



ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS FOR CUSTOMER SERVICE

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

**Corporation of the
Town of Orangeville**
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Definitions

Accessibility Coordinator – shall mean the staff liaison for the Accessibility Committee.

Assistive Devices – shall mean an auxiliary aid such as communication aids, cognition aids, personal mobility aids and medical aids (i.e. canes, crutches, wheelchairs, or hearing aids).

Contractors and Third Parties – shall mean any contractor, agent, volunteer or otherwise, who provide customer service and/or develop policies and procedures on behalf of the Town of Orangeville.

Disabilities – shall mean the same definition of disability as found in the Ontario Human Rights Code.

Employee – shall mean individuals directly employed by the Town of Orangeville.

Persons with Disabilities – shall mean those individuals that have a disability as defined under the Ontario Human Rights Code.

Service Animal – shall mean any animal individually trained or required to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of a person with a disability. If the work of the service animal is not readily apparent, the person can provide a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that they require the animal for reasons relating to the disability.

Support Person – shall mean any person whether paid professional, volunteer, family member, or friend who accompanies a person with a disability in order to help with communications, personal care / medical needs, or with access to goods or services.

Town – shall mean the Corporation of the Town of Orangeville.

Background and Purpose

The Ontario Government is issuing five sets of standards under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) to achieve the vision of a barrier-free Ontario by 2025. The first set of standards is the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07, which came into force on January 1, 2008. By January 1, 2010, municipalities, being designated public sector organizations, must have policies, practices and procedures in place. Other providers of goods and services are required to have their policies and procedures in place by January 1, 2012.

The purpose of the Customer Service Standards Policy is to fulfill the requirements set out in the regulation by establishing a policy for the Town to govern the provision of its goods or services by its employees, agents or volunteers to persons with disabilities. In general, the Town must deliver its services in a way that is in keeping with the key principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity.

The Town will strive to provide its services in a way that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities and is committed to giving persons with disabilities the same opportunity to access its goods and services, as well as allowing them to benefit from the same services, in the same place and in a similar way as other customers.

Best Practices and Procedures

Accessible Customer Service provided by Town employees will follow four basic principles, which are defined as follows:

- Dignity – persons with disabilities will be treated the same as any other customer and are as deserving of effective and full service as any other customer. Persons with disabilities will not be treated as an afterthought or forced to accept lesser service, quality or convenience. Service delivery will take into account how people with disabilities can effectively access and use services and show respect for these methods.
- Independence – in some instances, independence means freedom from control or influence of others – freedom to make your own choices. In other situations, it may mean the freedom to do things in your own way. People who may move or speak more slowly should not be denied an opportunity to participate in a

program or service because of this factor. A staff person should not hurry them or take over a task for them if they prefer to do it themselves in their own way.

- Integration - integrated services are those that allow persons with disabilities to fully benefit from the same services, in the same place and in the same or similar way as other customers. Integration means that policies and procedures are designed to be accessible to everyone, including persons with disabilities. Sometimes integration does not serve the needs of all people with disabilities. In these cases, it is necessary to use alternate measures to provide goods or services.
- Equal Opportunity – equal opportunity means having the same chances, options, benefits and results as others. In the case of services, it means that people with disabilities have the same opportunity to benefit from the way the Town provides goods or services to others. Persons with disabilities should not have to make significantly more effort to access or obtain a service and they should also not have to accept lesser quality or more inconvenience.

Sometimes this may mean that the Town treat individuals slightly different so that they can benefit fully from its services. Equal opportunity can best be reached by taking steps to ensure that individual needs are taken into account when providing goods or services. Individuals do not have equal opportunity if they cannot have full benefit from the Town's goods or services because of barriers to their access or participation.

Sometimes the principles need to be balanced in order to achieve the outcome that meets the needs of the person with a disability.

Establishment of Policies, Practices and Procedures

The Town shall use reasonable efforts to ensure that its policies, practices and procedures are consistent with the four basic principles listed above.

- The goods or services must be provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.
- The provision of goods or services to persons with disabilities and others must be integrated unless an alternative measure is necessary, whether temporarily or on

a permanent basis, to enable a person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the goods or services.

- Persons with disabilities must be given an opportunity equal to that given to others to obtain, use and benefit from the goods or services.
- Persons with disabilities may use assistive devices and/or support persons in the access of the Town's goods and services.
- When communicating with a person with a disability, Town employees shall do so in a manner that takes into account the person's disability.

This policy shall apply to all persons who deal with members of the public or contractors and third parties on behalf of the Town, whether the person does so as an employee, agent, volunteer or otherwise.

Exclusions

The Accessibility Standards for Customer Service policy shall not apply during any period where Council has declared a "State of Emergency" as defined under the *Emergency Management Act*. Policies of the County of Dufferin's Emergency Plan would apply.

Feedback Process

Feedback from our customers gives the Town opportunities to learn and improve. The Town recognizes and encourages our customers to provide us with feedback, either in the form of a complaint, compliment or to make suggestions on ways to improve its services.

To assist the Town in ensuring that the delivery of its goods and services to those with disabilities is provided in an effective and timely manner, the customer is invited to provide the Town with their feedback.

Let us know how we can improve or enhance our accessible customer service. An Accessible Customer Service Feedback form will be available on the Town's website www.orangeville.ca .

Feedback can also be forwarded in writing, in person, email or telephone, addressed to:

Accessibility Coordinator
c/o Building and By-law Enforcement Department
87 Broadway, Orangeville, ON L9W 1K1
Phone: 519-941-0440 x228
Fax: 519-941-2979
Email: vdouglas@orangeville.ca

The Accessibility Committee Coordinator will respond either in writing, in person, email or by telephone, acknowledging receipt of feedback and will set out the action to be taken in response to any comments.

Service Animal

If a person with a disability is accompanied by a guide dog or other service animal, the Town shall ensure that the person is permitted to enter the premises with the animal and to keep the animal with him or her unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law from the premises.

If a service animal is excluded by law from the premises, the Town shall ensure that other measures are available to enable the person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the Town's goods or services.

If a service animal is unruly or disruptive (i.e. jumping on people or exhibiting harmful behavior) an employee may ask the person with a disability to remove the animal from the area in order to continue their access to goods or services. Other reasonable arrangements to provide goods or services shall be explored with the assistance of the person with a disability.

Support Persons

If a person with a disability is accompanied by a support person, the Town shall ensure that both persons are permitted to enter the premises together and that the person with a disability is not prevented from having access to the support person while on the premises.

The Town may require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person when on the premises, but only if a support person is necessary to protect the health or safety of the person with a disability or the health or safety of others on the premises.

There will be no fee charged to care providers who access Town facilities and other Town services while they are attending with a disabled person who require their assistance.

In the event that admission fees are charged, advance notice concerning what admission, if any, would be charged to a support person shall be posted in a conspicuous place.

Personal Assist Devices

The Town permits persons with a disability to use and keep with them their own personal assistive devices to obtain, use or benefit from the goods or services offered by the Town.

If for some reason the use of the personal assistive device could cause harm or injury to the person with a disability while attempting to access our goods or services, then other reasonable arrangements to provide the goods or service shall be explored with the assistance of the person with a disability.

Appropriate staff will be trained and knowledgeable of the presence and use of Town owned assistive devices within their working department. Staff will be available to assist with the assistive devices, if requested, for use by an individual.

Notice of Service Disruptions

Notice of Service Disruptions must be provided when facilities or services that persons with disabilities may use to access the Town's goods or services are temporarily unavailable or if the goods or services are expected, in the near future, to be temporarily unavailable.

For example, persons with disabilities may often go to a lot of trouble to access services, such as arranging for transportation or relying on the use of an elevator to access another floor. Providing notice can save that person an unnecessary trip.

The Notice of Service Disruption will include the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration and a description of alternative facilities or services, if any, that are available.

Notice of Service Disruptions will be provided to the public on the Town's website www.orangeville.ca, by posting the information in a conspicuous place at the location of the disruption, or by such other method as is reasonable in the circumstances.

In the event of an unexpected disruption in service, notice will be provided as soon as possible and alternative methods of service may be considered, if any, and those impacted by the disruption in service shall be informed of any alternative methods.

Training

The Town shall ensure that the following persons receive training about the provision of the Town's goods or services to persons with disabilities:

- Every person who deals with members of the public or other contractors and third parties on behalf of the Town, whether the person does so as an employee, agent, volunteer or otherwise.
- Every person who participates in developing the Town's policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of goods or services to members of the public or other third parties.

The training will include, but is not limited to the following:

- Review the purpose of the AODA and requirements of the customer service standards.

- How to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disabilities.
- 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.
- How to use equipment or devices available on the Town's premises or otherwise provided by the Town, that may help with the provision of goods or services to a person with a disability (i.e. TTY telephones, elevators, lifts, listening devices or other technology).
- What to do if a person with a particular type of disability is having difficulty accessing the Town's goods or services.

All current employees must receive training that complies with the above guidelines.

Contractors and third parties who provide customer service and/or develop policies and procedures on behalf of the Town must provide proof of training on the customer service standard if required by the Regulation. This process will be confirmed and monitored through the Contractor Handbook, if required.

This training must be provided to all new employees as soon as practicable after he or she is assigned their applicable duties. The method and amount of training shall be geared to the trainee's role in terms of accessibility.

The Human Resources Department will coordinate training and will maintain records that include who the training has been provided to and the dates when the training was completed.

Town employees and contractors and third parties will be provided with a handout, "Guidelines to Providing Accessible Customer Service - "May I Help You?", which sets out the standards for providing goods and services to customers with disabilities.

Training will be provided on an ongoing basis in connection with changes to the policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of goods or services to persons with disabilities.

Notice of Availability of Documents

A copy of the policies and procedures required under Ontario Regulation 429/07 – Accessibility Standards for Customer Service will be provided to any person. The Town's Accessibility Standards for Customer Service will be available on its website.

Format of Documents

If a request is made to the Town to provide a copy of a document to a person with a disability, the Town shall provide to that person the document, or the information contained in the document, in a format that takes into account the person's disability.

The Town and the person with a disability may agree upon the format to be used for the document or information.