



CNIB
GUIDE
DOGS™

City of New Westminster Guide Dog Presentation

Agenda

Today we will talk about:

- What guide dogs do
- The difference between guide dogs and other working dogs
- A guide dog's journey from puppyhood to retirement
- The rights of guide dog handlers in Canada
- Some reasons why access denials still happen despite these rights
- The importance of guide dog etiquette
- How you can help



What does a guide dog do?

- A guide dog fosters independence for the handler
- The harness facilitates communication between dog and handler
- Intelligent disobedience



What does a guide dog do?

- Guide dogs are among the most highly trained dogs in the world, performing tasks that require intensive standardized training.
- They are the only service dogs trained to disobey their handler's command if it will put their handler at risk
- Their handler's safety is a guide dog's top priority



How are guide dogs trained

- Dogs are bred to be Guide Dogs
- First year puppies are trained to behave in public and are given exposure to different environments (restaurants, malls, public transit etc.)
- Six months formal training (learning how to wear a harness, follow verbal commands, avoid obstacles)



How are guide dogs trained

- At the ages of 5-15 Months, puppies continue to live with their puppy raisers, who will help them to learn to move around safely and negotiate stairs while exposing them to as many different environments as possible. This helps the puppy become more confident.
- At the ages of 13-17 months, training starts in earnest as the dog begins to work with a professionally qualified guide dog trainer to learn the basics of the guiding role. They are also introduced to the harness
- At around 18 months, the guide dog instructor individually matches each qualifying dog to a waiting handler, taking into consideration the dog's personality and physical attributes and matching them to the handler's needs



Guide Dogs Explained

- Guide dogs are partners in mobility and independence for people who are blind, deafblind, or have low vision and can open the world in a profoundly unique way
- Whether it's avoiding obstacles, stopping at curbs and steps, or negotiating traffic, guide dogs foster independence for their handlers
- The guide dog's harness and u-shaped handle facilitate communication between the dog and their handler
- The handler provides directional commands, and the dog ensures the team's safety



Guide Dogs Explained

- Service dogs are trained to assist a person with a disability. The dogs are trained to perform specific tasks which mitigate their handler's disability
- Guide dogs are service dogs which are specifically trained to guide people who are blind, deafblind, or have low vision
- While all guide dogs are service dogs, not all service dogs are guide dogs.
- Guide dogs and service dogs are protected by human rights legislation across Canada



What are the laws?

- Guide dogs and their handlers are legally allowed access to any premises to which the public would normally have access
- Canadian legislation prohibits discriminating against a person with a disability who is working with a guide dog
- Discrimination continues to happen



What if there are conflicting rights?

- Businesses and service providers have a responsibility to ensure the rights of guide dog teams are respected
- Do not decline services because you think the guide dog is not a guide dog
- Do not ask for a Guide Dog "ID" card



Guide dog etiquette

- Harness on means hands off
- Contain your excitement
- Say “hello” another time
- Don’t feed them
- Provide space so the guide dog and their handler can feel comfortable within the working environment



How the City of New Westminster and the public can help

CNIB Recommends:

1. That all businesses and municipal offices have posted Guide Dog decals on its doors in support of access for guide dogs and the handler
2. City of New Westminster provide Guide Dog decals to all existing and newly approved licensed business owners
3. City of New Westminster and the public are duly educated and aware of Guide Dog legislation and laws
4. CNIB provides educational and guide dog materials to the City of New Westminster and business owners



How the City of New Westminster and the public can help

The CNIB is grateful for the support of the City of New Westminster and would like to thank all the councillors for their partnership. Thank you to Councillor Ruby Campbell for supporting a motion to advocate for the sight loss community and guide dogs. Thank you to Councillors Tasha Henderson, Mike Anderson and Ruby Campbell for joining the CNIB and participants on many "walkabouts" so we can share real lived experiences and learn from each other to support common goals.





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For more information, please visit cnibguidedogs.ca or
email guidedogs@cnib.ca.

Thank you. Questions?