

Title: Accessibility – Service Animals	
Manual: Corporate	Type: Policy and Guidelines
Section: Hospital Wide Master Policy	Additional Sections (if indicated):
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POLICY STATEMENT:

It is Mackenzie Health’s policy to create a welcoming environment for 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, consistent with the principles of independence, dignity, integration and equality of opportunity as set out in the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service (2005). We are committed to meeting the accessibility needs of persons with disabilities in a timely manner.

The hospital will also ensure that all staff, physicians, volunteers, students, contractors and others dealing with the public are properly trained in how to interact with people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

All employees, physicians, volunteers, students, contractors and all others, who have a working relationship with the hospital, will interact with people with disabilities in a manner, providing equitable care that respects dignity and independence to achieve patient and family centered care.

DEFINITIONS:

Customer: Persons to whom the hospital provides goods and services and those who access the hospital facilities for the purpose of conducting business with the hospital.

Guide Dog: A guide dog as defined in section 1 of the *Blind Persons Rights’ Act (1990)* is a dog

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trained as a guide for a blind person and having qualifications prescribed by the regulations under the *Blind Persons Rights' Act (1990)*.

Service Animal: Any animal used by a customer with a disability for reasons relating to the disability where it is readily apparent that the animal is used by the customer for reasons relating to his or her disability; or where the customer provides a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the customer requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability; or where the customer provides a valid identification card or training certificate from a recognized guide dog or service animal training school.

Training: Training could be provided through workbooks, videos, handouts such as fact sheets or brochures at an orientation session, through a mandatory online module, in a classroom setting or other format. (Compliance Manual: Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07 p. 28.)

GUIDELINES:

1. Guide dogs and other Service animals may accompany people with disabilities in all areas of the hospital except where excluded by law. Guide dogs and other Service animals are not permitted where sterile procedures occur in accordance with the Health Promotion and Protection Act (1990) including but not limited to:

- operating rooms;
- minor procedure rooms or rooms where sterile interventional procedures are occurring;
- food preparation and food storage areas;
- medication preparation or storage areas;
- clean or sterile supply storage areas; and / or
- rooms in which transmission based precautions are in place (isolated rooms).

2. The owner of the Guide dog or Service animal 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.

3. If the owner is a patient and is pre-scheduled for a procedure which may preclude the presence of a service animal, arrangements for alternate care of the service animal must be made. The staff and the owner will collaborate to develop an accessibility plan identifying necessary support arrangements.

4. In cases where the animal is declined, provisions must be made, by the organization to provide the types of support generally provided by the animal.

5. The owner who requires the Guide dog or Service animal may be asked to provide a letter from a physician or nurse, or documentation from the Ministry or the Attorney General's office confirming that the person requires a Guide dog or Service animal. Note: the letter does not need to disclose the nature of disability.
6. In the event the animal soils the environment, it is the responsibility of the owner to do the initial cleaning unless unable to do so, in which case Environmental Services cleans the area. Environmental Services is responsible for disinfection of the area. Environmental Services may be requested to supply cleaning products.
7. Should the animal bite or scratch a patient, the Most Responsible Physician must be notified by a Health Care Professional. Additionally, a *Patient / Visitor Incident Form* must be completed and sent to the manager.
8. 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 *Patient / Visitor Incident Form*.
9. Should the animal bite or scratch a staff member, go to the Occupational Health Unit or the Emergency Department to seek immediate medical aid, if necessary. Notify your direct supervisor, complete an *Employee Incident Form*, and send it to Occupational Health Unit.

Special Considerations:

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

1. Allow a service animal to accompany the patient at all times and everywhere on the property except where animals are specifically excluded by law.
2. 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. 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;
3. 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.).
4. Converse with the owner, not the animal. Avoid eye contact with the animal;
5. 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.
6. Be aware that 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.
7. Service animals may wear specialized identifiable harnesses and vests but this is not a requirement.

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 physically 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 of staff member).
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 by the organization to provide the type of support provided by the animal (as specified by the owner).

REFERENCES:

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APPENDIX A:

Service animals and their roles: Service Animal	Key Tasks	Users
Autism assistance or service dog.	Keeps a child from running into danger and provides assistance when sensory stimulus is heightened. Dog is attached to the child's waist by a belt and a leash held by an adult.	People with autism or other developmental/intellectual disabilities.
Guide dog, dog guide or seeing eye dog	Follows directions of owner, alerts owner to changes in elevation (e.g., curbs, stairs) and obstacles.	People with vision loss.
Hearing ear, hearing, sound alert or hearing alert dog, cat or animal	Alerts owner to sounds often by a nudge or pawing and leads him/her to the source of the sound. May use a special signal to alert owner to fire alarm.	People who are Deaf, oral deaf, deafened or hard of hearing.
Psychiatric service dog	Retrieves and prompts the person to take medicine, retrieves or activates medical alert, leads person out of crowds, etc.	People with mental health disabilities.
Service or mobility dog or animal, special skills dog or animal (Small ponies, miniature horses or pigs are used but are not as common).	May pull wheelchairs, carry objects, pull items, and turn handles, retrieve objects or push buttons such as door openers. Larger dogs may provide balance support.	People with physical disabilities.

Seizure, seizure alert, seizure assist or seizure response dog or animal	Steers owner from danger during a seizure, activates medical alert Can alert owner to an oncoming seizure	People who have epilepsy or other seizure disorders.

APPENDIX B:

Training for staff:

Mackenzie Health will provide training to all employees, physicians, volunteers, students, contractors and all others who deal with the public.

Mandatory training will be provided to all current staff, volunteers and physicians, students, contractors and to new staff during their respective orientations to Mackenzie Health. Training will also be provided on an ongoing basis when changes are made to these policies, practices and procedures. Records of all training, including content and participants will be maintained by the hospital.

Policy and Procedure Coordinator will receive training to ensure that all policies and procedures are in compliance with the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service (2005).

Training will include the following:

- the purposes of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and the requirements of the customer service standards;
 - how to identify, interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities;
 - Mackenzie Health's policies, practices and procedures relating to the customer service standards;
 - how to interact with people with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or a support person;
 - how to use or access the equipment or devices available on provider's premises or otherwise that may help with the provision of accessing health care services to people with disabilities;
 - what to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing our services
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