



Corporation of the
Town of Hawkesbury

Policy N° :	DG-P-2009-01
Object :	Customer services
Service :	All

SUBJECT

Policy on customer services as per the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA).

SUMMARY

The standard for customer services that took effect on January 1, 2008 is the first standard developed under the AODA.

The public sector organizations in Ontario are now legally required to take certain actions to become accessible to persons with limitations. They must comply with the standards by January 1, 2010, and file a report in 2010.

1. SCOPE

- a. This policy applies to all departments, divisions or sections within the Corporation of the Town of Hawkesbury;
- b. Applies to all employees, whether unionized or non-unionized;
- c. Applies to all volunteers who interact with the public on behalf of the Corporation of the Town of Hawkesbury.

2. PURPOSE

Provide goods and services to people living with a limitation and adapt services as necessary to satisfy the requirements of the accessibility standards for customer service, Ontario Regulation 429/07.

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- a. The Corporation of the Town of Hawkesbury is committed to being attentive to the needs of its residents and visitors. To do this, it must recognize the different needs of its residents and visitors by trying to provide available services and facilities.
- b. The Corporation of the Town of Hawkesbury will promote accessibility through the development of policies, procedures and practices and ensure that it takes into consideration people living with limitations. To do this, it will make reasonable efforts to ensure that its policies, procedures and practices address the integration, independence, dignity and equality.
- c. The Corporation of the Town of Hawkesbury is committed to communicating with a person with a functional limitation in a manner which takes into consideration his/her limitation.
- d. The Corporation of the Town of Hawkesbury is committed to training its staff and anyone else involved in the development of its policies, practices and procedures relating to the provision of its goods or services.
- e. The Corporation of the Town of Hawkesbury is committed, whenever possible, to give people living with a limitation the same opportunities as other customers to its goods and services and enable them to benefit the same services, at the same location and in a similar way.
- f. The Corporation of the Town of Hawkesbury is committed to enabling people with limitation to be accompanied by their guide dog or service animal in places it occupies or open to the public, unless the animal is excluded from the site by another law. In such cases, it will take other measures to provide services to that person.

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- g. The Corporation of the Town of Hawkesbury is committed to enabling people living with a limitation, accompanied by a support person, to bring that person with them to services offered in public places.
- h. The Corporation of the Town of Hawkesbury is committed to provide an entrance fee, give notice in advance of the fee, if any, for the support person.

3. PRINCIPLES

Reasonable efforts will be undertaken to ensure that:

- a. The goods and services will be offered so that they respect the dignity and independence of people with limitations.
- b. The delivery of goods and services to people with limitations will be integrated, unless other measures are necessary, whether temporarily or permanently, to allow the person living with limitations to access, use or benefit from these goods and services.
- c. People living with limitations will be offered a chance to obtain, use or benefit from the goods and services.

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4. DEFINITIONS

a. Person living with limitations:

Under this policy a "limitation" is defined based on the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 as:

- i. any degree of physical limitation, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness, including diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, head injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, motor incoordination, blindness or visual impairment, deafness or hearing impairment, the muteness or impediment, or the need for a guide dog or other animal, to a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device;
- ii. an intellectual limitation or developmental disorder;
- iii. a learning limitation or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language;
- iv. a mental disorder;
- v. an injury or limitation for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997.

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b. A service animal:

Under this policy we define "service animal" as either:

- i. A "guide dog" as defined in the Blind Persons' Act or
- ii. A "service animal" for a person living with limitations.

Under this policy an animal is a service animal for a person living with limitations if:

- i. It is apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons related to his/her limitations, or
- ii. If the person provides a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person needs the animal for reasons related to his/her limitations.

c. Support person:

Under this policy, we define a "support person" as a person who accompanies a person living with limitations to help him/her communicate, move around, take care of personal or medical needs or to provide access to goods and services.

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5. PROCEDURES AND PRACTICES

- a. The departmental procedures and practices will try to achieve the following goals:
 - i. Communications will take into consideration people living with limitations.
 - ii. Staff and others who must interact with the public or who are involved in the development of policies, practices and procedures concerning the supply of goods and services for The Corporation of the Town of Hawkesbury receive adequate training.
 - iii. People living with limitations accompanied by a guide dog or service animal shall have access to all facilities owned or operated by The Corporation of the Town of Hawkesbury, which are normally accessible to the public.
 - iv. People living with limitations accompanied by a support person may be accompanied by such person in areas normally accessible to the public.
 - v. If admission fees are required for accessing a given location, The Corporation of the Town of Hawkesbury will ensure that a notice be issued as to the amount, if any, to be paid by the support person.
 - vi. A notice will be issued when a facility or service providing access to any services offered by The Corporation of the Town of Hawkesbury is temporarily interrupted.

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- vii. The Corporation of the Town of Hawkesbury recognizes that people living with limitations may decide to use their own means to obtain, use or benefit from services offered by The Corporation of the Town of Hawkesbury.

6. FEEDBACK PROCESS

- a. If a member of the public has a complaint concerning the accessibility of goods and services that were offer to him/her:
- i. He/she can inform The Corporation of the Town of Hawkesbury of his/her complaint by using one of the following:
- (a) Communicate with the Coordinator of the Accessibility Committee by mail at 600 Higginson Street, Hawkesbury ON K6A 1Y1.
- (b) Contact the department head responsible for providing the goods and services for which he/she wants to complain about.
- (c) Go to the office and meet the department head responsible for providing the goods and services for which he/she wish to complain.
- ii. A response will be given to all those who file a complaint about the accessibility of goods and services in the same manner as the complaint was received within 30 days.

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- iii. If it is considered expedient to do so, a complaint issued about the accessibility of goods and services may be directed to the Accessibility Committee of The Corporation of the Town of Hawkesbury so recommendations may be made to remedy the situation.
- iv. If common grounds can not be reached between the complainant and the concerned department head, the situation will be directed to the Chief administrative officer.
- v. If the Chief administrative officer can not find a solution to the satisfaction of the complainant, the complainant may turn to the council of The Corporation of the Town of Hawkesbury, which will take a final decision.

7. INTERRUPTION OF SERVICE

- a. If, to obtain, use or benefit of goods and services offered by The Corporation of the Town of Hawkesbury, people with limitations must use a facility or a particular service (as example an elevator) and if a temporary interruption of these facilities or services in whole or in part is scheduled, The Corporation of the Town of Hawkesbury will notify the public of the interruption.
- b. A notice of interruption must include the reasons for the interruption, the approximate duration and description of alternative goods and services if they exist.

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- c. The notice will be posted in a conspicuous place in the premises belonging to the Corporation of the Town of Hawkesbury and on the website of The Corporation of the Town of Hawkesbury www.hawkesbury.ca
- d. If a temporary interruption of the website is scheduled, notices will be issued as soon as possible, taking in consideration the conditions listed in the "interruption of service" of this policy.
- e. In the case of an unplanned interruption, a notice will be issued as soon as possible as described in Section 7.

8. DOCUMENTS FORMAT

- a. If the Corporation of the Town of Hawkesbury must provide a copy of a document to a person living with limitations, The Corporation of the Town of Hawkesbury will provide, whenever possible, this document or the information it contains, in a format that takes into account the limitations of this individual.
- b. The material and publications produced by or on behalf of The Corporation of the Town of Hawkesbury must include mention that in the event of an inadequate format, assistance may be available upon request and include the information needed to contact The Corporation of the Town of Hawkesbury.
- c. The Corporation of the Town of Hawkesbury will consult, within twenty days, the person requesting assistance to

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determine whether the offered assistance is acceptable, in accordance with the terms of this policy.

- d. The time required to transfer the information depends on the chosen medium, size, complexity, quality of source material and the number of documents to be converted. Information will be provided as soon as possible taking into consideration the factors noted above.

9. TRAINING

The standard for customer services requires providers to train their staff on how to provide services to peoples living with limitations. This training must be given to all staff and all those involved in the development and approval of policies, practices and procedures relating to customer services.

Training is provided as soon as possible after staff is hired:

- a. The Corporation of the Town of Hawkesbury ensures that the following persons will receive training on policies, practices and procedures regarding the accessibility of goods and services for people with limitations:
 - i. Every person dealing with the public on behalf of The Corporation of the Town of Hawkesbury.
 - ii. Each person who participates in the development of policies, practices and procedures of The Corporation of the Town of Hawkesbury on accessibility of the public or third parties.

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- b. This training will include a summary of the goals of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, the requirements of this Act and the following topics:
 - i. How to interact and communicate with people with various types of limitation;
 - ii. How to interact with people living with a limitation who use assistive device or equipment, who need a guide dog or other service animal or support person;
 - iii. How to use equipment or devices that are in the provider's premises or that it provides otherwise and that could facilitate the provision of goods or services to a person with limitations;
 - iv. What to do if a person with a particular type of limitation have difficulty in accessing goods or services of the provider.

10. SUPPORT EQUIPMENT

- a. The Corporation of the Town of Hawkesbury recognizes that a person living with limitations may choose to use its own tools to obtain, use or benefit of goods and services offered by The Corporation of the Town of Hawkesbury.
- b. If a person living with limitations is unable to access goods and services offered by The Corporation of the Town of Hawkesbury on its own, The Corporation of the Town of Hawkesbury will take the following measures:

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- i. Determine if the supply of goods and services is inaccessible, based on the needs of the individual;
- ii. Assess various options to make the service accessible;
- iii. Inform the person living with the limitations of alternatives and how to access these alternatives, either temporarily or permanently.

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