



Service Animal Policy

Pets are not allowed in the MBC Campground, at Camp Widjiitiwin, or on the Conference Centre grounds. Some exceptions are made for small caged pets, such as hamsters or birds, and indoor cats, in seasonal trailers. The recent inclusion of emotional support animals as Service Animals under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) has prompted MBC to clarify our policy. Our policy was formed by answering four questions:

1. What is a Service Animal?

A Service Animal is an animal that is trained to perform a service for the benefit of an individual with a disability. Therefore, a service animal must be accompanying the disabled person it is trained to serve in order to be granted access to MBC. If an animal is not performing as a service animal, it is a pet.

2. Is an Emotional Support Animal Classified as a Service Animal?

MBC recognizes that an emotional support animal that is performing a service for a person with a disability is classified as a service animal under AODA.

An animal classified as an emotional support animal must comply with all rules pertaining to service animals. It is imperative that the service animal has been properly trained to interact with all manner of distractions and the challenges that the animal will encounter as it joins the human environment. These include, but are not limited to:

- Interactions with people
- Interactions with other animals
- Sanitary issues
- Noise issues

3. Is a Certificate Designating my Animal as a Service Animal Sufficient?

The simple answer to this question is “no”.

Agencies such as the Lions Foundation provide certification for dogs which provide a variety of services for their owners. At this time, there is no recognized procedure to certify the training of a service animal providing mental or emotional support. There are organizations that sell vests and/or certificates to pet owners without any training, testing or verification. Such certificates have no value. Therefore, it is our policy to evaluate the validity of the service animal under the requirements of AODA.

The AODA requirements include:

- It is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to his or her disability, or
- The person provides a letter from a qualifying source (typically a physician) verifying that the animal is required for reasons relating to his or her disability.

In the case of Emotional Support Animals or Psychiatric Service Animals, the letter must indicate that the owner has a mental or emotional disability recognized by the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV), that the service animal is required during the owner's time at MBC, and that the owner is under the on-going care of the licensed professional who prepared the letter. The letter must be dated in the current calendar year and provide the professional's license number and issuing authority.

4. What are the Owner's Responsibilities related to Service Animals?

The owner is responsible for the care and supervision of his or her service animal while on MBC property.

MBC reserves the right to refuse and/or require the owner to remove the service animal if its behaviour is not in keeping with a trained service animal.

These behavioural issues include, but are not limited to:

- Aggressive interaction with humans
- Aggressive interaction with other animals
- Sanitary issues (e.g. climbing, sitting or lying down on any furniture outside of the owner's residence, defecating or urinating indoors)
- Noise issues

All service animals must be wearing a harness or be on a leash (maximum 6' in length) when outside the owner's residence, trailer, or guest room.

When the service animal is working it needs to be wearing a vest for identification. When the service animal is being walked for exercise, as opposed to when working, it is to be walked on the MBC Acres cottage roads, or off MBC property.

All service animals must be registered with the MBC Campground Office or Front Office upon arrival. Please provide a picture of the service animal with its owner annually. This information will be used to inform the staff of your presence and help eliminate any confusion for staff and guests.