

Customer Service: Accessibility Standard for Customer Service Policy - Service Animals	Approved by Board on December 13, 2011	October 2011	Page 1 of 2
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Principle:

The use of service animals by parents, clients and general public.

Policy Statement:

Geneva Centre for Autism (GCA) is committed to ensure that all staff are trained and familiar with how to interact with people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal.

Procedure:

- Any person with a disability at all GCA sites who is accompanied by a service animal will be welcomed with his or her service animal and will be accompanied by the service animal while on the premises. Access will be in accordance with normal security procedures.
- This requirement applies only to those areas of the premises where the public or third parties customarily have access and does not include places or areas of the centre where the public does not have access.
- This procedure deals solely with the individual's right to be accompanied by a service animal.

Exclusion of Service Animal:

1. A service animal can only be excluded from access to the premises where this is required by another law. Examples include the *Health Protection and Promotion Act* and the *Food Safety and Quality Act*. The former Act prohibits service animals in places where food is prepared, processed, or handled (e.g., kitchen of school cafeteria) although service dogs are permitted where food is served and sold.
2. Where there is a risk to the health and safety of another person as a result of the presence of a service animal, consideration must be given to options available prior to exclusion of a service animal. An example would be a situation where an individual has a severe allergy to the service animal. It is the centre's expectation that the situation be fully analyzed and all measures to eliminate the risk be considered, e.g. creating distance between the two individuals concerned, making reasonable alterations to schedules, etc.

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3. A service animal can be excluded if it is of a breed that is prohibited by law. An example would be the *Ontario Dog Owners' Liability Act* which places restrictions on pit bull terriers.

Alternative Measures If Service Animal Must Be Excluded:

In the rare instance where a service animal must be excluded, the centre must make every effort to put alternative arrangements in place to provide the services required by the person with a disability. This could involve leaving the animal in a secure area where it is permitted by law and discussing with the person how best to serve them, e.g., a person with a vision disability might need someone (a member of staff or volunteer) to guide them.

When It Is Necessary To Confirm An Animal Is A Service Animal:

Where an animal is not a trained guide dog and it is not readily apparent that the animal is a service animal, the centre may ask the person using the service animal for appropriate documentation confirming that the animal is needed because of a disability. The documentation does not need to identify the disability, why the animal is needed or how it is used.

Where the person using the service animal regularly attends at the centre, we may request to keep a copy of the documentation on file but only as long as required by the circumstances. Alternatively, the person using the service animal may be asked to bring the documentation with them on occasions when they visit the centre. The department shall preserve the confidentiality of the documentation, and shall not use or disclose the documentation except as provided for in the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, R.S.O. 1990, cM56, or as otherwise required by law.