



Service animal Do's and Don'ts

The AODA (Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act) requires organizations to allow a person with a disability who are accompanied by a service animal into public areas of the organization unless otherwise prohibited by law.

Service Animals are trained to assist persons with disabilities, including but not limited to: vision loss, autism, epilepsy, other medical disorders, mental health disabilities, and mobility disabilities.

Unfortunately, it is sometimes difficult to determine if an animal is a pet or a service animal. The best advice is to watch the animal and determine if the animal is doing what a service animal should be expected to do.

Employees should be aware of the following “Do's and Don'ts” outline as it relates to service animals:

DO

- DO allow service animal teams in your business if it is clear that the animal is used for reasons related to the handler's disability, such as the animal is wearing a vest or harness.
- DO ask the handler for documentation if the animal is not identifiable as a service animal. The documentation can be a letter from a *regulated health professional**.
- DO allow service animal teams to remain in all areas of the business that are open to the public unless otherwise excluded by law.

DON'T

- DON'T assume all service animals are guide dogs. Service animals can be any animal trained to assist a person with a disability.
- DON'T offer food, touch or call out to a service animal without permission from the handler.
- DON'T charge additional fees or ask for unnecessary information related to the service animal or the handler's disability.

Regulated Health Professionals include: audiologist, speech language pathologist, chiropractor, nurse, occupational therapist, optometrist, physician, physiotherapist, psychologist, psychotherapist or mental health therapist.