

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)

Customer Service Standard

The Company is committed to the accessibility of our goods and service to all our customers. The purpose of this policy is to establish policies, practices, and procedures to ensure we are accessible to customers and others in accordance with the AODA, including Ontario Regulation 429/7 Accessibility Standards for Customer Service.

Definitions

Assistive Device: An assistive device is a technical aid, communication device, or other instrument that is used to maintain or improve the functional abilities of people with disabilities. Personal assistive devices are typically devices that customers bring with them such as a wheelchair, walker, or personal oxygen tank that might assist in hearing, seeing, communicating, moving, breath, remember, or reading.

Disability: Broadly defined, the term “disability” covers a range of visible and invisible conditions. These conditions may have been present from birth, caused by an accident, or developed over time. Disabilities include, but are not limited to blindness or visual impairment, deafness or hearing loss, speech impairment, physical or mobility disabilities, epilepsy, intellectual disabilities, learning disabilities, mental health challenges, or reliance on a mobility device or service animal.

Guide Dog: Highly trained animals that help provide mobility, safety, and increased independence for people with sight loss.

Service Animal: An animal that helps maintain independence for people with disabilities or conditions such as visual impairments, diabetes, epilepsy, autism, hearing disabilities, or physical disabilities.

Service Dog: A dog other than a guide dog that provides clearly provides an advantage to a person with a disability.

Support Person: A person that accompanies someone with a disability to help with communication, mobility, personal care, medical needs, or access to goods and services.

Procedures

Assistive Devices: Someone with a disability may use their own assistive devices as required to access goods or services at our locations of business. In cases where the assistive device presents a safety concern or where accessibility might be an issue, other reasonable measures will be used to ensure the access of goods or services. No team member will reach for or touch a person’s assistive device without getting permission from that person. This includes moving a walker out of the way or pushing someone’s wheelchair.

Service Animals: A person accompanied by their service animal, including a guide dog, will be allowed to access any places that are open to the public at any of facilities. Team members should be aware that these animals are working and will not interact with the service animal. Interacting with or distracting a service animal while it is working can pose a risk to the person they are assisting. A team member can provide water to a service animal with the permission of its handler.

Support Persons: If a client or visitor with a disability is accompanied by a support person, we will ensure that both persons can enter the premises together and that the client has full access to the support person. In a situation where confidential information might be discussed, team members will first consult with the client to determine if they would like the support person present. Team members will always speak directly to the client and not interact with them through the support person.

Communication: Team members will communicate with a person with a disability in a manner that considers their disability. This may include communicating through writing, in a well-lit or quiet area, or using an interpreter. When an interpreter is used, team members will address the client directly. Always ask the person with a disability what method of communication works best for them and follow their requests and recommendations.

Training

Training will be provided to all team members as soon as it is practical to do so upon hire and on an ongoing basis as changes occur to any of our policies, practices, and procedures or the AODA. Records of training will be kept for each employee indicating the date and training provided. This training will include:

- a review of the purpose of the AODA
- a review of the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service (Regulation 429/07)
- How to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities
- How to interact with people with disabilities who use assistive devices, service animals, or support persons
- What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing any of our goods or services
- Our policies, procedures, and practices pertaining to the provision of goods or services to people with disabilities