



Guide Dogs and Service Dogs – Information for the Public

On January 18th, 2016, the Province implemented the new [Guide Dog and Service Dog Act](#) and *Guide Dog and Service Dog Regulation*. If you are a business owner, a landlord, or someone serving the public, the following information is for you.

As someone who serves the public or provides lodgings, you have an obligation to reasonably accommodate persons with disabilities. This includes visually impaired persons requiring guide dogs and persons with disabilities requiring service dogs to assist them with daily living.

In accommodating persons with disabilities, it is reasonable for you to expect that a guide or service dog be clean, well-groomed, free of offensive odours, and appear healthy. The guide or service dog should behave in an appropriate manner while on your premises: i.e., the dog should not show aggression or pose risk to others or property; the dog should not solicit attention or food, run freely, urinate or defecate in inappropriate areas, disrupt business transactions, or make unnecessary vocalizations (barking, growling, etc.).

If the guide or service dog is not behaving in an appropriate manner and you are unsure if the dog is certified or trained to a high standard, you may ask to see a person's government issued certificate or other documentation showing the dog has been suitably trained. Guide and service dog and handler teams carrying government issued certificates have undergone training to a high standard, and are monitored and assessed. If you have raised concerns about the behaviour of the guide or service dog with the handler and the dog continues to misbehave, you can ask someone to remove his/her dog from your premises. You may also consider making a complaint to the Registrar of the Guide Dog and Service Dog Program (see below).

You can also expect to see certified dogs-in-training out in public with dog trainers. If you have any questions about whether the dog-in-training and dog trainer are certified, you may ask them to produce a government-issued certificate. Although the dog is still in training, the dog should still be under control of the dog trainer at all times.

Retired guide or service dogs are allowed to continue to live with their owner handlers and are issued a separate certificate. Retired dogs do not, however, have the same access rights to businesses, transit, etc. as a guide or service dog team.

Unless you are selling, preparing or serving food ¹, you may choose to allow non-certified guide and service dogs, dogs-in-training, and/or pets onto your premises. For example: you may be approached by an uncertified dog-in-training and handler/dog trainer, as part of their skills training in public, to practice at your business location. Permitting the team to practice their skills on your premises may assist them in preparing for an assessment to become a certified dog and handler team.

Denying a certified guide or service dog and handler team access or accommodation can lead to a violation ticket, prosecution and fine up to \$3000 under the Act, and/or possible *Human Rights Code* complaint by the aggrieved party. The *Human Rights Code* also requires you to reasonably accommodate persons with disabilities.

If you have a concern about a certified guide or service dog team or you wish to make a complaint about someone falsely representing a dog as a member of a certified guide or service dog team, you may contact the Registrar of the Guide Dog and Service Dog Program by sending an email to: guideandservicedogs@gov.bc.ca, by toll-free telephone at 1-855-587-0185 option #5, or by writing to Security Programs Division, PO Box 9217 Stn Prov Gov, Victoria V8W 9J1.

For more information, please visit: www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/justice/human-rights/guide-and-service-dog

¹ If you sell or serve food, you are bound by section 25 of the *Food Premises Regulation* which only allows public access to those guide or service dog and handler teams with government-issued certificates.