

Public Information to Support Accessibility for People with Disabilities Who Use a Guide or Service Dog

INTRODUCTION

- A person with a disability, who uses a guide or service dog, has been trained and the dog will be under the care and control of the person. This includes using a harness, leash or tether. Just like anyone in a public space, a person and their guide or service dog will be expected to have good behaviour.
- Personal interaction, like it is with any customer, should be the same as if the guide or service dog were not present.
- By denying or restricting access to public places or services by a person with a disability who is using a guide or service dog, or treating that person differently from other customers, a business or service provider may face legal consequences.

THE LAW

The British Columbia Human Rights Code (the Code)

- The Code is a law that protects and promotes human rights. The Code prevails over other laws, where there is a conflict, to protect people from discrimination and harassment.
- The Code ensures that people with disabilities have equal access to services and facilities customarily available to the public. People with disabilities that require a guide or service dog are protected under the Code.

The Guide Dog and Service Dog Act (GDSDA)

- A person with a disability, who uses a trained guide or service dog, is protected from discrimination under Human Rights legislation. However, if a person with a disability chooses, they can also access protections under the GDSDA to ensure their equal rights to access.

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

People with disabilities who use guide or service dogs

Rights

- Equal to all members of the public, people with a disability, who use a guide or service dog, have rights to equal access and use of public places and services.

Businesses and service providers

Rights

- Like anyone acting inappropriately, a person may be refused access or asked to leave if they or their guide or service dog is disruptive.

Responsibilities

- Businesses and service providers have a duty to accommodate people with disabilities who are using a guide or service dog, and they should not be stopped or questioned unless there is a concern.
- Businesses and service providers should not limit access or assign a person with a disability who is using a guide or service dog to pet friendly areas, or in any way change how you would treat a customer that does not have a guide or service dog.