

**SECTION:** ACCESSIBILITY FOR ONTARIANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT **INDEX I.D.:** K-15

**SUBJECT:** ACCESSIBLE CUSTOMER SERVICE (CUSTOMER SERVICE ACCESSIBILITY AND INTEGRATED ACCESSIBILITY) **PAGE:** 1 of 6

**ORIGINAL DATE:** December 19, 2012

**APPROVED BY:**

**REVIEWED DATE:** September 1, 2023

**STANDARD:**

The Home is committed to respecting the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities, including Residents, Employees, visitors and other persons. We are also committed to providing people with disabilities the same opportunity to obtain, use and benefit from the goods, services and facilities that we make available to others.

In this regard, the Home will adhere to all aspects of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA), including the customer service accessibility standards set out in Regulation 429/07 and the amendments to the AODA, effective July 1, 2016.

All Employees are expected to adhere to this policy, failing which may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination, as well as other potential action.

**DEFINITIONS:**

For the purposes of this policy, the Home adopts the definitions set out in the AODA and Regulation 429/07, including the following:

**“Disability”**, means:

- (a) 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 impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device,
- (b) a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability,
- (c) a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,
- (d) a mental disorder, or

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(e) an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997*;

**“Service Animal”**, means:

An animal that is used by a person for reasons relating to his or her disability, in cases that are either readily apparent or confirmed by a letter from a regulated health professional.

**“Support Person”**, means:

a person that accompanies a person with a disability in order to assist him or her with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs or with access to goods, services and facilities..

## **PROCEDURE:**

### **A. COMMUNICATION**

1. We are committed to communicating with persons with disabilities in a respectful manner that takes into account their disability, thereby enabling them to access the goods, services and facilities provided by the Home.
2. We will communicate with persons with disabilities through a variety of formats, including large print materials, Easy English, graphic and written signage, telephone, e-mail and in person.
3. When preparing materials for distribution, we will consider the format of the material and its accessibility to the target audience. We will also provide information about events and services in a variety of formats.
4. On request, we will provide information in alternative formats, wherever possible.

### **B. ASSISTIVE DEVICES**

1. We are committed to supporting persons with disabilities to use assistive devices when necessary to access our goods and services.

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2. If a person with a disability is not able to access goods, services or facilities using an assistive device, we will take all reasonable steps to assist the person in accessing the goods, services or facilities, including the identification of alternative means to access the goods, services or facilities.

### **C. USE OF SERVICE ANIMALS AND SUPPORT PERSONS**

1. We are committed to welcoming persons with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal. Accommodation will be made for service animals, taking into consideration the safety of others and any applicable laws that exclude service animals. If a service animal is excluded by a law, we will put in place other measures to ensure that the person with a disability is able to access our goods, services and facilities. Note: If you cannot easily identify that the animal is a service animal you can ask the person to provide documentation from a regulated health professional including: psychologist, psychotherapist, audiologist, speech-language pathologist, chiropractor, nurse, occupational therapist, physician, optometrist, registered psychotherapist and mental health therapist.
2. We are committed to welcoming persons with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person. The person with a disability and the support person will be permitted to enter the premises together and the person with the disability will not be prevented from having access to the support person while on the premises. In certain limited instances, we may require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person when on the premises, but only if the support person is needed to protect the health and safety of the person with the disability or others on the premises. Note: In cases where the Home requires a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person for health or safety reasons the Home will consult with the person with the disability to understand their needs; consider health and safety reasons based on available evidence; determine if there is no other way to protect the health and safety of the person or others on the premises; in this situation waive any fee that may exist for the support person.

### **D. TEMPORARY SERVICE DISRUPTIONS**

1. We are committed to making all reasonable efforts to provide notice of a planned or unexpected disruption in our goods, services or facilities. The notice of the disruption will:

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- a. include information about the reason for the disruption, including its anticipated duration and a description of alternative goods, services or facilities, if any, and
- b. be posted at a conspicuous place on the premises, including at the point of disruption, at the main entrance and the nearest accessible entrance to the service disruption, or communicated in alternative manner that is reasonable in the circumstances.

**E: TRAINING OF STAFF, ETC.**

1. We will ensure that the following persons receive training about our provision of goods services and facilities to persons with disabilities:
  - a) every person who deals with members of the public or third parties on behalf of the Home, including Employees, agents, volunteers, and/or contractors, etc., and
  - b) every person who participates in developing the policies, practices and procedures of the Home, governing the provision of goods, services or facilities to members of the public or other third parties.
2. The training will include:
  - a) a review of the purposes of the AODA,
  - b) a review of the customer service accessibility standards, as set out in Regulation 429/07,
  - c) how to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disabilities,
  - d) how to interact and communicate with persons who use an assistive device, or who require the assistance of a service animal or a support person,
  - e) how to use equipment or devices available on the premises or otherwise provided by the Home, that may help with the provision of goods, services or facilities to a person with a disability,
  - f) what to do if a person with a particular disability is having difficulty accessing the goods, services or facilities provided by the Home, and
  - g) this policy, as well as other Home policies and procedures relating to accessible customer service standards.
3. Training will be provided to Employees at orientation, as well as on an ongoing basis, on at least an annual basis, including any changes made in respect to this policy.

**F. RECORDKEEPING**

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1. We are committed to keeping records that document our implementation of the AODA accessible customer service standards, including the dates training was provided and the number of employees who attended the training, and
2. We will maintain accurate records of training provided with respect to the AODA accessible customer service standards, as described above.

### **G. FEEDBACK**

1. We are committed to seeking and responding to feedback on the provision of our goods, services and facilities to persons with disabilities. The feedback process will be made accessible to persons with disabilities by providing or arranging for accessible formats and communication supports, on request.
2. We welcome feedback as it encourages continuous improvement in our goods, services and facilities and gives us opportunities to improve our performance.
3. Feedback about the delivery of goods, services and facilities to persons with disabilities may be provided by completing the Client Services Response form; in person; or via e-mail, telephone, or otherwise.
4. We will ensure that we review all feedback provided and deliver a response within fourteen (14) days.

### **H. NOTICE and DOCUMENTATION of POLICIES, PRACTICES and PROCEDURES**

1. We will ensure that we notify all persons receiving goods and services or facilities from the Home that the documents required by Regulation 429/07 and amendments that came into effect in July 2016 are available upon request.
2. The above notice will be posted at a conspicuous place on the premises, or communicated in another manner that is reasonable in the circumstances.
3. The Home will submit an Accessibility Compliance Report in accordance with requirements of the AODA

### **OUTCOME:**

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This policy and its procedures address the accessibility requirements of Regulation 429/07 under the AODA including amendments effective July 1, 2016.

The Accessible Customer Service Policy is available to the public and is provided in accessible format or with communication support, on request.

**ADDITIONAL REFERENCES:**

1. *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, including Regulation 429/07: Accessibility Standards for Customer Service*
2. *Accessibility Standard for Customer Service: Getting Started Guide for Employers* (Prepared by Government of Ontario)
3. Human Resources Manual, Code of Conduct and Business Ethics, Policy ID # E-10
4. Public Information Board/Kiosk
5. Accessible Customer Service Standard Changes, Quick Reference Guide ; [ontario.ca/accessibility](http://ontario.ca/accessibility)