

POLICY & PROCEDURE Title Accessible Customer Service - Use of Service Animals by Persons with Disabilities	
Category Human Resources, Organizational Development & Equity	
Sub-Category Accessibility	Version # 2
Approver V.P. Human Resources, Organizational Development & Equity	Owner Director, Human Resources & Organizational Development
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1.0 Purpose

Include brief statement(s) about the overall purpose of the policy, i.e. what outcome(s) is the policy intended to achieve?

These procedures and practices have been established for the purpose of fulfilling the requirements of the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, ([O. Reg. 429/07](#)) (Use of Service Animals by Persons with Disabilities) and IASR ([O. Reg. 191/11](#)).

2.0 Scope

Include brief statement(s) that identify to whom (e.g. specific people or groups) and to which specific items the policy applies. Specify exclusions to clarify scope, if needed.

These procedures and practices apply where Home and Community Care Support Services Hamilton Niagara Haldimand Brant (HNHB) provides its goods and services on premises that it owns or operates, and if the public and other third parties have access to these premises. This policy is available in accessible formats upon request.

3.0 Definitions

Set out definitions of key terms used.

Guide Dog means a dog trained as a guide for a blind person and having the qualifications prescribed by the regulations ([Blind Persons' Rights Act 1990 s1 \(1\)](#))

Service Animal means an animal acting as a service animal for a person with a disability,
(a) if it is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to his or her disability; or
(b) if the person provides a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability.

4.0 Policy Statement(s)

Policy statements are about identifying the broad principles or standards of expected action or behaviour and/or compliance.

Home and Community Care Support Services HNHB recognizes the importance of service animals to persons with disabilities and welcomes them where Home and Community Care Support Services HNHB provides goods and services on property it owns or operates if the public or other third parties have access to these areas.

5.0 Procedures and Responsibilities

Include brief statement(s) identifying actions and responsibilities and the positions responsible for carrying out the steps aimed at ensuring the policy is adhered to.

Identifying Service Animals

Service animals may be any animal that assists a person with a disability. They provide a wide range of assistance including but not limited to, guiding a person who is blind, alerting a person who is deaf to certain sounds, opening doors and retrieving items for persons with mobility disabilities, emotional support for persons with mental illness, and many other forms of assistance.

Service animals may be identified by any one of the following methods:

1. the animal may be wearing a service animal vest, harness or saddle packs
2. the animal may be observed providing assistance
3. the person may have a letter from a physician or nurse stating that they require the animal for reasons related to a disability
4. the person may show a valid identification card or training certificate from a recognized service animal training school.

When we cannot easily identify that an animal is a service animal, our staff may ask for documentation (template, letter or form) from a regulated health professional that confirms the person needs the service animal for reasons relating to their disability.

A regulated health professional is defined as a member of one of the following colleges:

- College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists of Ontario
- College of Chiropractors of Ontario
- College of Nurses of Ontario
- College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario
- College of Optometrists of Ontario
- College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario
- College of Physiotherapists of Ontario
- College of Psychologists of Ontario
- College of Registered Psychotherapists and Registered Mental Health Therapists of Ontario

If service animals are prohibited by another law, we will do the following to ensure people with disabilities can access our goods, services or facilities:

- explain why the animal is excluded
- discuss with the customer another way of providing goods, services or facilities

Home and Community Care Support Services HNHB Responsibilities

Persons with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal will be permitted to enter Home and Community Care Support Services HNHB premises with the animal and keep the animal with them in areas where the public or other third parties are allowed, unless the animal is excluded by law. If the animal is excluded by law Home and Community Care Support Services HNHB will provide another means of accommodating the person. For example, if the animal is not permitted into a certain area by law, Home and Community Care Support Services HNHB may suggest providing services in an area where the service animal is permitted.

Responsibilities of Persons with Service Animals

It is the responsibility of the person with the disability to ensure that:

- their service animal is kept in control at all times and is well behaved;
- the service animal is not a threat to health and safety; and
- the service animal's immunizations are up-to-date.

Removal of Service Animals from the Home and Community Care Support Services HNHB Premises

Home and Community Care Support Services HNHB is aware that service animals are usually well trained and well behaved. In the event that this is not the case service animals may be removed for any one of the following reasons:

- **Disruptive or Aggressive Behaviour**, such as growling, barking or other signs of threatening or aggressive behaviour.
- **Causing Damage**, including causing damage to any person or property.
- **Poor Health**, such as a contagious illness where the animal risks spreading the illness to others.

Areas Off-Limits to Service Animals

Service animals may be prohibited from entering certain areas for health and safety reasons or due to law. For example, Ontario Regulation 562 under the Health Protection and Promotion Act states that animals are not permitted in areas where food is prepared, handled, served, displayed, stored, sold, or offered for sale.

It must be noted that service dogs are exempt from this restriction and are permitted to go where food is served, sold or offered for sale, such as restaurants including buffets. However all animals, including service dogs, are not permitted to enter areas where food is prepared, such as kitchens.

Legislation and By-laws Governing the Exclusion of Animals

Some municipalities exclude certain animals from their jurisdictions. Depending on the specifics of the by-law, this may give reason for Home and Community Care Support Services to exclude certain animals from their premises.

Persons Allergic to or Afraid of Service Animals

Common allergies or fear of animals are not considered disabilities. As a courtesy Home and Community Care Support Services HNHB may attempt to accommodate persons with common fears and allergies to animals.

In rare circumstances a person may have a severe and debilitating reaction to an animal, such as respiratory distress. In these situations Home and Community Care Support Services HNHB will suggest alternative means of providing the goods or services to the person, perhaps by limiting exposure to the animal or by another reasonable method.

Agents and Others Providing Goods and Services on Behalf of Home and Community Care Support Services HNHB

Agents and others providing goods and services on behalf of Home and Community Care Support Services HNHB will adhere to these procedures and practices.

6.0 Supporting Documents and Tools

List the tools that are available to staff in the implementation of this procedure.

Related Policies and Procedures

- **Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Accessible Customer Service and Integrated Accessibility Standards Policy**
- **Accessible Customer Service - Feedback and Complaints Procedure**
- **Accessible Customer Service - Notice of Temporary Disruptions in Services Procedure**
- **Accessible Customer Service - Provision of Goods and Services including the use of Assistive Devices Procedure**
- **Accessible Customer Service - Use of Support Persons by persons with Disabilities Procedure**

Job Aids and Forms

N/A

Other Supporting Documents

N/A

7.0 Related Legislation and Other References

List the related legislative documents (e.g. acts, regulations, and standards), government policy, and related Professional College policies, procedures, forms, templates, guidelines or committee terms of reference that together form a suite or framework for the specific policy matter.

External Resources/Links

- [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005](#)
- [Ontario Regulation 429/07 – Customer Service Standards \(AODA\)](#)

Supersedes

N/A

