
Niagara Casinos Policy

Title: AODA Service Animals
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OVERVIEW

The Ontario *Human Rights Code* prohibits businesses that serve the public from discriminating against individuals with disabilities.

The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (“AODA”) requires businesses to allow guide dogs and service animals to accompany people with disabilities in all areas of a facility where the general public is normally allowed.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that MGE Niagara Entertainment Inc., operator of Casino Niagara, Niagara Fallsview Casino Resort and Niagara Falls Entertainment Centre (“MGE”) complies with Ontario’s human rights accessibility standards with respect to guide dogs and service animals.

The Customer Service Standard under the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (Ontario Regulation 191/11) of the AODA specifically addresses the use of guide dogs and other service animals.

PURPOSE

This policy sets out the definition of “guide dog” and “service animal” and how MGE associates should interact with customers, visitors and employees who may be accompanied by a guide dog or service animal at MGE facilities.

APPLICATION AND SCOPE

This policy applies to all MGE associates and facilities.

POLICY STATEMENT

MGE is committed to creating an inclusive environment by preventing and removing barriers for persons with disabilities. Where it is not possible to remove barriers, MGE will make efforts to accommodate persons with disabilities in a timely, effective and suitable manner.

MGE supports the principles of the Ontario *Human Rights Code* and AODA and MGE’s goal is to ensure accessibility for associates and the public we serve.

DEFINITIONS

Disability means:

- i. any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree

- of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical co-ordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device
- ii. a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability
 - iii. a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language
 - iv. a mental disorder
 - v. an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997

Associate includes a full-time, part-time, temporary or seasonal staff member, student, intern or consultant.

Guide dog means a dog trained as a guide for a blind/visually impaired person and having the qualifications prescribed by the regulations for the *Blind Persons' Right Act*.

Service animal means a dog or other animal used by a person with a disability for reasons relating to their disability. Service animals are not pets. They perform some of the functions and tasks the people with disability cannot perform for themselves.

In accordance with the *AODA*, an animal is a service animal if:

- a) It is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to his or her disability; or
- b) The person provides a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability.

Emotional support animals provide comfort and security, but do not have training for specific tasks. Emotional support animals do not qualify as "service animals" under the *AODA*.

REQUIREMENTS

1. Disabilities may differ in severity, may be visible, invisible, and have effects which may come and go. MGE is committed to meeting the needs of people with disabilities in a timely manner and will make this policy available in an accessible format upon request.
2. People with disabilities accompanied by a guide dog or service animal may access all areas where they would normally be allowed and will not be segregated from other employees, visitors or customers.

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3. Guide dogs and service animals must be in a harness and/or identified with an identification card or medical documentation.
 4. Pets and emotional support animals are not allowed on MGE premises.
 5. The person presenting with a guide dog or service animal must be in control of the animal at all times and shall be responsible for their animal and for any damage to persons or property caused by the animal. Any guide dog or service animal behavior that poses a direct threat to the health and/or safety of other customers or associates may be excluded from MGE's premises. The person presenting with a guide dog or service animal will have the option of continuing to use MGE services and facilities without having their guide dog or service animal on the premises.
 6. If it is not readily apparent that the person presenting with an animal has a disability and is relying on the animal, an MGE associate may ask the following questions of a person presenting with a service animal:
 - a. If the service animal is required because of a disability;
 - b. If an animal is a service animal and what services it provides;
 - c. If the person has an identification card or documentation from a health professional confirming they require the animal for reasons relating to a disability.
 7. Any of the following Regulated Health Professions may provide documentation confirming that a person requires an animal for reasons relating to a disability.
 - (i) A member of the College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists of Ontario
 - (ii) A member of the College of Chiropractors of Ontario
 - (iii) A member of the College of Nurses of Ontario
 - (iv) A member of the College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario
 - (v) A member of the College of Optometrists of Ontario
 - (vi) A member of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario
 - (vii) A member of the College of Physiotherapists of Ontario
 - (viii) A member of the College of Psychologists of Ontario
 - (ix) A member of the College of Registered Psychotherapists and Registered Mental Health Therapists of Ontario
 8. Associates shall not ask questions about the specific nature of a person's disability.
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RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Policy
- Integrated Accessibility Standards Policy

REFERENCES AND FORMS

- Ontario Human Rights Code
- Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005
- Accessibility Standards for Customer Service 429/07
- Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation 191/11
- Blind Persons' Rights Act