

VILLA ITALIA RETIREMENT RESIDENCE

Department	Accessibility Standards	Policy #	VI-HS-PP-021-3
Section	Customer Service	Issued	12/01/11
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Issued to	All Employees	Replaces	NEW
Issued by	Pat Mostacci, Executive Director	Dated	12/01/12
	Laura DiStefano, Executive Assistant		

POLICY

Villa Italia Retirement Residence welcomes and provides access for persons with disabilities accompanied by a guide dog or service animal. The person will be permitted to enter the facility with the service animal and will be permitted to keep the animal with her/him unless the animal is excluded by law from a certain area on the premise (i.e. such as the kitchen area or dining area).

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

To ensure that all persons enjoy access to services, programs and opportunities offered at Villa Italia Retirement Residence while maintaining their dignity and independence.

PURPOSE

To remove potential barriers by ensuring access to programs, services and opportunities for persons with disabilities who use service animals.

GOALS

To provide a respectful, safe and welcoming environment for all persons with disabilities who use service animals.

DEFINITIONS

Service animals are animals that are individually trained to carry out tasks for persons with disabilities. Service animals are generally dogs, but may include other types of animals such as, but not limited to cats, rabbits or reptiles. Such service animals may be used to assist a person who is blind, has a vision impairment or low vision; a person who is deaf, deafened or hard of hearing; a person who has a mobility disability or difficulties with strength or dexterity; a person who has autism or a developmental disability; a person who has a mental health disability, and many other reasons.

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RESPONSIBILITY

It is the responsibility of all management, staff, volunteers, agency workers, contractors and consultants, working on behalf of Villa Italia Retirement Residence to follow and carry out the procedures outlined below.

All management, staff, and volunteers will be made aware of and trained to better understand the purpose and intent of this policy and to implement the procedures effectively.

All staff that work with or contracts agency workers, contractors and/or consultants to work on behalf of Villa Italia Retirement Residence will ensure that they are made aware of the purpose and intent of this policy and its procedures.

PROCEDURES

Animals that function as service animals for persons with disabilities are permitted in all premises that are open to the public, unless prohibited by another law such as Ontario Reg. 31/05 of Food Safety and Quality Act.

Service dogs are allowed to go to places where food is normally served, sold or offered for sale. However, other types of service animals are not included in this exception. As such, in these cases, staff must determine and carry out an alternative way to provide the same level and quality of goods, services, programs and opportunities, in collaboration with the individual. This will be done in a timely manner.

Staff will ensure that clear signage, regarding any specific rules for out-of-bounds or prohibited areas that exclude service animals, is posted in conspicuous locations.

Persons with disabilities who use service animals cannot be:

- asked to remove their service animal from the premises;
- isolated from others;
- charged extra fees for the use of the animal;

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In exceptional circumstances where the service animal may be prohibited by law, (The Dog Owners' Liability Act 2005) prohibits individuals from owning, breeding, selling, importing, abandoning or training pit bulls, including Staffordshire Bull Terrier, American Staffordshire Terrier or American Pit Bull Terrier) staff may respectfully ask if an animal is a service animal and will not ask the nature of the person's disability or purpose of the animal. Staff will explain, in a respectful manner, that the service animal must be removed from the public area due to the Municipal Bylaw and make alternate arrangements or provide the service outside the public area. In such cases, staff is required to determine the specific secure areas where service animals are permitted to stay, with respect to the law.

A person with a disability, who uses service animals, cannot be denied access or refused service because others have allergies or express a fear of the service animal. All efforts must be made to respectfully accommodate both individuals.

Due diligence needs to be paid, to address Health and Safety requirements. For example, if a person's health and safety could be seriously impacted by the presence of a service animal on the premises open to the public, management must fully analyze all options for safely allowing the service animal. Options could include creating a distance between the two individuals, eliminating in-person contact; changing the time the two receive service or using air purifiers and any other measures that would allow the person to use their service animal on the premises.

In very exceptional circumstances that the animal becomes out of control, causing a clear disruption or a threat to the health and safety of others and the animals' behaviour is not corrected by the owner, a person with a disability can be asked to remove their service animal from the premises. The regular processes for such occurrences will be followed.

Once everyone's safety is assured, staff must, in a timely manner, determine and carry out, an alternative way to provide the same service(s), in consultation with the person who has a disability.

An incident report will be filled out (a copy to be sent to the Executive Director and one kept on file in the Administration Office).

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As a courtesy, particularly if the person and service animal have been in attendance on the premises for a long time, staff may enquire whether the animal requires water, may designate an area in which the service animal can relieve itself and/or enquire whether the staff can be of assistance pertaining to the service animal.