

**PROCEDURE: AODA-008**

**Support Persons and Service Animals**

**Policy**

OCAPDD is committed to providing exceptional customer service to all customers, including those who use support persons or service animals in order to obtain, use or benefit from our goods and services.

It is the policy of OCAPDD to ensure that people with disabilities who are accompanied by support persons and/or service animals are allowed entry to all parts of our premises that are open to the public, unless otherwise excluded by law.

**Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that people with disabilities accompanied by a support person and/or service animal are permitted access to those areas on our premises that are open to the public.

**Procedures**

**Support Persons**

Some people with disabilities rely on support persons in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care, medical needs, or with access to goods or services. A support person may be a paid professional, a volunteer, a family member or a friend of the person with a disability. He or she does not necessarily need to have special training or qualifications.

If a person with a disability is accompanied by a support person, OCAPDD will permit both persons to enter the premise together (those areas open to the public) and ensure that the person with a disability is not prevented from having access to their support person.

In some cases a support person may have to agree to rules or requirements that are specific to the kinds of goods or services that we provide. Where confidentiality is important because of the kinds of information discussed, we may require the support person to sign a confidentiality/privacy agreement.

Employees of OCAPDD or others dealing with the public on OCAPDD's behalf will receive training on how to interact with people with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person.

### **Service Animals**

Service animals are used by people with many different kinds of disabilities to overcome barriers. Service animals are not pets – they are working animals.

A few examples of service animals include dogs used by people who are blind, hearing alert animals for people who are deaf, deafened or hard of hearing, and animals trained to alert an individual to an oncoming seizure and lead them to safety.

To be considered a service animal under the Customer Service Standard, O. Reg 429/07, it must be either readily apparent (obvious by its appearance or by what it is doing) that the animal is being used because of a person's disability or the person with a disability must provide a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that it is required because of his or her disability.

OCAPDD will permit any person with a disability who is accompanied by a guide dog or other service animal to enter our premises (those areas that are open to the public) with the service animal and to keep the animal with him/her, unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law.

Employees/agents of OCAPDD or others dealing with the public on OCAPDD's behalf will receive training on how to interact with people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal.