

Service Animals in the Workplace



2/28/2023

POLICY SCOPE:

The Town of Stow, in conjunction with the Board of Health, is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for all, including residents, visitors, consultants, contractors, employees, and volunteers in municipal buildings. In keeping with this commitment, the Town does not permit employees to bring household pets to work. The purpose of this policy is to create guidance on service animals in our municipal buildings.

APPLICABILITY:

This policy applies to all employees and volunteers of the Town of Stow and visitors to any town owned buildings. This policy recognizes that some people have service animals that assist them in activities of daily living. Employees governed by a collective bargaining agreement are subject only to those provisions of this policy not specifically regulated by law or agreement.

DEFINITION:

Service Animal is an animal that has been trained to do work or perform tasks for an individual with a disability, including physical, sensory, mental, psychological, intellectual, or other mental disabilities as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Service animals are trained to help an individual person who has a disability. Service animals can go to restaurants, shops, hospitals, schools and hotels.

POLICY DESCRIPTION:

An employee who requires the help of a service animal that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability will be permitted to bring a service animal to the office, provided that the animal's presence does not create a danger to others and does not impose an undue hardship upon the Town. The Town complies with all federal, state, and local laws to provide reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities. In compliance with the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), individuals with disabilities shall be permitted to be accompanied by their service animal in all unrestricted areas of Town buildings, and may attend any class, meeting, or other event. Exceptions may apply in certain areas of certain buildings.

PROCEDURE:

Service Animals

1. An Employee who has a disability and is requesting a reasonable accommodation for a service animal must contact the Human Resources (HR) department and provide the proper documentation.

2. Current documentation must be provided that the animal is clean, properly vaccinated, free of parasites, fleas, and ticks consistent with public health requirements.
3. All service animals must be licensed in compliance with local laws and must also be vaccinated against rabies and other diseases typically found in that animal. The service animal must wear a tag displaying its rabies vaccine status and a license tag.
4. All service animals must have documentation on file with the HR department. If not on file, the handler must be prepared to present all documentation to the HR department or the Board of Health upon entering a public building.
5. Documentation to be provided will include license, rabies vaccine including documentation of all vaccines, and proof of an insurance policy that covers the service animal.
6. Service animals must be harnessed, leashed, or tethered, unless these devices interfere with the service animal's work or the individual's disability prevents them from using these devices, in which case the individual must maintain control of the animal through voice, signal or other effective controls.
7. The service animal's handler must be always in complete control of the service animal. The care and supervision of a service animal is solely the responsibility of its handler. The animal must be:
 - a. Trained and not disrupt any program or activity
 - b. Odor free, free of fleas and ticks
 - c. Friendly, not bark, hiss, growl, bite, or threaten anyone
 - d. Housebroken and not urinate or defecate in a building
8. If the handler fails or is unable to take effective action to control the service animal, or the service animal consistently behaves inappropriately, acts out of control, or behaves poorly causing a disruption, or is unclean, and/or not housebroken, the service animal must leave the premises.
9. All documentation must be updated at least annually.

Service Animals

The owner of the animal is completely and solely liable for any injuries or any damage to personal property caused by the animal. The Town of Stow will require the owner of the animal to maintain a liability insurance policy covering damage or injuries caused by the animal while in a municipal building.

1. The Town of Stow shall not be liable for loss of, or injury to, any service animal brought into municipal buildings.
2. The owner of the animal must be prepared to provide to the Town/Board of Health a current copy of a health certificate from a licensed veterinarian stating that the animal is properly vaccinated and is free of internal and external parasites, a current rabies vaccination certificate (for animals for which rabies vaccination is required by law), along with proof of licensing in the town in which the animal resides at least annually.