

 Middlesex Hospital Alliance Strathroy Site X Four Counties Site X		Policy X Procedure X	Standard <input type="checkbox"/>
Subject: AODA SERVICE ANIMALS POLICY AND PROCEDURE			
Owner: Director of Human Resources	Reviewer(s): Human Resources Infection Prevention & Control Patient Family Advisory Council Occupational Health	Approver: Senior Leadership Council	
Cross Reference: Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2005			

BACKGROUND:

The purpose of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2005 (AODA) is to develop, implement and enforce accessibility standards in order to achieve accessibility for Ontarians with disabilities with respect to goods, services, facilities, accommodation, employment, buildings, structures and premises. AODA is also intended to provide for the involvement of persons with disabilities, of the Government of Ontario and of representatives of industries and of various sectors of the economy in the development of the accessibility standards.

DEFINITION:

Service animals are working animals, they are not pets, they are assistants or guides for people with a variety of disabilities. They must learn to perform different tasks depending on their handlers' needs, each animal's training is often individualized. For example, guide dogs for people who are blind or visually impaired receive their training from programs approved under the Blind Persons' Rights Act.

POLICY STATEMENT:

The MHA is committed to welcoming people with disabilities who require the presence of service animals to assist them during their interactions at the hospital, providing them with the services and goods that are part of the premises and that are open to the public and other third parties.

The owner of a service animal shall be responsible for and indemnify the hospital against all injury or damage to property or person including all claims in respect thereof caused by the service animal while on hospital property. The hospital will not be liable for any injury up to and including loss of life suffered by the service animal.

PROCEDURE:

1.00 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1.01 Hospital

- Will ensure that disabled persons are permitted to enter the premises with their service animal and allowed to keep the animal with them unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law or health risk from the premises.

- Will ensure proper training is provided to employees or volunteers on interacting with people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal.
- Will communicate the infection control considerations to the owner of a service animal (see appendix A)

1.05 Human Resources

- Provide coaching, support and guidance to facilitate the effective application, implementation, related education, awareness and training programs for this Policy.
- Will monitor the adequacy and effectiveness of the policy and procedures for providing services and proper customer service to individuals accompanied by a service animal.

1.03 Managers/Supervisors

- Provide coaching and guidance to employees on appropriate methods to communicate with individuals with a service animal.
- Identify and accommodate the needs of employees/affiliates and patients who are allergic to, or fearful of, service animals.
- Notify other patients and address any concerns.
- Allow the service animal to remain with the patient at all times unless medically contraindicated by the attending physician.
- Assign patient to a semi-private room if a private room is unavailable upon confirming the other patient in the room is allergy-free and consents.
- Use signage to alert others to the presence of the service animal in a patient care area.

1.04 Employees/Volunteers

- Will offer the same experience and services to individuals accompanied by service animals as they would any one else.
- Refrain from interacting with the service animal.
- Follow applicable Occupational Health and Safety reporting procedures for injuries/illnesses as a result of service animal-related incidents.

1.06 Union or Employee Representative

- Provide coaching and guidance to employees on appropriate methods to communicate with individuals with a service animal.

2.00 ACTIONS AND PRACTICES FOR INTERACTING WITH SERVICE ANIMALS

2.01 Interactions between Employees and Individual

- Speak to the individual clearly, and normally as you would any one else
- Employees and volunteers are not to talk, touch or make eye contact with the service animal

2.02 Incidents involving Service Animals

- The Manager will be contacted by affected employee regarding any untoward occurrence, such as a bite, scratch or allergic reaction.
- The Manager will document the occurrence on an Employee Incident report (employee) or an Unusual Occurrence Report (Patient, Visitor), along with the vaccination status of the animal, and the reaction of the person(s) affected.
- The Management refers affected visitors and affiliates to the Emergency Department for medical care as warranted.
- The physician or any other person who has information regarding an animal bite or animal contact that may result in rabies notifies the Medical Officer of Health and provides the information in accordance with the Health Protection and Promotion Act, Regulation 557.

Appendix A

Infection Control Considerations for Service Animals in an Acute Care Setting

Within 24-48 hours before entering the hospital and before each visit the owner should:

- Ensure the service animal is in good health, well groomed and appropriately vaccinated.
 - Check the service animal for cleanliness, odour, and flea or tick infestation.
 - Groom the animal.

Immediately before the visit the owner should:

- Wipe the animal down with an almost dry washcloth to reduce the dander, which might otherwise become airborne.
- Bring a clean drinking bowl in a clean and sealed plastic bag

While in the Hospital

- For patient safety/infection control purposes, employees may request that the service animal does not enter such areas of the hospital as:
 - High-risk critical areas
 - Patient rooms with isolation precautions in place
 - Areas where invasive procedures are performed
 - Medication preparation areas
- Employees will ask that the service animal be kept away from any shunts, chest tubes, surgical wounds, intravenous sites, bandages/dressings, other areas of potential infection and dangerous chemicals.

Ensure any clean up that may be necessary before, during or following a visit is done in the following manner:

- Using gloves, clean the area by picking up the feces or urine with a paper towel.
- Place any animal feces in toilet and soiled paper towels in a plastic bag, and into waste container.
- Soak the area with hospital disinfectant.
- Wipe the area with a clean paper towel.
- Dispose of the paper towel in the plastic bag.
- Dispose of secured plastic bag in waste container.
- Wash hands promptly.
- Notify the department employees immediately; department employees will notify housekeeping.
- Notify housekeeping and employees immediately if the animal urinates, defecates or vomits on a patient, the patient's equipment or bedding.