

# Policy on Service Animals at The Rooms

## **Purpose and Definitions**

To inform visitors to The Rooms, its Regional Museums or its exterior grounds and also employees of The Rooms Corporation, of the types of animals permitted in and around The Rooms facilities and the conditions under which they may be present.

*Service Animal* - in accordance with the *Service Animal Act*, (SNL 2002), an animal trained to provide assistance to a person with a disability and used by a person with a disability:

- A) Where it is readily apparent that the service animal is used by the person for reasons relating to their disability, or
- B) Where the person provides a letter from a physician/nurse practitioner confirming that they require the service animal for reasons relating to their disability.

*Comfort Animal* – any animal that provides emotional support, comfort or therapy which alleviates one or more identified symptoms or effects associated with its Partner’s documented disability. Unlike a Service Animal, a Comfort Animal need not be individually trained or certified to perform any disability-related task and may not accompany the Partner at all times.

*Pet* – an animal kept for ordinary use/companionship. A pet is not a Service or Comfort Animal.

## **Policy**

### **1.0 General and Legal Framework**

1.1 The Rooms Corporation has a legal duty to provide access and to accommodate the needs of individuals with disabilities. It must also provide a healthy and safe environment in which individuals can visit, work and study. The Rooms recognizes the need to minimize the potential health and safety risks to visitors and staff, disruptions and nuisances that may result from the presence of service animals on Rooms premises. (*Animal Health and Protection Act*, SNL cA9.1, *Human Rights Act* SNL, 2010 cH13-1 and the *Service Animal Act*, SNL 2012 cS-1302)

1.2 Visitors bringing Service Animals to The Rooms or animals to its grounds must comply with this policy, all provincial/municipal laws, civic regulations and bylaws pertaining to licensing and animal control.

### **2.0 Pets/Comfort Animals**

2.1 Pets and Comfort Animals are not permitted inside The Rooms facilities but are permitted on The Rooms grounds provided that:

- a. All vaccinations and licenses are up to date;
- b. They are on a leash or in a carrier, as applicable;
- c. All waste is properly removed and disposed of immediately by the animal owner who should also notify Rooms security/cleaners of the issue.

### **3.0 Service Animals**

- 3.1** Visitors bringing a Service Animal onto The Rooms premises accept sole financial and legal responsibility for any damage, injury or other harm caused by the animal and will indemnify The Rooms Corporation should it be found legally liable for any injury or other harm caused.
- 3.2** Visitors bringing Service Animals to The Rooms will be provided reasonable accommodation in accordance with this policy. Employees requiring Service Animals will be provided reasonable accommodation in accordance with the *Government Disability Accommodation Policy (2012)* and are encouraged to communicate their request with their union representative and/or Disability Manager, if applicable.
- 3.3** Visitors with Service Animals are not required to contact The Rooms in advance of their visit, but should inform Rooms Visitor Services staff or Rooms Security at the beginning of their visit.
- 3.4** Visitors with Service Animals may be denied entrance to a specific area of The Rooms, event or location if the presence of the animal would interfere with the safe and normal operations of The Rooms facility, or if it would pose a risk to the animal.

### **4.0 Responsibilities Relating to Service Animals**

#### **4.1** Service Animals must be:

- Licensed;
- In good health and treated humanely;
- Housebroken (the visitor/owner is responsible for the proper disposition of any waste of a Service Animal and for notifying Rooms security/cleaners.
- Harnessed, leashed, or otherwise under the control of the Visitor (e.g. voice control, signals, or other effective means) so that the Service Animal does not disrupt or interfere with the ability of other visitors/users of the space or activity.

#### **4.2** With regard to Service Animals specifically, Rooms staff and security are expected to abide by the following:

- Allow the Service Animal to accompany the visitor at all times and in all places where visitors would customarily have access;
- Speak to the visitor before giving attention to the animal and refrain from inquiring about the visitor's disability or reason for using a Service Animal;
- Maintain a respectful distance from the Service Animal. It is not appropriate to pet, feed, or startle a Service Animal while it is working; ask permission before touching the animal as this may distract it from its work;
- Ensure that visitor and their Service Animal can remain together; in case of an emergency, every effort should be made to keep the animal with its owner. However, the first effort should be toward the owner/visitor, which may necessitate leaving an animal behind in certain emergency situations;
- Ensure that a visitor with a Service Animal is included and not isolated from other visitors as much as possible.