

Providence Care

Being accessible to customers with disabilities isn't just the right thing to do, it's also the law.

Ontario's first standard under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, **Customer Service**, is now law. Requirement #5 of this standard states:

People with disabilities are welcome to bring their service animals into the parts of our premises open to the public or open to other third parties, except where the animal is otherwise excluded by law.

Service Animals

- ◆ Service animals are used to support independence for a person with a disability.
- ◆ If you have concerns about the legitimacy of a service animal you may request a letter from a physician or nurse, verifying that the animal is a valid service animal.
- ◆ If the person does not have a verification letter or a guide dog certificate from the Ministry of the Attorney General, you are not required to allow it on our premises.

Remember

- ◆ A service animal is not a pet, it is working.
- ◆ Do not distract the service animal by talking to it, petting it, giving it treats, etc. - it must pay attention at all times.
- ◆ Ask the owner if you are not sure whether the animal is a pet or a service animal.
- ◆ The owner is responsible for the service animal and must be the one to:
 - care for the animal
 - control the animal (e.g. on leash)
 - clean up after the animal.
- ◆ Therapy animals are not service animals. They are required to go through proper facility screening in accordance with policy and procedures.

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Service Animals

What if the animal is excluded from an area by law?

- ◆ Bring the goods or services to the part of the facility that does not restrict service animals.
- ◆ Find a safe place where the service animal can wait, if it is possible for the owner to be separated from the animal.
- ◆ Offer assistance to the owner to access the goods or services while he/she is separated from the service animal.
- ◆ Talk to the owner about the best way to accommodate their needs.

Examples of service animals

- ◆ ***Hearing alert dog*** - alerts the owner to sounds often by a nudge or pawing and leads the owner to the source of the sound.
- ◆ ***Psychiatric service dog*** - retrieves and prompts the owner with a mental illness to take his/her medication; leads the client out of crowds or activates a medical alert.
- ◆ ***Seizure alert dog*** - steers its owner away from danger during a seizure and activates a medical alert; alerts the owner to an oncoming seizure.
- ◆ ***Guide horse or dog*** - supports owner with blindness.
- ◆ ***Assistance parrot*** - supports owner with psychotic tendencies by talking to the owner to calm them down at onset of a psychotic episode.
- ◆ ***Service monkeys*** - supports owner with quadriplegia by fetching items, answering the door, helping to dress the owner, etc.