

PERTH AND SMITHS FALLS DISTRICT HOSPITAL

POLICY AND PROCEDURE

TITLE: Service Animals

CREATION DATE: December 30, 2015

APPROVED BY: Senior Leadership Council

Purpose:

The objective of this policy is to be responsive to an individual's needs in a manner that protects their dignity and respect and enables persons with disabilities to increase their independence, and access goods and services through the use of service animals; furthermore to recognize PSFDH's obligation to facilitate the implementation of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2005(AODA), and all regulations pursuant to the Act.

Policy:

If a person with a disability is accompanied by a guide dog or other service animal, the Perth and Smiths Falls District Hospital (PSFDH) will permit the person to enter the premises with the animal and keep it with him or her, unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law from the premises. If the service animal or guide dog is excluded by law from the premises, PSFDH will look to other available measures to enable the person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from PSFDH's services. Service animals are permitted in areas commonly accessed by the public. A patient accompanied by a service animal is not required to disclose the nature of their disability.

For the purpose of safety and infection control requirements service animals will not be permitted in the following areas of the hospital:

- Food preparation areas
- Medication storage/preparation areas
- Isolation rooms
- Intensive Care Units
- Procedure areas (operating room, labour/delivery, pre/post-op recovery areas)
- In a room where there is a immunosuppressed patient
- In a room with another post-operative patient who does not require the guide dog

Exceptions will be considered as required.

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Distribution Groups: none	Signing Authority: Chief of Staff,President and CEO,VP of Clinical Services,VP of Finance and Support Services
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Definitions:

Service animals are animals specifically trained to assist people with disabilities in their activities of independent living (i.e. Guide dogs for those requiring support for safe mobility). Service animals are not considered to be pets but rather an auxiliary aid similar to the use of a cane, crutch or wheelchair. Service animals sometimes are called assistance animals.

Examples of service animals include:

- A guide animal, trained for individuals who are visually impaired and/or blind
- A hearing animal, trained to alert a person with significant hearing loss or who is deaf when a sound occurs
- Special skills animals, trained to assist a person who has a mobility or health disability
- Duties may include carrying, fetching, opening doors, ringing doorbells, activating elevator buttons, steadying a person while walking, helping a person up after a fall, emotional support, etc.
- A seizure response animal, trained to assist a person with a seizure disorder. The animal's service depends on the person's needs. The animal may go for help, or may stand guard over the person during a seizure
- A companion animal or emotional support animal that assists persons with psychological disabilities

Procedure:

1. The service animal must be supervised and the handler/designate must retain full control, and be responsible for the care and behaviour of the animal at all times.
2. All owners of service animals must maintain the appropriate certification and documentation to support the role of the service animal.
3. Where the animal is excluded from a prohibited area, an alternate, safe location will be offered where the service animal can wait, if the person is able to be separated from the animal while obtaining the service. Assistance will be offered to the person with a disability while he or she is separated from the service animal.
4. Release responsibility
5. Vaccination documentation

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Awareness:

PSFDH 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 prohibited
- 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
- 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/handler, not the animal. Avoid eye contact with the animal. In the event of contact with the animal, practice hand hygiene
- 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 patient/handler 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. All service animals/users have identification cards

Revision History

January 2016

July 2017

March 23, 2022

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