

Accessibility Policy



1. PURPOSE

This policy is intended to provide the overarching framework to guide the review and development of other _____ policies, standards, procedures, By-laws and guidelines to comply with the Regulation 191/11, Integrated Accessibility Standards (Regulation) under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 standards Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2005, S.O. 2005, c. 11. (the AODA), which were established to identify, remove and prevent barriers and increase accessibility for persons with disabilities in the areas of customer service, information and communications and employment.

2. DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this Policy:

Assistive Device: any tool, technology, or equipment that facilitates the performance of everyday tasks by a person with a disability. Examples of assistive devices include, but are not limited to, wheelchairs, walkers, hearing aids, oxygen tanks, and communication boards.

Barrier: As defined in the AODA, anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of his or her disability. This includes physical barrier, an architectural barrier, information or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy or a practice.

Disability: As defined in AODA and the Human Rights Code, includes the following:

- Any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical co-ordination, blindness or visual impairment, deafness or hearing impairment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device,
- A condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability,
- A learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,

- A mental disorder, or
- An injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997

Guide Dog: a dog trained as a guide for a blind person that also meets the conditions and qualifications prescribed by Guide Dogs, RRO 1990, Reg 58.

Service Animal: any animal accompanying a person with disability, so long as:

- It is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to his or her disability; or
- The person provides a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability.

Support Person: a person who accompanies a person with disability in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs or with access to goods or services.

3. SCOPE

This Policy applies to all employees, volunteers, and to any individual or organization that provides goods, services or facilities to the public or other third parties on behalf of _____.

4. guiding principles

- **Dignity**

People with disabilities are treated as equally valued and respected as any other individuals.

- **Equal Opportunity**

Persons with disabilities have the same opportunities to benefit from the goods and services provided by _____ as other customers. This means taking the individual needs of a person with a disability into account, even if doing so results in different treatment.

- **Independence**

People with disabilities are free to choose the manner in which they are served.

- **Integration**

People with disabilities have full access to the goods and services provided by _____. This principle includes the use of alternate measures in cases where full integration does not serve the best needs of a person with a disability.

- **Assistive Devices**

Employees, volunteers and third party contractors shall accommodate the use of personal assistive devices including but not limited to, wheelchairs, canes, walkers, scooters and Braille display boards. Assistive devices including, but not limited to, Assistive Listening Devices and FM Loop systems that are available for access to specific services and programs shall be kept in good working order and the public

shall be informed of their availability.

- **Communication**

When communicating with a person with a disability, [organization name] will take into account the person's disability to ensure accessibility. Specific measures include [list existing services/items is available] Additionally, [organization name] will provide training on communication with people with disabilities.

5. Commitment to Accommodations

_____ is committed to making every reasonable effort to accommodate people with disabilities, provided such accommodation does not cause undue hardship.

- **Service Animals and Guide Dogs**

Employees, volunteers and third party contractors shall accommodate the use of service animals by people with disabilities who are accessing _____ services or goods unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law, such as food preparation areas as prohibited by Food Premises, R.R.O. 1990, Reg. 562 under the Health Protection and Promotion Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. H.7

Service animals and guide dogs accompanying persons with disabilities are welcome on [organization name] premises that are open to the public unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law. For example, certain dog breeds may be excluded by the provincial Dog Owners' Liability Act or by municipal by-laws.

Additionally, there may be circumstances where allowing a service animal to accompany a person with a disability on _____ premises might compromise the health and safety of another person. A common example would be allowing a guide dog near a person with a severe allergy to dogs. In such circumstances, _____ will consider all relevant information to come up with a solution that meets the needs of both parties.

If it is not apparent that an animal accompanying a person with a disability is a service animal, _____ may require the person to produce a letter from a physician or a nurse to verify the animal's role.

6. SUPPORT PERSONS

Where a person with a disability accessing _____ goods or services is accompanied by a support person, _____ employees, volunteers and third party contractors shall ensure that both persons are permitted to enter the premises together and shall ensure that the person with a disability can access the support person while on the premises.

Support persons accompanying people with disabilities are welcome at all _____'s premises that are open to the public.

Generally, the presence of a support person will only be required in situations where there is a significant health and safety risk that cannot be mitigated by other means.

7. NOTICE OF TEMPORARY DISRUPTION

_____ will promptly notify all customers about any disruptions to services or facilities for people with disabilities. This notice will be posted in a conspicuous place and will include information about the reason for the disruption and its anticipated length, as well as information on available alternative services or facilities.

The notice will be placed at [list locations e.g. website, bulletin boards, etc.].

8. ESTABLISHMENT OF ACCESSIBILITY PLANS AND POLICIES

_____ shall produce a multi-year Accessibility Plan. The plan will be posted on its website and shall be made available in an accessible format and with communication supports, upon request.

Progress on the plan will be provided annually. The Accessibility Plan shall be reviewed and, if necessary, updated at least once every five (5) years.

_____ maintains policies governing how it shall meet its requirements under the AODA, and _____ will provide policies in an accessible format, upon request.

9. ACCESSIBLE FORMATS AND COMMUNICATION SUPPORT

Except as otherwise provided by the AODA, _____ shall, upon request, and in consultation with the person making the request, provide or make arrangements to provide accessible formats and communication supports for persons with disabilities. Accessible formats and communication supports shall be provided in a timely manner, taking into account the person's accessibility needs and at a cost that is no more than the regular cost charged to other persons, in accordance with the Accessible Formats and Communication Supports Procedures.

This does not apply to products and product labels, unconvertible information or communications and information that [organization name] does not control directly or indirectly through a contractual relationship. If it is determined that information or communications are unconvertible, the department shall provide the person requesting the information or communication with:

- An **explanation** as to why the information or communications are unconvertable;
- A **summary** of the unconvertible information or communications.

Upon an employee's request, _____ shall consult with the employee to provide or arrange for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports for:

- Information that is needed in order to perform the employee's job; and
- Information that is generally available to employees in the workplace.

_____ will consult with the employee making the request in determining the suitability of an accessible format or communication support.

10. EMPLOYEE TRAINING

_____ will train employees who deal with the public or other third parties on the provision of accessible customer service to people with disabilities, as well as all individuals who participate in the development of policies, practices, and procedures governing customer service. This includes individuals in the following positions: [specify customer-oriented positions that you will train e.g. customer service and sales representatives, managers, etc.]

Training will be held [specify frequency of training and whether it will be provided as part of the onboarding process for new hires].

Employee training will include the following elements:

- An overview of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, and the requirements of the customer service standard
- _____'s accessible customer service plan
- How to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities
- How to interact with people with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or a support person
- How to use on-site equipment and devices, including [list specific equipment/devices] to provide accessible customer service for people with disabilities
- What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing _____'s goods and services

Training will also be provided following any changes to the accessible customer service plan.

11. RECRUITMENT

_____ shall post information about the availability of accommodations for applicants with disabilities in its recruitment process. Job applicants who are individually selected for an interview and/or testing shall be notified that accommodations for material to be used in the process are available, upon request.

_____ shall consult with any applicant who requests an accommodation in a manner that takes into account the applicant's disability. Successful applicants shall be notified about _____'s policies for accommodating employees with disabilities as part of their offer of employment

12. EMPLOYEE SUPPORTS

_____ will inform employees of the policies used to support employees with disabilities, including policies on the provision of job accommodations that take into account an employee's accessibility needs due to disability.

_____ will provide this information to new employees as soon as practicable after they begin their employment and provide updated information to all employees whenever there is a change to existing policies on the provision of job accommodations that take into account an employee's accessibility needs due to disability.

13. WORKPLACE EMERGENCY RESPONSE INFORMATION

If an employee's disability is such that workplace emergency response information is necessary and _____ is aware of the need for accommodation, this information shall be provided to employees. In addition, this information shall be provided, with the employee's consent, to the person designated to provide assistance. The information shall undergo review when the employee moves to a different location, when the employee's overall accommodation needs or plans are reviewed and when _____ reviews its general emergency response plan.

14. DOCUMENTED INDIVIDUAL ACCOMMODATION PLAN

A written process for the development and maintenance of documented individual accommodation plans shall be developed for employees with disabilities. If requested, these plans shall include information regarding accessible formats and communications supports. If requested, the plans shall include individualized workplace emergency response information.

15. RETURN TO WORK PROCESS

_____ shall have in place a documented return to work process for employees returning to work due to disability and requiring disability-related accommodations. This return to work process shall outline the steps that _____ shall take to facilitate the return to work.

16. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT & REDEPLOYMENT

_____ shall take into account the accessibility needs of its employees with disabilities as well as any individual accommodation plans when providing career development, performance management and when considering redeployment.

17. FEEDBACK PROCESS

We welcome customer feedback on our efforts to ensure accessible customer service to people with disabilities. We invite customers to speak to [any of our employees or managers] or to contact us by [insert communication methods, e.g. email, telephone, suggestion box, feedback card, etc.].

All customer feedback will be reviewed by [specify job title of person responsible for reviewing feedback] and replies will be provided within [specify number of days].

Additionally, any complaints related to the provision of customer service for people with disabilities can be addressed by [speaking to a manager, or provide other details of complaint procedures].

18. POLICY MODIFICATIONS AND/OR REVIEW

_____ will modify or repeal any policy that is inconsistent with the principles set out in AODA or the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service.