

Service Animals in the Workplace Policy



While it's permissible to ban pets in the workplace, employers must recognize that service animals and emotional support animals are not pets and must be accommodated, provided that: i. The employee has a disability; and ii. The employee needs the assistance of the service or emotional support animal for a reason directly related to the disability. However, accommodations must be reasonable and aren't required where they'd impose undue hardship. **Bottom Line:** You need a written policy setting out accommodations request procedures and ground rules for service and emotional support animals that you allow into the workplace. Here's a template policy that you can adapt.

1. POLICY

While employees are not permitted to keep pets at the workplace, this rule does not apply to assistance animals or service animals duly certified and trained service, guide, signal and emotional support animals that may be required by an employee with a disability to service a need related to that disability. Assistance and service animals are not "pets" and ABC Company will make reasonable accommodations for employees who need them up to the point of undue hardship.

2. ADVANCE PERMISSION REQUIRED

Employees who have a disability requiring the assistance of a service animal in the workplace must first make a written request for an accommodation and complete all documentation required under the ABC Company Disability Accommodations Policy. In processing accommodations requests, ABC Company reserves the right to request information necessary to verify that:

- The employee is disabled; and
- The employee requires the assistance of the service animal for reasons directly related to the disability.

ABC Company will not request such information when the employee's disability and/or need for the service animal is obvious and self-evident.

3. OTHER DOCUMENTATION & VERIFICATION REQUIRED

In addition to the foregoing verification, if the service animal is a dog, the employer must provide documentation that the dog has received up-to-date vaccinations for rabies, Bordetella (aka, kennel cough), DHLPP (including viral diseases canine distemper, hepatitis, parvovirus, parainfluenza and bacterial infection leptospirosis) and other diseases transmissible to humans, along with evidence that the service animal is trained, potty-trained, well behaved and spayed or neutered.

4. NO WILD OR EXOTIC ANIMALS

In the interest of workplace health and safety, ABC Company reserves the right to reject a request for accommodation to bring to the workplace any service animal or emotional support animal that is an exotic or wild animal, including but not limited to birds, chinchillas, ferrets, fish (in tanks 20 gallons or more), iguanas, monkeys, pot-bellied pigs, rabbits, raccoons, rodents of any kind, skunks, snakes or reptiles of any kind, tarantulas, scorpions or spiders of any kind, or weasels.

5. SERVICE ANIMALS MUST OBEY WORKPLACE RULES

Employee must accept full responsibility for knowing and ensuring that their service animals comply with workplace rules designed to protect others at the site against health, safety, nuisance and other hazards associated with having animals at the workplace, including but not limited to the following house rules:

- Dogs must be kept on a leash at all times when in elevators and common areas;
- Animals are not allowed in the following designated areas, which will be maintained as pet-free zones [*list areas*];
- Service animals must not engage in violent or aggressive activity;
- Excessive barking, emitting excessive odors and other annoying behaviour that creates a nuisance or interferes with any other person's health, safety, work, productivity, comfort, enjoyment or use or enjoyment of the workplace property is strictly prohibited;
- All local leash and licensing requirements must be obeyed;
- Animals must not be left unattended for unreasonable periods;
- Animals may relieve themselves only in designated relief areas and employees must clean up after their animals and dispose of waste quickly and properly;
- All animals must be registered and have a proper identification tag.

6. EMPLOYEE LIABILITY FOR SERVICE ANIMAL DAMAGE

Employees are responsible liable for the entire amount of all damages caused by their service animals and all cleaning, defleaing, and deodorizing required because of such animals. This applies to carpets, doors, walls, drapes, wallpaper, windows, screens, furniture, appliances and any other part of the workplace premises or common areas. If such items cannot be satisfactorily cleaned or repaired, employees must pay for complete replacement by ABC Company. Payment for damages, repairs, cleaning, replacements, etc. are due immediately upon demand.

7. REVOCATION OF PERMISSION

Employees acknowledge and understand that failure to comply with any of the terms of this Policy are grounds for immediate revocation of permission to keep their service animal in the workplace and may also result in discipline up to and including termination.