

#### **4. Problems of Access**

Nowadays most hotels, restaurants, food shops, etc., admit Guide Dogs without question. You may, however, come across an establishment that will not let you in with your dog. Very often this is the result of misunderstanding or ignorance. A new or inexperienced member of the staff may just have been told not to admit dogs. If it happens to you, here are a few guidelines to follow.

Assume that it is a misunderstanding rather than prejudice and keep calm. Ask to see the manager and explain the situation to him/her. If he/she still refuses to let you and your dog in, ask yourself if there is perhaps a good reason – some premises really are quite unsuitable, even for a Guide Dog. On the other hand, if you are convinced that he/she is being unreasonable, leave and refer the matter to GDTx. Do not make a scene then and there, and do not immediately get in touch with a local newspaper or radio station. It is far better to let GDTx try to sort it out.

Included with this package is a booklet entitled, “In Texas, Any Place You Take Your Eyes I Can Take My Dog Guide – It’s the Law.” Carry this with you whenever possible so you can show it to anyone questioning your access rights. Remember also to carry your Guide Dog ID as proof that you are a registered Guide Dog owner. Unfortunately, some businesses have encountered problems with members of the public pretending that their pet dog is a Guide Dog.

Please also bear in mind that Guide Dogs are granted access to places prohibited to other dogs largely because of their reputation for good behavior. A dog that is unkempt, noisy, or restless in such a place is not only a source of embarrassment and irritation to all concerned, but is also placing that reputation in jeopardy.

Access problems occur infrequently but, if one does arise, try reasoning rather than getting angry. It’s usually the best response.