

Approved by Council: April 12, 2017

## SERVICE ANIMALS IN THE WORKPLACE

### PURPOSE

To provide a safe and healthy work environment for all employees and members of the public with regards to service animals in the workplace. To welcome people with disabilities and their service animals on the parts of our premises open to the public.

Staff shall ensure that accessible customer service is provided to all customers in accordance with this procedure and the Municipality's Accessibility Policy and Policy Statement – A05-2017

### DEFINITIONS

Service animal: An animal is a service animal for a person with a disability if,

- a) the animal can be readily identified as one that is being used by the person for reasons relating to the person's disability, as a result of visual indicators such as the vest or harness worn by the animal; or
- b) the person provides documentation from one of the following regulated health professionals confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability:
  - A member of the College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists of Ontario.
  - A member of the College of Chiropractors of Ontario.
  - A member of the College of Nurses of Ontario.
  - A member of the College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario.
  - A member of the College of Optometrists of Ontario.
  - A member of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario.
  - A member of the College of Physiotherapists of Ontario.
  - A member of the College of Psychologists of Ontario.
  - A member of the College of Registered Psychotherapists and Registered Mental Health Therapists of Ontario. O. Reg. 165/16, s. 16.

### RESPONSIBILITIES

#### Staff Responsibilities

If a service animal accompanies a person with a disability, staff shall ensure that the person is permitted to keep the animal with him or her.

The person with the service animal shall be welcomed in the areas of Municipally owned premises that are open to the public.

#### Customer's Responsibility

A customer with a disability who is accompanied by a service animal is responsible for maintaining care and control of the animal at all times.

In the unlikely circumstance that the customer is unable to gain control of their service animal staff shall:

#### Step One:

Advise the customer about their responsibility to maintain appropriate care and control of the animal at all times. Allow the customer 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 (i.e. acting in an aggressive manner), staff may proceed directly to step two.

#### Step Two:

In the event that the animal is acting in a manner that causes health and safety concerns staff may request the customer to remove the animal from the situation and/or area of concern until such time that care and control is resumed. In such a situation staff shall use reasonable efforts to make sure other measures are available to enable the person with a disability to access goods or services

#### General Information

- Service animals 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 dogs or other types of animals.
- Service animals are not pets — they are working animals. Do not pet or talk to a service animal.
- Service animals provide a vital service; they are allowed to be with their owner at all times, unless otherwise prohibited by law.
- Service animals in training will be welcome in all Municipally owned facilities, provided they adhere to all Municipal procedures relating to service animals.

#### Identifying a Service Animal

A service animal can be easily identified through visual indicators, such as when it wears a harness or a vest, or when it helps the person perform certain tasks.

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

#### Exceptions

If service animals are prohibited by another law, Municipal staff 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

#### Where Food is Prepared, Stored or Sold:

The Health Protection and Promotion Act states that animals are not allowed in places where food is manufactured, prepared, processed, handled, served, displayed or stored. It does make an exception for service animals to allow them to go where food is normally served or sold. Other types of service animals are not included in this exception.

**RELATED DOCUMENTATION:** A05-2017 – Accessibility Policy and Policy Statement