

SERVICE DOG HANDLER RIGHTS

UNDER THE ALBERTA HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

The Alberta Human Rights Act protects people from discrimination because of disability.

Physical disability includes reliance on a guide dog or service dog.



You have the right to be treated with dignity, respect and equality in all areas of daily life.



A service dog is not simply a pet being permitted as an exception to a rule.

For a person with a disability, the dog may be part of the accommodation required to provide equal access.

WHERE HUMAN RIGHTS PROTECTIONS APPLY



GOODS & SERVICES

Businesses and service providers must not discriminate.



HOUSING

Includes landlords, condominiums, and housing providers.



EMPLOYMENT

Employers must accommodate employees with disabilities.



EDUCATION & OTHER AREAS

Schools, public institutions and other organizations.



Service dog handlers have the right to reasonable accommodation in these areas, to the point of undue hardship.

This means rules, policies and practices may need to be changed to ensure equal access.

ALBERTA HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

YOUR RIGHTS. YOUR ACCESS. YOUR DIGNITY.



HOUSING, CONDOMINIUMS & “NO PETS” RULES

Housing providers—including landlords and condominiums—must accommodate a person with a disability who uses a qualified service dog or guide dog to the point of undue hardship.



A “NO PETS” POLICY DOES NOT AUTOMATICALLY OVERRIDE HUMAN RIGHTS OBLIGATIONS.

Accommodation can require changing or making exceptions to tenancy, condominium or housing policies.

WHAT ACCOMMODATION CAN LOOK LIKE

The Alberta Human Rights Commission lists changing condominium, tenancy or business rules to improve service-dog access as examples of accommodation.



Allowing a
service dog in
“no pets” units



Waiving pet
deposits or
additional fees



Making
exceptions to
housing policies



Modifying
condominium
rules



Providing
reasonable
access



BUSINESSES, SERVICES, EMPLOYMENT & OTHER SETTINGS

Accommodation obligations can apply to business owners, public service providers, educational institutions, employers, landlords, condominium corporations and others.



UNDERSTANDING UNDUE HARDSHIP

Accommodation must be provided up to the point of undue hardship. This means the burden would be too high considering factors such as:

- Cost
- Health and safety
- Size of the organization
- Impact on operations
- Availability of outside funding



KNOW YOUR RIGHTS. ALBERTA HAS STRONG DISABILITY PROTECTIONS.

Learn more at albertahumanrights.ab.ca



EVERYONE DESERVES EQUAL ACCESS, RESPECT AND DIGNITY.
SERVICE DOG TEAMS HELP MAKE THAT POSSIBLE.

IF YOU BELIEVE YOU'VE BEEN DISCRIMINATED AGAINST



TAKE THESE STEPS



DOCUMENT WHAT HAPPENED

Write down dates, times, locations, names of people involved, what was said or done, and who witnessed it.



COMMUNICATE YOUR NEED

Clearly explain that you require accommodation related to your disability and the use of your service dog.



KEEP RECORDS

Keep copies of emails, letters, forms and any other relevant documents.



ATTEMPT TO RESOLVE

Try to resolve the issue through respectful conversation or by speaking with a manager, supervisor or landlord.



FILE A HUMAN RIGHTS COMPLAINT

If the issue remains unresolved, you may file a complaint with the Alberta Human Rights Commission.

A complaint must generally be filed within **one year** of the discriminatory act or treatment.

TWO LAWS – DIFFERENT PURPOSES



SERVICE DOGS ACT

Focuses on qualification, identification and statutory public-access rights for qualified service dog teams. Qualified teams have the right to access locations where the public is allowed.



ALBERTA HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

Protects people from discrimination based on disability and creates broader accommodation obligations in areas such as housing, services and employment.

IMPORTANT: this resource provides general educational information and is not legal advice. Alberta legislation, regulations, and policies can change. Refer to current Government of Alberta information when determining your legal rights or obligations.