

Service Animals

Administration/Finance Policy AD-188

The Everett Clinic
For the whole you.

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Date Reviewed:

(no changes
made)

Approved by: Al Fisk, Chief Medical Officer

POLICY:

Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, (Section 504) and the Washington Law Against Discrimination (RCW 49.60), health care facilities may not discriminate against individuals with disabilities. Specifically, the Clinic may not exclude Service Animals, such as guide dogs and hearing dogs, from facilities within the Clinic or areas within the facilities, except in limited circumstances. This policy applies to staff, patients, visitors, and others who use a Service Animal while visiting, working, or being treated in this facility.

PURPOSE:

- To enable staff to make decisions in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and the Washington Law Against Discrimination (RCW 49.60), and Centers for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines regarding animals on TEC premises.
- To ensure safety of patients and TEC employees.

DEFINITION:

Service Animal: A Service Animal is any animal that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability. The work or tasks performed by a service animal must be directly related to the handler's disability. Examples of work or tasks include, but are not limited to, assisting individuals who are blind or have low vision with navigation and other tasks, alerting individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing to the presence of people or sounds, providing non-violent protection or rescue work, pulling a wheelchair, assisting an individual during a seizure, alerting individuals to the presence of allergens, retrieving items such as medicine or the telephone, providing physical support and assistance with balance and stability to individuals with mobility disabilities, and helping persons with psychiatric and neurological disabilities by preventing or interrupting impulsive or destructive behaviors. The crime deterrent effects of an animal's presence and the provision of emotional support, well-being, comfort, or companionship do not constitute work or tasks for the purposes of this definition.

PROCEDURE:

Staff may ask if the Service Animal is required because of a disability and what tasks the animal has been trained to perform, but may not require special ID cards or tags or certificates of health or proof of vaccinations for the animal or ask about the person's disability.

The Clinic shall not require documentation, such as proof that the animal has been certified, trained, or licensed as a service animal. Generally, the Clinic may not make these inquiries about a service animal when it is readily apparent that an animal is trained to do work or perform tasks for an individual with a disability (e.g., the animal is observed guiding an individual who is blind or has low vision, pulling a person's wheelchair, or providing assistance with stability or balance to an individual with an observable mobility disability).

If a Service Animal is observed on Clinic property, staff will not question the validity of the Service Animal's presence unless there is a question or doubt about the animal being needed for functional support of his or her handler.

A Service Animal shall be under the control of its handler pursuant to Snohomish County code(s) 9.14.030 and 9.14.050. A Service Animal shall have a harness, leash, or other tether, unless either the handler is unable because of a disability to use a harness, leash, or other tether, or the use of a harness, leash, or other tether would interfere with the Service Animal's safe, effective performance of work or tasks, in which case the service animal must be otherwise under the handler's control (e.g., voice control, signals, or other effective means).

The Clinic may ask an individual with a disability to remove a Service Animal from the premises if the animal is not housebroken.

The Clinic may ask an individual with a disability to remove a Service Animal from the premises when it has been determined, in accordance with this policy, that the Service Animal is out of control and the handler does not take effective action to control the Service Animal, or the Service Animal poses a direct threat to the health and safety of others. A direct threat is defined as a significant risk to the health and safety of others that cannot be eliminated or mitigated by a modification of policies, practices or procedures. In determining whether a Service Animal poses a direct threat, the Clinic shall make an individualized assessment, based on the reasonable judgment of competent medical personnel and current medical knowledge.

If the Clinic properly excludes a service animal under this Policy, it shall give the individual with a disability the opportunity to obtain goods, services, and accommodations without having the Service Animal on the premises.

The Clinic personnel and staff must comply with the ADA and Section 504 and the Washington Law Against Discrimination (RCW 49-60), while maintaining measures to control infections. All Service Animals must be well groomed and free of ectoparasites (e.g., fleas, ticks, mange, etc.). If a Service Animal presents at the Clinic with signs of vomiting or diarrhea, urinary or fecal incontinence, open wounds, skin infections or “hot spots,” such Service Animal will be considered to be a direct threat to the health and safety of others and, at the request of Clinic staff, must be removed from the Clinic premises.

Based on the above legal standards and guidance of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, a clean, healthy and well-behaved Service Animal should be permitted in all areas that a human visitor is allowed to go without having to use special infection control precautions (e.g., donning protective garments, such as gloves, gowns, or masks, or using protective equipment). Under Section 504 of the ADA and the Washington law against discrimination (RCW 49.60), people with disabilities who use Service Animals may not be isolated from other people or treated less favorably than other individuals in the Clinic.

A public accommodation shall not ask or require an individual with a disability to pay a surcharge, even if people accompanied by pets are required to pay fees, or to comply with other requirements generally not applicable to people without pets. If a public accommodation normally charges individuals for the damage they cause, an individual with a disability may be charged for damage caused by his or her service animal.

Persons who use Service Animals are entitled to be accompanied by their Service Animals during the course of visits to the Clinic regardless of whether the animals are working or performing services at all times, and regardless of whether healthcare staff could perform essentially the same services provided by the Service Animal, such as retrieving items or guiding the handler to a destination.

The patient takes full responsibility for the needs and behavior of the Service Animal. The Clinic staff and personnel are not required to supervise or care for Service Animals. The patient needs to make his or her own arrangements to have someone feed, water and air the animal throughout the visit.

If the patient is separated from the Service Animal, a staff member should remain with the patient at all times and under all circumstances while he or she is separated from the Service Animal, unless a friend or relative accompanies the patient and the patient does not need a staff member to assist him or her.

Individuals can make complaints about the unjustified exclusion of service animals from the Clinic by notifying the Administration Department at 425-339-5460 or by utilizing an online [feedback form](#). The Clinic considers interference with or denial of this right to be a serious violation of Clinic policy. The Clinic will promptly investigate all complaints raising this issue.

Resources:

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA 504)
Washington Administrative Code (WAC 162-26)
Washington Law Against Discrimination (RCW 49.60)
Snohomish County code(s) 9.14.030 and 9.14.050

Intranet Issues:

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