

Guide Dog Users of Canada
Utilisateurs de chiens-guides du Canada

300 Hedonics Road, Apt. 1009, Peterborough ON K9J 7T1
Website: <http://gduc.ca> / Toll-Free: 1-877-285-9805
Canadian Registered Charitable No.:869175190RR0001

MM27.40.1

City Clerk's Office
Via email to: clerk@toronto.ca

March 18, 2017

Dear Sir/Madame,

Guide Dog Users of Canada is writing to suggest that bylaw 201-2017, City of Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 349, Animals, Section 8.1 be amended to exempt owners of service animals. It is our understanding that Tracey Cooke, Director of Municipal Licensing and Standards for the city, will issue a written note, and a motion to City Council on March 29, to provide an exemption to the above section for guide dog handlers using a metal training collar. GDUC whole-heartedly lends its support to this initiative.

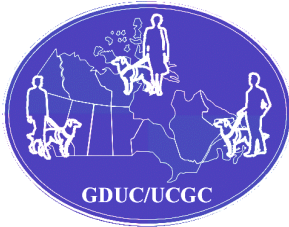
Founded in 1999, GDUC is an organization of people who are either partnered with, or interested in the work of dogs who guide those who are blind, deaf-blind, or partially sighted. We are not in the business of training either dogs or people. We are, however, very concerned about providing a forum for peer support for guide dog users, and educating the general public about the need for accessibility in every sense, including attitudinally.

For further information about Guide Dog Users of Canada, we cordially invite you to visit our website, <http://gduc.ca>.

Quite a number of Torontonians are partnered with guide dogs. In addition, many guide dog users from across the province, and indeed from across the country travel through and around Toronto on an almost daily basis. In an effort to head off any future confusion, we propose the above amendment, and further suggest that terms such as choke collars, pronged collars, and martingale collars be defined in order to insure that everyone is perfectly clear as to the type of dog equipment that is being referred to.

The production of guide dogs is both a serious and scientific business. The almost 20 guide dog training schools across North America, 5 of which are in Canada, all demonstrate unwavering commitments to train the best possible guide dogs, who will eventually be partnered with persons living with vision loss. The schools put considerable thought into their choices of collars and such, and train their students on the safe and effective use of that equipment. Consequently, a choke or pronged collar in the hands of a properly trained individual does not represent a threat to a guide dog.

All schools teach their students precisely when and how to use the provided collar and leash to administer what is known as a correction. A correction is the act of refocusing the guide dog's attention on its handler, and is used to re-establish the safe and smooth functioning of the team.



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Correction techniques vary according to the dog's level of inattentiveness. Sniffing, being distracted by another dog, and failing to stop at a curb are typical examples of situations which warrant corrections. Even more important is the fact that when the correction results in a return to the desired behaviour, the dog is rewarded, most often with praise.

Students are also made aware that corrections can sometimes be viewed as cruel by members of the public, and are encouraged to counteract those perceptions through public education.

If you have any further questions, please don't hesitate to contact us at guidedogs@gduc.ca.

We thank you for considering our submission.

Sincerely

Greg Thompson
President - Guide Dog Users of Canada