



**ADMINISTRATION & HUMAN RESOURCES POLICY & PROCEDURE MANUAL**

**POLICY # A50**

**SUBJECT:** Accessibility  
**Sub Heading:** Customer Service – Service Animals

**PAGE NUMBER**  
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<b>ISSUED BY:</b> Accessibility Workgroup	<b>ORIGINAL EFFECTIVE DATE:</b> April 2010	
<b>AUTHORIZED BY:</b> Administrative Management Committee	<b>DATE OF REVIEW</b> January 2016	<b>DATE OF REVISION:</b>

**POLICY STATEMENT**

This policy outlines the roles and responsibilities regarding the identification, care and control of service animals.

For the purpose of this procedure, "staff" includes employees, physicians, volunteers, students and all others who have a working relationship with the hospital to provide services.

**Responsibility:**

- Owner or Support Person of the service animal
- Staff
- Security
- Management

**Equipment:**

- N/A

**Method:**

1. Owners or support persons are responsible to ensure the service animal is supervised and controlled at all times. However, in the event of an adverse or emergency circumstance where the owner cannot care for the service animal, staff will contact Security to arrange for temporary appropriate care of the service animal.
2. If the owner is a patient and is pre-scheduled for a procedure which may preclude the presence of a service animal, alternative care for the service animal should be made by the owner.
3. If the animal appears unwell or unkempt, consult with the manager or designate regarding the appropriateness of allowing the animal in the hospital.

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4. If unsure if an animal is a service animal:

- Ask owner to provide letter of proof signed by MD or Nurse demonstrating the animal is a service animal. Note: the letter does not need to disclose the nature of disability.
- If the owner is unable to provide documentation, notify your manager or designate. The manager or designate, at their discretion, will determine if animal meets the designation of a service animal.
- In cases where the animal is declined, provisions must be made to provide the support generally provided by the animal.
- Service animals are restricted from entering the following areas:
- Food preparation and food storage areas
- Medication preparation or storage areas
- Clean or sterile supply storage areas
- Isolation rooms
- Surgical procedure rooms

**Adverse Events**


- In the event the animal soils the environment, it is the responsibility of the owner to do the initial cleaning. Environmental Services will be responsible for disinfection of the area.
- Should the animal bite or scratch a patient, the most responsible physician must be notified. Additionally, a risk management incident form must be completed and sent to Risk Management.
- Should the animal bite or scratch a visitor, direct the visitor to go to the Emergency Department to seek immediate medical aid, if necessary. Notify the direct supervisor, complete a risk management incident form, and send it to Risk Management.

Should the animal bite or scratch a staff member, go to the Emergency Department to seek immediate medical aid, if necessary. Notify your direct supervisor, complete an employee incident form, and sent it to Occupational Health and Safety.

**Special Conditions**

Staff should be aware of the following while caring for a patient who is accompanied by a service animal.

- Allow a service animal to accompany the patient at all times and everywhere on the property except where animals are specifically excluded (refer to Method).
- Do not pet or touch a service animal. Petting a service animal when the animal is working distracts the animal from the task at hand.

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- Do not feed a service animal. The service animal may have specific dietary requirements. Unusual food at an unexpected time may cause the animal to become ill.
- Do not deliberately startle a service animal. Do not separate or attempt to separate a patient from her or his service animal. Avoid making noises at the animal (barking, whistling, etc.)
- Converse with the owner, not the animal. Avoid eye contact with the animal.
- Avoid initiating conversation about the service animal, the patient's disabilities or other service animals one has known. If you are curious you may ask if the owner would like to discuss it, but be aware that many persons with disabilities do not care to share personal details.
- Remember, not all disabilities are visible. The nature of the person's disability is a private matter, and you are not entitled to inquire for details.
- Service animals may wear specialized identifiable harnesses and vests but this is not a requirement.

### **Special Considerations:**

#### **Allergies and phobias**

If there is a service animal in an area and a staff/volunteer/patient/visitor identifies an allergy or phobia:

1. Try to separate them.
2. In the case of a staff member allergy/phobia, consider temporary reassignment of the staff member (decision to be made by direct supervisor)
3. The service animal may be declined based on the decision of the manager or designate responsible for the area where the service animal is located. In cases where the animal is declined, provisions must be made to provide the support generally provided by the animal (as specified by the owner).

### **References:**

[Ontario Regulation 429/07 Accessibility for Customer Service](#)