

Service Animal Procedure – Attachment B

All staff shall ensure that accessible customer service is provided to all persons in accordance with this procedure and WECAS Accessibility Policy for Service.

(A) Welcoming Service Animals: What We Need to Do

Staff Responsibilities:

1. If a guide dog or other service animal accompanies a person with a disability, staff shall ensure that the person is permitted to enter with the animal and keep the animal with him/her.
2. The person with the service animal shall be welcomed in the areas of the premises that are open to the public or third parties.
3. Exceptions – Service animal are not permitted
 - Where food preparation is being undertaken;
 - As otherwise disallowed by law or by-law.

Client's Responsibility:

A person with a disability who is accompanied by a service animal is responsible to maintain care, supervision and control of the animal at all times.

In the unlikely circumstance where the person is unable to gain control of their service animal they shall:

Step 1: Receive instruction from staff about their responsibility to maintain appropriate care, supervision and control of the animal at all times. Staff will allow the person an opportunity to gain control and rectify the situation. In the event that the animal is acting in a manner that causes health and safety concerns (eg. Acting in an aggressive manner), staff may proceed directly to step two.

Step 2: If the person is unable to gain appropriate control of the service animal, then staff may request that they remove the animal from the situation and/or area of concern until such time that control is resumed. In such a situation the staff member shall use reasonable efforts to make sure other measures are available to enable the person with a disability to access the services.

(B) Guide Dogs and Service Animals: General Information

- Guide dogs are specially trained to assist a person who is blind.
- Service animals are animals that are specially trained to assist a person with a disability. They might open doors, pick up items, predict seizures, alert to sounds, etc. Service animals may be a dog or another type of animal.
- Service animals are not pets – they are working animals. Do not pet, make eye contact with or talk to a service animal.

- Service animals provide a necessary service; they are allowed to be with their owner at all times, unless otherwise prohibited by law.

(C) Identifying a Guide Dog or Service Animal

A service animal is an animal that is being used because of a person's disability and this is either readily apparent or is supported by a letter from a physician or nurse.

Readily Apparent Service Animals or Guide Dogs

It is usually readily apparent that an animal is a guide dog or a service animal. You might recognize an animal as a service animal because of its appearance or what it is doing.

Appearance: it may be readily apparent that an animal is a service animal if it is:

- Wearing a harness/saddlebags;
- Has a sign that identifies it as a service animal;
- Has a certificate or identification card from a service animal training school;
- Has an identification card from the Attorney General of Ontario.

What the Animal is doing: It may be readily apparent if the person is using the animal to assist him/her in doing things such as opening doors or retrieving items, etc.

When it is readily apparent that it is a service animal there is no need to request verification. Allow the person regular access to the premises.

Not Readily Apparent that the Animal is a Service Animal

If it is not readily apparent that an animal is a service animal staff may ask the person for a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons related to a disability.

(D) Exceptions to the Rule

As you already know, a person with the service animal shall be welcomed on the premises that are open to the public or third parties unless another law specifically states that the animal must be excluded.

Exceptions to the rule: Service animals are not permitted:

- **Where food preparation is being undertaken**
- **As otherwise disallowed by or by-law (ie: Restricted Animal Breeds – Pit Bulls)**

Where a law excludes the animal from our premises, staff will be required to take steps to make sure other measures are available to enable the person with a disability to access our services. Staff will need to consider the needs of the person with a disability if his/her service animal is excluded. Explain to the individual why the animal is excluded and see what other arrangements can be made.

Some options to consider include:

- Bringing services to the person in a part of our premises where the animal is not restricted;
- Work with the individual to find a mutually agreeable solution (eg. Determine another method of service that will lead to the result that the person is seeking while still complying with the law.)

(E) Other Special Situations to Consider

Allergies:

When you are serving a person who has a service animal and there is another person present who has an allergy to animals, staff will explore the following options.

- Discuss the situation with both individuals to identify possible accommodations that meets the needs of both parties.
- In general, people with allergies to animals are affected if they touch the animal or are in very close proximity for a length period of time
- Some of the options to consider may be:
 - Creating distance between the two individuals;
 - Changing the time the two parties receive service (if both are clients);
 - Using any other reasonable measures that would allow the person to use their service animal on the premises.

Health and Safety:

If any other situation should arise where another person's health and safety could be seriously impacted by the presence of a service animal, staff shall consider reasonable options for safely allowing the service animal and meeting the health and safety needs of the other individual(s).