

Accessibility Standards Policy

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Accessibility Standards Policy

Specifications

Related Policies: This policy is supported by the Human Rights Policy.

Related Laws: The policy is supported by the following laws: Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA), Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR), Ontario Building Code, et Ontario Human Rights Code.

Scope

This policy applies to all departments, divisions or sections within the Corporation of the Town of Hawkesbury:

- Applies to all employees, whether unionized or non-unionized;
- Applies to all volunteers who interact with the public on behalf of the Corporation of the Town of Hawkesbury, with the exception of sections on the subject of employment, for which this policy does not apply to volunteers or other individuals who are not paid.

Policy Statement

The Town of Hawkesbury, also referred to in this policy as the “Town,” provides accessible employment in accordance with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA) and its associated regulations. This policy sets out the Town’s commitment to standards for accessibility across employment, customer service, transportation, information and communications, and the design of public spaces. As a Town, we respect and comply with the requirements of the AODA and its

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associated regulations. We strive to provide an accessible and welcoming environment for everyone by identifying and removing barriers in our workplace and ensuring that new barriers are not created. The Town ensures that persons with disabilities are provided with equal opportunities. We are committed to meeting the needs of individuals with disabilities in a timely and integrative manner that respects their dignity and independence.

Policy Communication

The policy will be posted on the Town's website. Staff will be informed of the new policy through distribution to the Town's management team.

Definitions

Accessible format: Includes but not limited to large print, recorded audio and electronic formats, braille, and other formats usable by persons with disabilities.

Communication support: Includes but not limited to captioning, alternative and augmentative communication supports, plain language, sign language, and other supports that facilitate effective communication.

Guide dog: A dog trained as a guide for a blind person that has completed a training program at a designated training facility as set out in section 1 of the *Blind Persons' Rights Act*.

Person living with a disability: A "disability" is defined based on the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* as:

- (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 coordination, blindness or visual impediments, deafness or hearing impediments, 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
- (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*;

Redeployment: The reassignment of an employee to another department or job in the Town as an alternative to layoff when their job or department has been eliminated by the Town.

Service animal: For the purposes of this policy, an animal is a service animal for a person with a disability if:

- The animal can be readily identified as one that is being used by the person for reasons relating to the person's disability, as a result of visual indicators, such as the vest or harness worn by the animal; or
- The person provides documentation from a designated regulated health professional, confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability.

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Support person: In relation to a person with a disability, another person who accompanies them in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care, medical needs, or access to goods, services, and facilities

Guidelines

Accessible Employment

Hiring

Accommodations are available from the beginning of the recruitment process. Information regarding the availability of accommodations is included in all job postings. Applicants selected to participate in an assessment, or the selection process are informed that accommodations are available upon request. Where an accommodation is requested, the Town consults with the applicant and provides or arranges for suitable accommodation that meets their individual needs. Successful applicants are made aware of the Town's policies for accommodating employees with disabilities when an offer of employment is made.

Accessible Workplace Information

The Town of Hawkesbury ensures that new employees are aware of the policies and supports available for employees with disabilities as soon as reasonably possible after beginning employment and all employees are informed of any updates to existing policies. The Town also supports employees with disabilities with the Human Rights Policy.

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Upon request, the Town provides or arranges for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports for employees with disabilities regarding information needed to perform their job and other information that is generally available to all employees in the workplace. Individualized workplace emergency response information is also provided to an employee with a disability where necessary. An employee who requires workplace information in an accessible format or with communication supports should contact Human Resources. The Town consults the employee making the request to determine the best way to provide the accessible format or communication support.

Individual Accommodations

The Town of Hawkesbury creates, and documents individual accommodation plans for employees with disabilities upon request. An employee with a disability who requires an individual accommodation plan should inform Human Resources. These plans include:

- Information regarding accessible formats and communication supports, where requested;
- Individualized workplace emergency response information, where necessary; and
- Details of any other accommodation provided.

Where an employee is absent from work due to a disability and requires accommodation to return to work, the Town develops and documents individual return-to-work processes.

Performance Management and Career Development

The accessibility needs of employees with disabilities are considered in all aspects of the employment relationship, including during performance management processes,

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career development or advancement opportunities, and in the event of redeployment; Individual accommodation plans are consulted where they exist as part of this process.

Accessible Customer Service

The Town of Hawkesbury makes every reasonable effort to ensure that its policies, practices, and procedures are consistent with the principles of dignity, independence, integration, and equal opportunity by:

- Allowing customers with disabilities to do things in their own ways and at their own pace when accessing goods, services, and facilities, as long as this does not present a health and safety risk;
- Using alternative methods of access when necessary to ensure that customers with disabilities have access to the same goods, services, and facilities in a similar manner;
- Considering individual accommodation needs when providing goods and services; and
- Communicating in a manner that considers the customer's disability.

Upon request, the Town provides a person with a disability with a copy of this policy, or the information contained within it, in a format that meets their accessibility needs.

Requests should be directed to the Town's Clerk.

Persons with disabilities may use their own assistive devices as required when accessing goods or services or facilities. In cases where the assistive device presents a health and safety concern or where accessibility might be an issue, the Town's Clerk should be informed so that other reasonable measures can be put in place to ensure the access of goods and services.

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Guide Dogs and Service Animals

A customer with a disability who is accompanied by a guide dog or other service animal is welcome to access to premises that are open to the public and keep the animal with them unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law. “No pets,” policies do not apply to guide dogs or service animals. If a customer’s guide dog or service animal is excluded by law, the Town of Hawkesbury offers alternative methods to enable the person with a disability to access goods, services, and facilities.

If it is not readily apparent that the animal is a guide dog or service animal, employees may respectfully ask whether an animal is a guide dog or service animal but must not ask the nature of the person’s disability or purpose of the animal. If they reveal the animal is not a guide dog or service animal, they should be asked to remove the animal from the premises promptly.

The customer who is accompanied by a guide dog or service animal is responsible for always maintaining control of the animal. If a service animal becomes out of control, causing a clear disruption or a threat to the health and safety of others, and the animal’s behaviour is not corrected by the owner, employees should report this to their supervisor, or any other member of the Town’s senior management team, who may ask the customer to remove their service animal from the premises.

Support Persons

If a customer with a disability is accompanied by a support person, the Town of Hawkesbury will ensure that both persons may enter the premises together and that the customer is not prevented from having access to the support person. In situations where confidential information might be discussed, consent must be obtained from the customer before any potentially confidential information is mentioned in the presence of the support person.

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The Town may require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person while on the premises if the support person is required to protect the health and safety of the person with the disability or others in the workplace and there are no other reasonable measures that can be taken to ensure this. The Town consults with the person with the disability and assess available evidence before making such a decision. Employees are informed of any such arrangements.

Notice of Temporary Disruptions

The Town of Hawkesbury makes all reasonable efforts to provide notice of any temporary disruptions to facilities or services that customers with disabilities rely on to access or use goods or services. In some circumstances, the notice may not be possible.

When disruptions occur without notice, the Town informs customers by:

- Posting written notices in conspicuous places, including at the point of disruption and all entrances.
- Informing customers verbally upon arrival.
- Posting to social media
- Posting to our web site.
- By any other method that may be reasonable under the circumstances.

The following information is provided regarding the disruption unless it is not readily available or known:

- Goods or services that are disrupted or unavailable.
- Reason for the disruption.
- Expected duration; and
- A description of alternative services or options that are available.

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Employees are informed of this information as soon as reasonably possible in the event of a disruption so that they can inform customers and respond to inquiries.

Feedback Process

The Town of Hawkesbury has established a feedback process to provide the public with the opportunity to provide feedback on how goods, services, and facilities are provided to customers with disabilities. Feedback may be shared verbally (in person or by telephone) or in writing (handwritten, delivered, website, or e-mail). The Town of Hawkesbury ensures the feedback process is accessible by providing or arranging for accessible formats and communication supports. These are available upon request.

If a member of the public has a complaint concerning the accessibility of the goods and services that were offered to them:

1. They can inform The Corporation of the Town of Hawkesbury of their complaint by:
 - Communicating with the department Director responsible for providing the goods and services about which they want to submit a complaint
 - by mail posted to 600 Higginson Street, Hawkesbury ON K6A 1H1
 - by e-mail, addressed directly to department Director
 - by completing a request for information specific to the department in question, via the Town's website's contact page, or the Town's mobile application's request module
 - by telephone, 613 632-0106
 - by making an appointment to meet in-person with the department Director
 - Communicating with the Town Clerk
 - by mail posted to 600 Higginson Street, Hawkesbury ON K6A 1H1
 - by e-mail, addressed to infogreffe@hawkesbury.ca

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- by completing a request for information to the Clerk's Office, via the Town's website's contact page, or the Town's mobile application's request module
 - by telephone, 613 632-0106
 - by making an appointment to meet in-person with the Clerk at Town Hall
2. 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 (or via e-mail for complaints submitted via the Town's website or mobile application) within 30 days.
 3. If it is considered expedient to do so, a complaint issued about the accessibility of goods and services may be directed to the Clerk of the Town of Hawkesbury so recommendations can be made to remedy the situation.
 4. If common grounds cannot be reached between the complainant and the concerned department head, the situation will be directed to the Chief administrative officer.
 5. If the Chief administrative officer cannot 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.

Accessible Information and Communication

The Town of Hawkesbury strives to provide information and communications to all in a format or manner that meets their needs. The Town provides or arranges for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports for persons with disabilities upon request. This includes but is not limited to the feedback process and all publicly available safety and emergency information, such as evacuation procedures and floor

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plans. The Town also ensures that its website and web content meet the standards required by the *Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation* to enable accessible information and communications online.

The public is informed of the availability of accessible formats and communication supports by including a note on our website. Requests for accessible formats or communication supports should be submitted to the Town Clerk or Communications Coordinator. The Town consults with the individual making the request to ensure a suitable format or communication support is provided. Accessible formats and communication supports are provided in a timely manner and at a cost no more than the original format.

Exceptions

These standards do not apply to:

- Products and product labels.
- Unconvertible information or communications; or
- Information that the Town does not control through a contractual relationship.

Unconvertible Information or Communications

Information or communications are classified as unconvertible where it is not technically practicable to convert them, or the technology required to make the conversion is not readily available. If the Town of Hawkesbury determines that information or communications are unconvertible, the Town provides the individual who made the request with an explanation as to why and a summary of the information or communications.

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Emergency Preparedness and Response Practices

The Town of Hawkesbury establishes, implements, maintains, and documents emergency preparedness and response practices that account for the needs of individuals with disabilities who use its transportation services. These practices are made available to the public on the Town's website and provided in an accessible format upon request.

Taxicabs

Where appropriate, the Town of Hawkesbury will consult the municipal accessibility advisory committee, the public, and persons with disabilities to determine the proportion of on-demand accessible taxicabs required in the community.

All taxicabs licensed through the Town are prohibited from charging a higher fare or additional fee to persons with disabilities, including charges for the storage of mobility aids or assistive devices. These taxicabs must also ensure the vehicle identification and registration information is posted on the rear bumper of the taxicab, and all owners and operators must make this information available to persons with disabilities who are passengers in an accessible format that meet legislative standards.

Accessible Design of Public Spaces

Recreational Trails

The Town of Hawkesbury will consult with the public, persons with disabilities, and the municipal accessibility advisory committee (where required) for all newly constructed and redeveloped recreational trails and beach access routes maintained by the Town of Hawkesbury. Wilderness trails, backcountry and portage routes, and trails used solely for cross-country skiing, mountain biking, snow vehicles, off-road vehicles are excluded from these consultations. During these consultations on the slope of the trails, the need for and location of ramps, and the need for, location of, and design of rest areas,

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passing areas, viewing areas, amenities, and other pertinent features will be considered to ensure they meet legislative technical requirements, as well as the needs of the public and persons with disabilities.

Outdoor Public Eating Areas

Whenever the Town of Hawkesbury constructs or redevelops outdoor public eating areas, a minimum of 20 percent of tables will be accessible by people using mobility aids, and the ground around the table will be reasonably level and firm and will have sufficient ground clearance.

Outdoor Public Play Spaces

When constructing new or redeveloping existing outdoor play spaces maintained by the Town of Hawkesbury, accessibility features for children and caregivers with various disabilities will be incorporated into the design. The Town will also ensure the ground is firm and stable, paying special attention to impact-attenuating properties for injury prevention. Sufficient clearance to allow people with disabilities free movement throughout the outdoor play area will also be provided.

Where appropriate, the Town of Hawkesbury will consult the municipal accessibility advisory committee, the public, and people with disabilities.

Sidewalks and Pedestrian Walkways

All newly constructed or redeveloped non-recreational outdoor sidewalks and pedestrian walkways maintained by the Town of Hawkesbury will meet all accessibility requirements outlined in the *Integrated Accessible Standards Regulations* (IASR).

Where appropriate, the Town of Hawkesbury will consult the municipal accessibility advisory committee, the public, and persons with disabilities on the design and placement of rest areas along sidewalks and pedestrian walkways.

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Accessible Parking

The Town of Hawkesbury will ensure that any newly constructed or redeveloped off-street parking facilities provide standard parking spaces and wider parking spaces with signage identifying them as van accessible. Access aisles will be provided for all accessible parking spaces to ensure individuals can enter and exit their vehicles.

Accessible parking spaces will be designated for the use of people disabilities and will be marked with an accessible permit parking sign. The number and location of accessible parking spaces will be determined accordance with the IASR.

When constructing or redeveloping on-street parking, the Town of Hawkesbury will consult the municipal accessibility advisory committee, the public, and persons with disabilities to determine the need, location, and design of accessible on-street parking.

Obtaining Services

To ensure services are accessible to individuals who use mobility aids or mobility assistive devices, the Town of Hawkesbury will comply with the requirements set out in the IASR when:

- Constructing new service counters (including replacing them) and fixed queueing guides; and
- Constructing new or developing waiting areas.

Training

The Town of Hawkesbury provides accessibility-related training to all employees, volunteers, agents, and contractors. Retraining is provided in the event of changes to legislation, procedures, policies, or practices. Retraining is provided as soon as practicable to ensure compliance with the Town's policies and procedures. Employees

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may be required to attend additional accessibility-related training on a case-by-case basis.

For all accessibility-related training, the Town of Hawkesbury keeps a record that includes the dates training was provided and the number of employees who attended the training.

General Human Rights Training

All employees of the Town of Hawkesbury must participate in training on accessibility standards found in the *Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation* and the *Human Rights Code* that are appropriate for the duties they complete while at work.

Customer Service Training

Training is provided to employees, volunteers, those who participate in the development of municipal policies, and any other person who provides goods, services, or facilities on behalf of the Town.

Customer service training covers:

- A review of the purpose of the AODA.
- A review of the requirements of the customer service standards.
- Instructions on how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities.
- Instructions on how to interact with people with disabilities who use assistive devices or require the assistance of a guide dog or other service animal or a support person.
- Instructions on how to use equipment or devices that are available at the premises or that the Town of Hawkesbury provides that may help people with disabilities.

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- Instructions on what to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing municipal services; and
- Policies, procedures, and practices of the Town pertaining to providing accessible customer service to customers with disabilities.

Alternative format support

The Town shall, on request, provide this document, or the information contained in this document, to any person in an accessible format or with communication support ;

- in a timely manner that considers the person's accessibility needs due to disability; and
- at a cost that is no more than the regular cost charged to other persons.

The Town shall consult with the person making the request to determine the suitability of an accessible format or communication support.

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.

Requests for alternative formats or supports may be submitted to the Town verbally (in person or by telephone) or in writing (handwritten, delivered, website, or e-mail) as follows:

- Communicating with the department Director responsible for providing the goods and services about which they require an alternative format
 - by mail posted to 600 Higginson Street, Hawkesbury ON K6A 1H1
 - by e-mail, addressed directly to the department Director

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- by completing a request for information specific to the department in question, via the Town's website's contact page, or the Town's mobile application's request module
- by telephone, 613 632-0106
- by making an appointment to meet in-person with the department Director
- Communicating with the Town Clerk
 - by mail posted to 600 Higginson Street, Hawkesbury ON K6A 1H1
 - by e-mail, addressed to infogreffe@hawkesbury.ca
 - by completing a request for information to the Clerk's Office, via the Town's website's contact page, or the Town's mobile application's request module
 - by telephone, 613 632-0106
 - by making an appointment to meet in-person with the Clerk at Town Hall

Compliance

In the event of a policy violation, the Town can investigate and determine the appropriate corrective measures. The Town is committed to reviewing its policies in compliance with legislative requirements.