

# Human Resources Policy:

Section: Organizational Policies



Subject: Service Animals

Policy Number: HR 6.05b

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Originated: October 2019

Approved By: Management

Revised: June 2021

Approval Date: July 2021

Reviewed:

## 1 POLICY

- 1.01 Four Counties Addiction Services Team (Fourcast) is committed to fostering an atmosphere which removes and prevents barriers that impact the accessibility for people with disabilities. We understand the vital relationship and dependency which exists between people with disabilities and their service animals and will ensure we make all reasonable efforts to accommodate clients, employees and the general public needs.
- 1.02 In compliance with the Customer Service Standard of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), Fourcast welcomes guide dogs and service animals in all our office locations.

### 1.03 Identification

There are two ways to identify a service animal:

1. It is visibly apparent that the individual requires the animal for reasons relating to a disability as a result of visual indicators such as a vest or harness worn by the animal; or
  2. The individual provides documentation from a regulated health professional, confirming that the individual requires the animal for reasons relating to a disability. Documentation may be provided from any of the following:
    - a. A member of the college of Audiologists or Speech-language Pathologists of Ontario
    - b. A member of the college of Chiropractors of Ontario
    - c. A member of the college of Nurses of Ontario
    - d. A member of the college of Occupational Therapists of Ontario
    - e. A member of the college of Optometrists of Ontario
    - f. A member of the college of Physicians or Surgeons of Ontario
    - g. A member of the college of Physiotherapists of Ontario
    - h. A member of the college of Psychologists of Ontario
    - i. A member of the college of Registered Psychotherapist or Registered Mental Health Therapists of Ontario
- 1.04 Fourcast reserves the right to ask all individuals for documentation relating to their service animal, unless it is visibly apparent that the individual has a disability and relies on the service animal for support (i.e. guide dog).

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- 1.05 Fourcast will not ask any individual to disclose any details pertaining to their disability.
- 1.06 Fourcast does not permit emotional support animals in any of the office locations. (Please refer to definition listed below)
- 1.07 When a conflict arises with a service animal and other individual rights under the Human Rights Code, Fourcast will work with all parties to find a solution(s) that accommodates everyone's needs. Fourcast will implement the guideline from the Policy on Competing Human Rights from Ontario Human Rights Commission.
- 1.08 Fourcast will make every effort to ensure that the individual and their service animal are not separated while receiving services from Fourcast or conducting services on behalf of Fourcast.
- 1.10 Fourcast will ensure that all employees will receive training on how to interact with people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal.
- 1.11 Individuals must assume responsibility for the care and behaviour of the service animal at all times. Barking, growling, biting or aggressive behaviour will not be tolerated or permitted.

## 2 PURPOSE

- 2.01 The purpose of this policy and procedure is to acknowledge Fourcast's acceptance of service animals within its office settings, and to establish guidelines for employees and owners of service animals.

## 3 SCOPE

- 3.01 This policy applies to all employees, clients and general public

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## 4 RESPONSIBILITY

### 4.01 Clients, general public are responsible for:

- Identifying their request to have a service animal while accessing services
- Provide documentation when requested
- Work collaborating with employees when a conflict arises to identify a solution(s)
- Maintain control and care over the service animal at all times.

### 4.02 Employees are responsible for:

- Informing all clients and general public of the policy and guidelines
- Working with clients when a conflict arises in order to accommodate everyone's needs.
- Identifying any health and safety concerns or personal concerns when working with service animals to a program manager or human resources

### 4.03 Program managers are responsible for:

- Understanding and enforcing the policy and guidelines
- Supporting employees when a conflict arises between clients or employees to identify appropriate solution(s)

### 4.04 Human Resources is responsible for:

- Policy and guideline development
- Working with program managers and employees to find alternative solutions when conflicts arise
- Ensuring compliance with AODA, including employee training and signage welcoming service animals.

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## 5 DEFINITIONS

**Service Animals** – animals that have been trained to assist people with disabilities maintain their independence. Examples include:

- A Guide Dog is a trained service dog that is used as a travel tool for persons with visual impairments, are blind or have low-vision
- A Hearing Dog is a trained service dog which alerts a person with significant hearing loss, or who is deaf, to specific sounds such as a knock on the door.
- Assist Dog is a trained dog which assists a person who has a mobility or health impairment. Types of duties the dog may perform include: carrying, fetching, opening doors, ringing doorbells, activating elevator buttons, steadying a person while walking, helping a person up after a fall, etc.
- A SSigDog is a Social Signal Dog trained to assist a person with autism. The dog may alert the partner to distracting or repetitive movements common amongst people with autism, allowing the person to stop the movement (eg. hand flapping). Recognizing familiar persons in a crowd, steering around a mud puddle, responding to other people or social signals, are all possible roles for SSigDogs. A person with autism may have sensory problems and require the same assistance from a dog as a person who is blind or deaf.
- A Seizure Response Dog is a trained service dog that assists a person with a seizure disorder. How the dog serves the person depends on the person's needs. The dog may stand guard over the person during a seizure, or the dog may go for help. Some dogs are trained to predict a seizure and provide a warning.
- A Psychiatric Service Animal is a trained service animal that assists a person with a psychiatric disability. A Psychiatric Service Animal provides specific services to a person with a psychiatric disability, including, but not limited to: picking up/retrieving objects or aiding with mobility when the handler is dizzy from medication or has psychosomatic symptoms, waking the handler if the

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handler sleeps through alarms or cannot get out of bed, alerting and responding to episodes, reminding the handler to take medication, alerting and/or distracting the handler from repetitive and obsessive thoughts or behaviours.

**Emotional Support animals** - animals that provide an individual with emotional support and security. These animals do not have specialized training and therefore fall outside of this policy.

**Disability** – as defined by the Ontario Human Rights Code (section 10) and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act.

1. any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical co-ordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device,
2. a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability,
3. a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,
4. a mental disorder, or
5. an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997*.

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## 6 REFERENCES and RELATED STATEMENTS of POLICY and PROCEDURES

***Ontario Human Rights Code***

***Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act***


***Occupational Health and Safety Act***

***Ontario Human Rights Commission – Competing Rights policy***

***6.04 Customer Service Policy***

## 7 PROCEDURE

- 7.01 Clients may choose to identify during Intake or prior to their first visit the need to bring a service animal with them to their appointments. Should an individual wish to participate in group programs, Fourcast employees will first need to confirm that there are no circumstances that would adversely influence the wellbeing of current participants or employees.
- 7.02 Should a conflict arise between the rights of two or more clients or employees regarding the presence of a service animal, the employee will bring the issue forward to a program manager or human resources in order to identify a solution that will accommodate everyone's needs.
- 7.03 Management of service animals
- Service animals must be accompanied and controlled at all times by their owner
  - Service animals must be housetrained
  - Service animals must be restrained on a leash or harness at all times
  - Service animals must not be disruptive to others: such as interacting with others, disturbing the personal belongings of others, blocking passageways for fire and emergency exits.
  - Should an animal exhibit a behaviour(s) that affects or may affect the health and safety of others, the animal will no longer be permitted in the office(s). Employees will meet with the client to find alternate ways to support the individual.

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7.04 Requirements for ensuring an inclusive environment when supporting individuals with service animals.

- Pay attention to the owner, not the service animal
- Allow the service animal to accompany the individual at all times.
- Maintain a respectful distance from the service animal, it is not appropriate to pet or feed a service animal while it is working
- Ensure the individual using a service animal is included and not isolated from others.
- Be sensitive and respectful, don't ask the individual about their disability.

7.05 Dispute Resolution Process

In the event of a disagreement about the appropriateness of an accommodation, service quality, or animal exclusion, the individual can bring concerns forward to a Program Manager or Human Resources.