



DEPARTMENTAL PROCEDURE

POLICY TITLE: Service Animals - AODA

Section	Organization
Category	
Number	2937-V1

PURPOSE:

Service Animals are not pets but animals trained to provide assistance to a person with disability. They are individually trained to assist people with disabilities in the activities of normal daily living, to enhance quality of life and mitigate their disabilities. They provide a variety of services, including but not limited to, guiding individuals with impaired vision; alerting individuals who are hearing impaired to intruders or sounds; providing companionship; pulling a wheelchair; alerting to seizures; opening/closing doors, or retrieving dropped items. A service animal is afforded access to all places the public is invited when accompanying their human partner, in accordance with Infection Control guidelines.

POLICY:

We are committed to welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal on the parts of our premises that are open to the public and other third parties. We will ensure that all staff, volunteers and other dealing with the public are properly trained in how to interact with people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal.

This policy will assist in preventing anticipated concerns regarding the presence of service animals, and aid in maintaining infection control principles.

PROCEDURES:

I Procedure for Welcoming Service Animals and Guide Dogs:

I) Elective Patient Admissions

- There should be pre-planning and documentation with the owner and health care provider through the Pre-Admission process;
- The owner is responsible for pre-planning with a support person if necessary;
- All reasonable efforts will be made to accommodate the patient and service animal when no advanced notification has been received;
- For elective admissions, Dryden Regional Health Centre (DRHC) will, if possible, assign the patient a private room. If not, a semi-private room will be assigned with the consent of the other patient(s). The service animal is to remain with the owner at all times. If the patient is unable to manage the service animal, their designated support person for the animal is notified to come and assume responsibility for the

animal during the transition period. The service animal may be brought to the hospital to visit and to resume its duty as soon as possible.

ii) Outpatient Procedures or Clinic Appointments

- All reasonable efforts will be made to welcome a patient with a service animal
- An outpatient who knows they will be separated from their animal for the purpose of infection control or other purposes should arrange their own support person.

iii) Emergency Patient Admissions

Conscious patients able to manage the animal will not be separated unless the owner gives consent or if there are Infection Control or safety issues.

Unconscious Patients or Patients without Support Persons

For patients who need help with their service animals due to unforeseen circumstances, who have no support person with them or who are unconscious:

- Front-line staff will consult with the nursing supervisor, service Director or delegate of the area to determine who will contact the next of kin or support person to come to the hospital and assume responsibility for the animal.
- The Nursing Supervisor will contact the local animal kennel if necessary.
- The service animal will be brought to the hospital to visit and to resume its duty as soon as possible.

II Responsibilities

i) Owner

- The service animal's owner is responsible for its control and stewardship i.e. the animal's behaviour, care, supervision and wellbeing;
- The owner is responsible for making available up to date immunization records if requested.
- The service animal should be clearly identified/recognized.

ii) Area Charge Person

- Inform staff about the role of the service animal and how to interact appropriately with the patient and the animal;
- Notify other patients of the service animal's presence and address any concerns (e.g. allergies);
- Discuss with owner and staff the responsibilities for feeding, handling and cleaning issues;
- If a health care provider does not feel comfortable providing care to a patient with a service animal, the health care provider is responsible for discussing with the service Director or delegate to find an alternate professional who will provide that care and document this in the patient's health record.

iii) Staff, Physicians and Volunteers

- Are not to separate or attempt to separate a patient from their service animal without the owners consent;
- Are not to touch a service animal or the person it assists, without permission;
- Are not to pet or make noise at a service animal as this may distract the animal from the task at hand;

- Are not to feed a service animal as it may have specific dietary requirements or may become ill from unusual food or food at an unexpected time;
- Are not to deliberately startle a service animal;
- Are not to provide care for the service animal while performing their professional health related responsibilities. This care includes, but is not limited to feeding, toileting, exercising and interacting.

Note: If hospital personnel volunteer to assist the patient to care for the service animal during their off duty hours, they do so at their own risk and liability. This excludes responsibilities that are delegated by their supervisor in emergency situations.

III Safety

If any staff member sustains an injury from a service animal a report must be filed with the Employee Health Nurse and through Risk Pro detailing the name of the injured, circumstances, and nature of injury. If a patient or visitor sustains an injury from a service animal, the patient/visitor must be examined by a physician and a report filed through Risk Pro. All bites must be reported to the Northwestern Health Unit (during business hours 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., Monday – Friday at 223-3301; after hours 1-888-404-4231)

IV Eviction or Exclusion

- Eviction or exclusion of a service animal can only occur for reasons that are demonstrable, not speculative. Assumptions or speculation about how the animal is likely to behave based on past experience with other animals are not valid. If another person complains about the presence of a service animal (because of fear, or other reasons not related to the animal's demeanour or health), the person with objections to the animal should be separated and/or remove themselves from the area where the animal is located. If another person complains about the presence of a service animal because of allergies, the person with allergies should discuss the concern and possible solutions with the Director, Supervisor or most responsible person. Each situation is to be considered individually and in consultation with the owner.
- A service animal may only be evicted, excluded or separated from its owner
 - if the animal's actual behaviour poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others;
 - if contraindicated by the attending physician for sound medical and/or Infection Control reasons.

These circumstances and rationale must be documented in the patient's health record.

If a patient must be separated from his or her service animal while in the health-care facility:

- 1) identify from the patient what arrangements have been made for supervision or care of the animal during this period of separation; and
- 2) make appropriate arrangements to address the patient's needs in the absence of the service animal.

The Accessibility For Ontarians With Disabilities Act: The Ontarians With Disabilities Directorate - Ontario Regulation 429/07

http://www.mcsc.gov.on.ca/mcsc/english/pillars/accessibilityOntario/what/AODA_2005.htm

Blind Persons Rights' Act - R.S.O. 1990, c. B.7, s. 1 (1).

http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/statutes/english/elaws_statutes_90b07_e.htm

Guidelines for Environmental Infection Control in Health-Care Facilities:

Recommendations of CDC and the Healthcare Infection Control Practices Advisory Committee (HICPAC)

<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr5210a1.htm>

Mount Sinai Hospital, Policy: Use of Service Animals, Policy I-d-80-83.

PROCEDURE APPROVAL	
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