

2-3 PERSONNEL

2-3-25 ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS FOR CUSTOMER SERVICE POLICY

1. DEFINITIONS

- a) **ASSISTIVE DEVICE:** A device used to assist persons with disabilities in carrying out activities or in accessing the services of persons or organizations covered by the customer service standard.

- b) **DISABILITY:**
 - i. 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;

 - ii. a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability;

 - iii. a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language;

 - iv. a mental disorder, or

 - v. An injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997*; ("handicap").

- c) **GUIDE DOG:** A dog trained as a guide for a blind person and having qualifications prescribed by the regulations under the *Blind Persons' Act*.

- d) **SERVICE ANIMAL:** Any animal used by a person with a disability for reasons relating to the disability where it is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to his or her disability; or where the person provides a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that he or she requires the animal for reasons relating to his or her disability; or a valid identification card signed by the Attorney General of Canada or a certificate of training from a recognized guide dog or service animal training school.

- e) **SUPPORT PERSON:** A person who accompanies a person with a disability in order to assist him/her with communication, mobility, personal care, or medical needs or with access to good or services.

2. PURPOSE BACKGROUND

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) was passed by the Ontario legislature with the goal of creating standards to improve accessibility across the province. The Act applies to the private and public sector organizations and mandates the development, implementation and enforcement of common and sector specific standards to achieve accessibility for persons with disabilities with respect to goods, services, facilities, accommodation, employment, buildings, structures and premises.

Under the AODA, Regulation 429/07 entitled "Accessibility Standards for Customer Service" came into force on January 1, 2008. The Regulation establishes accessibility standards specific to customer service for public sector organizations and other persons or organizations that provide goods and services to members of the public or third parties.

This policy is drafted in accordance with Accessibility Standards for Customer Service (Ontario Regulation 429/07) and addresses the following.

- The provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities;
- Communication with a person with a disability;
- The use of assistive devices by persons with disabilities;
- The use of service animals by persons with disabilities;
- The use of support persons by persons with disabilities;
- Notice of temporary disruptions in service and facilities;
- Training;
- Customer feedback regarding the provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities;
- Notice of availability and format of documents

3. POLICY STATEMENT

The Corporation of the Town of Cobourg is committed to providing quality goods and services that are accessible to all persons that we serve and in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.

4. APPLICATION

This policy applies to all persons who deal with members of the public or third parties on behalf of the town, whether the person does so as an employee, member of Council, volunteer, student placement or otherwise and all persons who participate in developing the Town's policies, practices, and procedures governing the provision of goods and services to member of the public and third parties.

5. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

a) Provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities;

The Town of Cobourg will use reasonable efforts to ensure that its policies, practices and procedures are consistent with the following principles:

- i. The Town's goods and services will be provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities;
- ii. The provision of the Town's goods and services to persons with disabilities are integrated with those provided to persons who do not have disabilities unless an alternative measure is necessary to enable a person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the Town's good and services;
- iii. Persons with disabilities are given an opportunity equal to that of persons without disabilities to obtain, use or benefit from the Town's good and services.

b) Communication with a person with a disability

- i. When communicating with a person with a disability, the Town will do so in a manner that takes into account the person's disability.

c) Use of assistive devices by persons with disabilities

- i. A person with a disability may provide their own assistive devices for the purpose of obtaining, using or benefiting from the Town's good and services. Exceptions may occur in situations where the Town has determined that the assistive device may pose a risk to the health and safety of a person with a disability or the health and safety of other persons on premises

In these situations and others the Town may offer a person with a disability other reasonable measures to assist him or her in obtaining, using and benefiting from the Town's goods and services, where the Town has such measures available.

- ii. It is the responsibility of the person with a disability to ensure that their assistive device is operated in a controlled and safe manner at all times.

d) Service Animals

- i. A person with a disability is permitted to enter premises owned and operated by the Town accompanied by a service animal and keep the animal with them if the public has access to such premises and the animal is not excluded by law. If the animal is excluded by the Law the Town will ensure that alternative means are available to enable a person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the Town's goods and services.
- ii. If it is not readily apparent that the animal is a service animal, the Town may ask the person with a disability to provide a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person

requires the animal for reasons related to his or her disability. The Town may also, or instead, ask for a valid identification card signed by the Attorney General of Canada, or a certificate of training from a recognized dog or service animal training school.

- iii. It is the responsibility of the person with a disability to ensure that his or her service animal is kept under control at all times.

e) Support Persons

- i. A person with a disability is permitted enter premises owned or operated by the Town accompanied by a support person and have access to that support person while on premises.
- ii. Where admission fees are charged the Town will provide advanced notice concerning what admission, if any, would be charged with respect to the support person.

f) Notice of temporary disruption in services or facilities

- i. The Town will provide notice when accessibility to service or facilities for persons with disabilities is temporarily disrupted. The Town will make a reasonable effort to provide prior notice of planned disruption if possible.
- ii. When temporary disruptions occur to the Town's services or facilities the Town will provide notice, where possible, by posting information in visible places or on the Town website, or by another reasonable method.

g) Training

The Town will ensure that all persons to whom this policy applies including, but not limited to, customer service staff, volunteers and the persons responsible for developing the Town's customer service policies, practices and procedures receives training as required by the Accessibilities Standards for Customer Service Act.

- i. Training Time Line: Training will be provided as soon as practical upon an individual being assigned customer service duties as well on a on-going basis as changes occur to the Town's policies, procedures and practices regarding the provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities.
- ii. Record of Training: The Town will keep a record of Accessibility training that is conducted, that will include the name of the employee who participated in the training as well as the date that the training was conducted for administrative purposes, subject the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA)*.

iii. Training Content: All persons whom this policy applies will receive training as required by the Accessibilities Standards for Customer Service Act provided by the Town of Cobourg.

iv. Training will include:

- Review of the purpose of AODA
- The requirements of Accessibility Standards for Customer Service (Ontario Regulation 429/07)
- How to interact and communicate with a person with various types of disabilities
- What to do if a person with a particular disability is having difficulty accessing the Town's goods or services
- How to interact with persons with disabilities who have service animals, support persons or other assistive devices

h) Customer Feedback:

Feedback from a member of the public regarding the delivery goods to and services to persons with disabilities may be given by telephone, in person, in writing, by email or through other appropriate methods.

6. AVAILABILITY AND FORMAT OF DOCUMENTS REQUIRED BY THE ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS FOR CUSTOMER SERVICE (ONTARIO REGULATION 429/07)

All documents required by the Accessibility Standard for Customer Service including the Town's Accessible Customer Service policies, procedures and practices, notices of temporary disruptions, training records, and customer feedback procedures are available upon request, subject to MFIPPA.

When providing documentation to a person with a disability, the Town will provide the document, or the information contained in the document, in a format that takes a person's disability into account and in accordance with the Municipal Freedom of Information and Privacy and Protection Act.

7. NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY OF DOCUMENTS

Notice of availability of all documents, as required by the Accessibility Standard for Customer Service, will be posted on the Town's website and will be available through the Municipal Clerk's Office.