

## Veterinary college to offer free eye exams for service dogs in May

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Phillip Pickett, professor of ophthalmology in the Department of Small Animal Clinical Sciences, performs an eye exam on a service dog.

For the 10th year in a row, the [Virginia-Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine](#) at Virginia Tech will partner with the American College of Veterinary Ophthalmologists (ACVO) and StokesRX to participate in the National Service Animal Eye Exam Event in May.

The veterinary college will offer complimentary eye exams for service dogs throughout the month at the

Veterinary Teaching Hospital, located on the Blacksburg campus.

The event aims to preserve the sights of the dogs serving the community, benefit those who depend on service dogs, strengthen relationships with practicing veterinarians, and gather information to help the future performance of working dogs.

Service dogs include guide dogs, handicapped assistance dogs, detection dogs, military and police dogs, search and rescue dogs, and formally trained and certified therapy dogs. Dogs must be active working dogs that were previously certified or are currently enrolled in a formal training program or organization to qualify.

The veterinary college has offered free screening examinations and consultations for service dogs for more than 20 years and began participating in the National Service Animal Eye Exam Event when it was established by ACVO in 2008. During the campaign's first year, more than 160 ACVO diplomates offered exams to approximately 1,500 service animals in the United States and Canada free of charge. The ACVO and its diplomates have since assisted more than 52,000 service animals and hope to continue to increase their numbers annually. More than 270 certified veterinary ophthalmologists in the United States, Canada, and Puerto Rico participate in the event each year.

Service dog owners may register for the event via the [ACVO website](#) by April 30. Appointments are limited and accepted on a first-come, first-served basis.

### Contact:

[Michael Sutphin](#)  
540-231-6716