

AODA - Integrated Accessibility Standard	Customer Service Standard
Revised: October 20, 2023	

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to address the accessibility requirements of *Ontario Regulation 429/07 Accessibility standards for Customer Service* under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*. The Company is committed to conform to all aspects of this Act. The company also recognizes that the key principles of accessibility are independence, dignity, integrity and equality.

Definitions

Disability

As defined by the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* and the *Ontario Human Rights Code*.

Person with Disability

Any individual that is affected with a disability as defined under the *Ontario Human Rights Code*.

Barrier

As defined by the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*. A barrier is anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of his or her disability, including physical barrier, an architectural barrier, any information or communication barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy, procedure or a practice.

Assistive Device

Is an auxiliary aid such as technical aids, communication aids, cognition aids, personal mobility aids and medical aids that are used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional abilities of people with disabilities to access and benefit from goods and services offered by the Company.

Service Disruption

Any planned or unplanned disruption of services that are provided by the Company and are used by and made available to persons with disabilities to be able to access the Company facilities, goods or services.

Scope

This policy will apply to all applicable management and employees of the Company, including volunteers, agents, contractors, third parties or any other individuals who interact with the public or other third parties, who represent or act on behalf of the Company in any manner.

Responsibility

It is the responsibility of all applicable management, staff and volunteers working on behalf of the Company to follow and carry out the procedures outlined in this policy.

All applicable management, staff and volunteers will be made aware of and trained to better understand the purpose and intent behind this policy and to implement the procedures effectively.

Assistive Devices

Persons with disabilities may use their own assistive devices to access or benefit from the Company goods or services, unless those assistive devices are prohibited due to health and safety or privacy issues.

It is the responsibility of the disabled person to ensure that his or her assistive device is operated in a safe and controlled manner at all times.

Communication

The Company will endeavor to communicate with persons with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability. This means that staff will communicate in a means that enables persons with disabilities to communicate effectively for the purposes of requesting/obtaining goods or services.

Service Animals

Persons with disabilities are permitted to be accompanied by their service animal in all premises that are open to the public, when accessing goods or services by the Company, unless the animal is otherwise excluded from entering the premises governed by other laws.

In the event the service animal is prohibited from entering the premises due to other law enforcement, the Company shall ensure that other measures are available to enable the person with a disability to obtain and benefit from the Company goods or services.

If it is not readily apparent that the service animal is a service animal, the person with a disability may be required to provide proof. Proof can be from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to his or her disability or documentation that shows the employee is certified as a service animal handler.

It is the responsibility of the disabled person to ensure that the service animal is kept under control at all times.

Support person

Persons with disabilities are permitted to be accompanied by a support person on the Company premises that are open to the public, to enable the person with a disability to obtain and benefit from the Company goods or services.

On rare occasions, the Company may determine that a support person is required to protect the health and safety of the person with disability or that of others on the premises. In these cases, an explanation must be provided and documented.

When support persons are required for Company meetings, events, or activities, the Company will arrange for and cover the costs for the necessary support persons to be present.

Notice of Disruption

In the event an actual or anticipated disruption to facilities, services or systems that are relied upon by persons with disabilities to access the Company goods or services, a notice of disruption shall be provided in advance.

Such notice will include:

- a) Reason for the temporary disruption
- b) Anticipated duration of the temporary disruption
- c) Description of alternate facilities or services, if available; and
- d) Contact information

Training

The Company is committed to establishing and providing *Customer Service Standard* accessibility training to all applicable managers, employees, volunteers, interns, students and all those involved in the development of policies, practices and procedures as well as those dealing with members of the public or other third parties on behalf of the Company. Training will also be provided to anyone that provides goods, services or facilities on behalf of our organization.

The training should include, but not limited to:

- a) The purpose of the *Accessibilities of Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, the requirements of *Ontario Regulation 429/07 Accessibility Standards for Customer Service*, and the standards referred to in the *Integrated Accessibility Standards*.
- b) *Human Rights Code* as it pertains to persons with disability.
- c) How to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disability
- d) How to interact with persons with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a guide dog or other service animal or the assistance of a support person
- e) How to use assistive communication devices or other devices available on the Company premises or otherwise provided by the Company that may help with the provision of goods or services to a person with disability
- f) What to do if a person with a particular disability is having difficulty accessing the Company goods or services
- g) The Company AODA policies, procedures and practices.

New staff as well as those who take on new duties that involve interaction with the public or other third parties will receive training as part of their orientation. Training shall be provided to each person as soon as possible after he or she is assigned duties.

Training will be provided on an ongoing basis as changes occur to the Company policies, practices and procedures governing the goods or services to persons with disabilities.

The Company will keep detailed records of the training provided for reporting purposes.

Alternate Format

The Company is committed to providing accommodation to persons with disabilities where appropriate.

If the Company is required to provide a document to a person with a disability, the Company will keep into account that person's disability and provide the document in an appropriate format. The Company will consult with the individual making the request to determine the suitability of the accessible format or communication support.

The person with a disability and the Company will agree on the appropriate format to be used.

See *Accessible Formats and Communication Supports* under Information and Communications Standards for more details.

Notice of Availability

The Company is committed to making this policy and any other documents required by *Ontario Regulation 429/07* available to any party upon request.