



**SUPREME COURT OF NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR
NOTICE TO THE PROFESSION AND GENERAL PUBLIC**

POLICY ON SERVICE AND SUPPORT ANIMALS AT COURT

Scope of Guide

For the information of all justice system participants, this Notice outlines the Court's policy respecting the accommodation of people who attend Court with service or support animals at the General and Family Division in all judicial centres. The policy is designed to accord with the protections outlined in the *Service Animal Act*, SNL 2012, c S-13.02, and the *Human Rights Act*, SNL 2010, c H-13.1.

This policy applies to all members of the public for any purpose, including attending hearings or appointments at the Court Registry.

Note that this policy represents the default procedure and may be supplemented by Court Order in appropriate circumstances.

If you have further questions with respect to anything discussed in this policy, please feel free to contact the court Registry:

General Division:

<https://www.court.nl.ca/supreme/locations-contact-info/general-contact-info/>

Family Division:

<https://www.court.nl.ca/supreme/locations-contact-info/family-contact-info/>

Entering the Courthouse

The *Court Security Act, 2010* permits the screening of persons coming into or leaving the courthouse. Please keep in mind that, if you are attending a court proceeding or attending at a court Registry, you may need to allot extra time to pass through point-of-entry screening as you enter the courthouse.

Service and Support Animals

People with disabilities, as defined by the *Service Animal Act* or *Human Rights Act*, who rely on assistance from a service or support animal are entitled to access and receive services at Supreme Court courthouses when they are accompanied by that animal. This includes attending hearings, receiving Registry services, or engaging any other service the Court provides. A person relying on the assistance of a service or support animal in relation to a disability-related reason will not be denied entry or service only on the basis that they are accompanied by that animal.

It is the responsibility of the person with a disability to ensure that their service or support animal is kept in control at all times.

What to Expect at Point-of-Entry

If you are attending a courthouse with an animal, and it is not readily apparent at point-of-entry that the animal is a service animal or support animal whose assistance is relied on in relation to a disability, you may be asked:

- whether the animal is a service or support animal required because of a disability;
- the nature of the work the animal performs; and,
- whether there are any restrictions on public interaction with the animal.

Sheriff's Officers conducting point-of-entry screening will make every effort to accommodate people relying on animal support for a disability-related reason. There may be some instances where a person's ability to immediately pass through point-of-entry screening may not be possible where an Officer needs to seek direction from Court administration.

Please advise a Sheriff's Officer at point-of-entry if you are attending the courthouse to get assistance on an urgent basis.

Policy Limitations

This Policy only applies to people who rely on a service or support animal for a reason related to their disability. People accompanied by animals for other reasons will not be permitted entry to a courthouse or to receive service when accompanied by that animal. Some common examples include:

- Pets; and,
- Emotional support animals that do not assist with a reason related to a disability.

RAYMOND P. WHALEN
Chief Justice