

Support Animals

Human Rights and Service Delivery



Many people use animals for assistance or support. **An animal required for a person's disability is considered a support animal.** Support animals are protected under the Human Rights Act, even if they are not certified under the Service Animal Act. **Service providers must accommodate support animals up to the point of undue hardship.**

Navigating Human Rights Protections

Filing a complaint with the Commission requires:

- ✓ a medical note that confirms the need for a disability-related support animal
- ✓ a person to be denied a service because of their support animal
- ✓ a person to have informed, or tried to inform, the service provider that the support animal was needed because of their disability

Applying Knowledge to Practice

The Commission encourages people accessing a service with a support animal to:

- ✓ **Identify that they have a disability-related need for the animal.** For example, people may choose to self-disclose or use a visible support animal vest, harness, or collar.
- ✓ **Keep the animal under “care and control.”** For example, keep the animal close, on a short leash, or in a carrier. Make sure it does not go to the bathroom on site, whine excessively, or jump on people.

⚠ **Important:** Handlers may be responsible for any harm or damage caused by their support animal, and access may be denied if the animal misbehaves.

The Commission encourages service providers to:

- ✓ **Allow support animals entry** when it is apparent that the animal is necessary to support a person's disability-related needs.
- ✓ **Explain expectations clearly** so handlers understand what they can and cannot do with their animal in the shared space.
- ✓ **Develop policies and train staff** on how to respond to accommodation requests.

⚠ **Reminder:** Handlers with identified support animals under their control should not face barriers. If animals are not allowed, the service must still remain accessible to the person.

