

POLICY:

The Organization is committed to meeting the needs of individuals living with disabilities in a timely manner, and will do so by preventing and removing barriers to accessibility and meeting the requirements under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), 2005. We are committed to providing equal treatment to people with disabilities with respect to the services, programs, goods and facilities, in a manner that respects their dignity and independence.

PROCEDURE:

The Executive Director/ Administrator / General Manager/ or Head Office designate will:

1. Identify and remove barriers to access for people with disabilities.
2. Provide assistive devices where reasonable and necessary.
3. Communicate with persons with disabilities in a manner that takes into account the person's disability.
4. Welcome persons with disabilities who are accompanied by a *service animal* to the Home/residence, office or building to which the public has such access to and the animal is not otherwise excluded by law or for health and safety reasons.
5. Permit *support persons* to accompany visitors with disabilities to all areas that are open to the public. Where there are admission fees for an event organized by the Organization, persons with disabilities shall be expected to pay the same fee as other attendees. No admission fee shall be charged to their support person.
6. Permit the use of *personal assistive devices* or technologies in an unrestricted manner in all areas of the Home/residence, office or building to which residents/clients, family members, vendors, customers, volunteers, students, independent operators, contractors, sub-contractors or employees have access, except when subject to operator or resident/client safety and/or business integrity.
7. Provide information on *Service Disruptions* to persons with disabilities who might be affected by the disruption and identify the reason for the disruption, its duration, and information about alternative services. Notice may be given by posting the information in a conspicuous place or by other means. Upon request, provide a copy of the information in an accessible format.
8. Train all existing and new employees, students, volunteers, independent operators, contractors or sub-contractors that provide facilities, goods or services on the Organization's behalf and any individual who is involved in the preparation of the Organization's policies and plans on the

requirements of the Customer Service Standard and Ontario Human Rights Code and Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulations as it relates to people with disabilities.

- i. Provide training as soon as practicable and maintain accurate training records of completion, including dates the training took place.
 - ii. Provide education to reflect any changes to practices, policies and/or procedures.
 - iii. Issue a written letter of training notification using the designated template to independent operators, contractors or sub-contractors regarding the completion of required training.
9. Welcome *Feedback* on the ways in which it provides its customer service to persons with disabilities. The feedback may be provided or received in person, by telephone, in writing or electronic text or on a diskette. Customers or members of the public can also be directed to complete our online feedback form on our website.
10. Investigate feedback that is in contradiction to the above requirements and determine if necessary, action(s) to be taken. In all cases, every effort will be made to respond to the feedback in a timely and effective manner.
11. 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 in a timely manner. Take into account the person's accessibility needs and at a cost that is no more than the regular cost charged to other persons. This does not apply to products and product labels, unconvertible information or communications and information that the Organization does not control directly or indirectly through a contractual relationship. If it is determined that the information or communications are unconvertible, provide the person requesting the information or communication with:
- a) An explanation as to why the information or communication is unconvertible.
 - b) A summary of the unconvertible information or communication.

Examples of accessible formats or communication supports: Giving a customer or members of the public who have low vision information in a large print or exchanging hand-written notes to communicate with a customer or members of the public who are deaf.

12. Provide all existing public emergency procedures, plans and public safety information, upon request in an accessible format or with appropriate communication supports in a timely manner to the persons with disabilities that take into account their disability.
13. Provide individualized workplace emergency response information to employees, volunteers, students, independent operators, contractors or sub-contractors who have disabilities if aware of the need for accommodation and if the nature of the disability is such that individualized information is necessary. The Individualized *Workplace Emergency Response Plan form* shall be

utilized. With consent, share this information with anyone designated to help them in an emergency:

- (a) When an individual moves to a different location in the Organization;
- (b) When the individual's overall accommodations, needs or plans are reviewed; and
- (c) When the employer reviews its general emergency response policies.

Employees, volunteers, students, independent operators, contractors and sub-contractors will utilize any of the following principles as required:

1. Identify, remove or report barriers to access for people with disabilities.
2. Ask a person with a disability how to best help and communicate with them.
3. Respect the dignity of persons with disabilities.
4. Speak directly to the customer, not the intervener or support person accompanying the person with the disability.
 - **People with hearing loss:** Attract the customer's attention before speaking; ensure you are in a well-lit area where the customer can see your face and read your lips; reduce background noise or move to a quieter area; ask if another method of communicating would be easier (i.e. using a pen and paper).
 - **People with vision loss/impairment:** Do not assume the individual cannot see you; identify yourself when you approach your customer; ask if they would like you to read any printed material out loud to them; offer your elbow to guide them if needed, offer to expand print material.
 - **People with learning disabilities:** Provide information in a way that takes into account the customer's disability; be patient.
 - **People with speech or language impairments:** When possible ask questions that can be answered with "yes" or "no", do not interrupt or finish the customer's sentences, be patient.
 - **People with mental health disabilities:** Be calm and reassuring; ask them to tell you the best way to help.
 - **People with intellectual/developmental disabilities:** Use plain language; provide one piece of information at a time.
5. When interacting with people using personal assistive devices, such as wheelchairs, walkers hearing aids, canes or speech amplification devices, do not move assistive devices or equipment out of the customer's reach or handle assistive devices without permission.

6. Avoid touching or addressing service animals, as they are working animals who have to pay attention at all times. Employees that are unsure if the animal is a pet or service animal should ask the customer.
7. Where people with disabilities are accompanied by a support person (i.e. personal support worker, volunteer, family member or friend) take your lead from the customer or the person requiring your services.
8. Notify his/her Manager or designate about all accessibility requests for public emergency procedures, plans, public safety information, accessible formats and communication supports for persons with disabilities in a timely manner.
9. Request individualized workplace emergency response accommodations to his/her Manager or designate where required including when moving to different locations within the Organization.

The Organization will:

1. Establish, implement and maintain a multi-year accessibility plan. The multi-year accessibility plan will describe the specific short-term and long-term actions that the Organization will take to meet the obligations set out under the AODA and its regulations. The Accessibility Plan shall be reviewed and, if necessary, updated at least once every five (5) years.
2. Make internet websites and web content controlled directly by the Organization or through a contractual relationship that allows for modification of the product, shall conform with World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level A initially and Level AA in accordance with the schedule set out in the AODA Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulations.
3. Comply with the Built Environment Standards when undertaking new construction and redevelopment of public spaces.
4. Consider what accessibility features could be built into kiosks to best meet the needs of people with disabilities.
5. File an accessibility compliance report every three (3) years. Make the report available to the public and upon request in an accessible format.
6. Ensure documents that detail the Organization's accessibility policies and procedures will be made available upon request. The Organization will make every effort to make the information available to persons with disabilities in a format that takes into account their disability.