or deaf person who has a dog guide, or who obtains a dog guide, shall be entitled to full and equal access to all housing accommodations referred to in this section, without being denied access because of the dog guide and required to pay an extra charge for the dog guide; but such blind or deaf person shall be liable for any damage done to the premises by such dog.

(c) Nothing in this section shall require any person renting, leasing, or providing real property for compensation in the District of Columbia to modify his property in any way or to provide a higher degree of care for a blind person or person with another physical disability than for a person who does not have a physical disability.

(Oct. 21, 1972, 86 Stat. 972, Pub. L. 92-515, § 5; Mar. 5, 1981, D.C. Law 3-144, § 2(c), 27 DCR 4659; Apr. 24, 2007, D.C. Law 16-305, § 25(d), 53 DCR 6198.)

#### *HISTORICAL AND STATUTORY NOTES*

##### *Prior Codifications*

1981 Ed., § 6-1706.

1973 Ed., § 6-1505.

##### *Effect of Amendments*

D.C. Law 16-305, in subsec. (a), substituted "persons with physical disabilities" for "physically disabled persons"; and, in subsec. (c), substituted "person with another physical disability" for "otherwise physically disabled person" and "does not have a physical disability" for "is not physically disabled".

##### *Legislative History of Laws*

For legislative history of D.C. Law 3-144, see Historical and Statutory Notes following § 7-1002.

For Law 16-305, see notes following § 7-531.01.

## **§ 7-1007. PENALTIES.**

(a) Any person or the agent of any person in the District of Columbia who denies or interferes with admittance to or enjoyment of any of the places, accommodations, or conveyances listed in § 7-1001 and § 7-1002 or otherwise interferes with the rights of a blind person or person with another physical disability under § 7-1001, § 7-1002, § 7-1005, or § 7-1006 shall be imprisoned for not longer than 90 days, or fined not more than \$300, or both.

(b) A civil fine of \$250 may be imposed as an alternative sanction for any infraction of the provisions of this chapter pursuant to Chapter 18 of Title 2. Adjudication of any infraction of this chapter shall be pursuant to Chapter 18 of Title 2.

(c) The Mayor, pursuant to subchapter I of Chapter 5 of Title 2, may issue rules to increase the fine in subsection (b) of this section.

(Oct. 21, 1972, 86 Stat. 972, Pub. L. 92-515, § 6; Apr. 24, 2007, D.C. Law 16-305, § 25(e), 53 DCR 6198; May 22, 2010, D.C. Law 18-146, § 2(b), 57 DCR 2549.)

## *HISTORICAL AND STATUTORY NOTES*

### *Prior Codifications*

1981 Ed., § 6-1707.

1973 Ed., § 6-1506.

### *Effect of Amendments*

D.C. Law 16-305 substituted "person or person with another physical disability" for "or otherwise disabled person".

D.C. Law 18-146 designated the existing text as subsec. (a); and added subsecs. (b) and (c).

### *Legislative History of Laws*

For Law 16-305, see notes following § 7-531.01.

For Law 18-146, see notes following § 7-1002.

## **§ 7-1008. WHITE CANE SAFETY DAY.**

Each year, the Mayor of the District of Columbia shall take suitable public notice of October 15th as White Cane Safety Day. He shall issue a proclamation commenting upon the significance of the white cane, and calling upon the citizens of the District of Columbia to observe the provisions of this chapter, to be aware of the presence of persons with disabilities in the community, to keep safe and functional for persons with disabilities the streets, highways, sidewalks, walkways, public buildings, public facilities, other public places, places of public accommodation, amusement, and resort, and other places to which the public is invited, and to offer assistance to persons with disabilities upon appropriate occasions.

(Oct. 21, 1972, 86 Stat. 972; Pub. L. 92-515, § 7; Apr. 24, 2007, D.C. Law 16-305, § 25(f), 53 DCR 6198.)

## *HISTORICAL AND STATUTORY NOTES*

### *Prior Codifications*

1981 Ed., § 6-1708.

1973 Ed., § 6-1507.

### *Effect of Amendments*

D.C. Law 16-305 substituted "persons with disabilities" for "disabled persons" and "the disabled".

### *Legislative History of Laws*

For Law 16-305, see notes following § 7-531.01.

### *Change in Government*

This section originated at a time when local government powers were delegated to the District of Columbia Council and to a Commissioner of the District of Columbia. The District of Columbia Self-Government and Governmental Reorganization Act, 87 Stat. 818, § 711 (D.C. Code, § 1-207.11), abolished the District of Columbia Council and the Office of Commissioner of the District of Columbia. These branches of government were replaced by the Council of the District of Columbia and the Office of Mayor of the District of Columbia, respectively. Accordingly, and also pursuant to § 714(a) of such Act (D.C. Code, § 1-207.14(a)), appropriate changes in terminology were made in this section.

## **§ 7-1009. DEFINITIONS.**

For the purposes of this chapter:

(1) The term "blind person" means, and the term "blind" refers to, a person who is totally blind, has impaired vision of not more than 20/200 visual acuity in the better eye and for whom vision cannot be improved to better than 20/200, or who has loss of vision due wholly or in part to impairment of field vision or to other factors which affect the usefulness of vision to a like degree.

(2) The term "deaf person" means a person who is totally deaf or a person with hearing impairment that severely interferes with his or her ability to hear environmental noises.

(3) The term "guide dog" means a dog that is specially trained to assist a blind or deaf person and one which a blind or deaf person relies on for assistance.

(4) The term "person with a physical disability" refers to an individual who has a medically determinable physical impairment (other than blindness) which interferes with his ability to move about, to assist himself, or to engage in an occupation.

(5) The term "service animal" means an animal, including a guide dog, that is specially trained to assist a person who is blind or has a physical disability and one which a person who is blind or has a physical disability relies on for assistance.

(6) The term "service animal in training" means an animal that is:

- (A) At least 6 months of age;
- (B) Undergoing special training to assist a person who is blind or has a physical disability;
- (C) Accompanied by an experienced service animal trainer; and
- (D) Designated as a service animal in training by wearing a harness, backpack, or vest that identifies it as a service animal in training.

(Oct. 21, 1972, 86 Stat. 972, Pub. L. 92-515, § 8; Mar. 5, 1981, D.C. Law 3-144, § 2(d), 27 DCR 4659; Apr. 24, 2007, D.C. Law 16-305, § 25(g), 53 DCR 6198; May 22, 2010, D.C. Law 18-146, § 2(c), 57 DCR 2549.)

#### *HISTORICAL AND STATUTORY NOTES*

##### *Prior Codifications*

1981 Ed., § 6-1709.

1973 Ed., § 6-1508.

##### *Effect of Amendments*

D.C. Law 16-305, in par. (4), substituted "person with a physical disability" for "otherwise physically disabled".

D.C. Law 18-146 added pars. (5) and (6).

##### *Legislative History of Laws*

For legislative history of D.C. Law 3-144, see Historical and Statutory Notes following § 7-1002.

For Law 16-305, see notes following § 7-531.01.

For Law 18-146, see notes following § 7-1002.