

Corporate Policy and Procedure



POLICY: PROVISION OF SERVICES TO PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

POLICY STATEMENT The City of Mississauga is committed to providing customer service to persons with disabilities in a manner that:

- respects their dignity and independence;
- is integrated as fully as practicable into the method of service delivery;
- ensures reasonable efforts are made to provide an opportunity equal to that given to other customers to obtain and use our goods and services; and
- allows persons with disabilities to benefit from the same services, in the same place, and in a similar way to other customers.

PURPOSE The purpose of this policy is to outline how the City of Mississauga is complying with the requirements of Ontario Regulation 429/07, the customer service standard for serving people with disabilities.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY *The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (the Act) and specifically the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429-07 (the Regulation) requires every provider of goods or services to establish policies, practices, and procedures governing the provision of its goods or services to persons with disabilities.

SCOPE This policy applies to the provision of goods or services to members of the public or other third parties by, or on behalf of, the City of Mississauga.

All staff or third parties who are responsible for delivering services to members of the public or other third parties are expected to comply with this policy.

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This policy does not address the provision of documents in alternative formats. Refer to City of Mississauga Corporate Policy and Procedure – Documentation Standards.

All City Corporate Policies and Procedures related to the provision of goods and services must also comply with the Act and the Regulation.

DEFINITIONS

“Assistive Devices” are technical aids, communication devices, or medical aids modified or customized for use in increasing, maintaining or improving the functional ability of a person with a disability and may include, but are not limited to, wheelchairs, walkers, white canes used by people who are blind or who have low vision, note taking devices, portable magnifiers, recording machines, assistive listening devices, personal oxygen tanks and devices for grasping. Assistive Devices may accompany the customer or already be on the premises, and are used to assist persons with disabilities in carrying out activities or in accessing the services provided by the City of Mississauga.

“Disability” is defined as:

- 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,
- a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability,
- a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or

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spoken language,

- a mental disorder, or
- 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”)

An animal is a “Service Animal” if it is readily apparent that the animal is used by a person with a disability for reasons relating to his or her disability, for example a guide dog wearing a harness. If it is not readily apparent that the animal is a Service Animal, then a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability is required.

“Support person” means, in relation to a person with a disability, another person who accompanies him or her in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs or with access to goods or services.

USE OF ASSISTIVE DEVICES

If a person with a disability uses an assistive device, they must be permitted to enter the premises with the device and to utilize the device, unless excluded by law. (For example, recording devices which may be excluded by copyright law.) Where the device is excluded by law, staff must provide an explanation and other arrangements must be explored in order to provide service. Potential barriers to the use of assistive devices must be removed where possible.

Persons with disabilities must be made aware of assistive devices available on the provider’s premises or otherwise supplied by the provider that may help with the provision of goods or services. This may involve posting a sign or including the information in printed or electronic communications. Assistive devices must be offered in a manner that respects the person’s dignity and

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independence. Staff must know how to use equipment or devices available in their specific area in order to provide assistance to those who require it.

USE OF SERVICE ANIMALS

The care and control of Service Animals are the responsibility of the person using them. If a person with a disability is accompanied by a Service Animal, they must be permitted to enter those areas of the premises that are open to the public or third parties with the animal, and to keep the animal with him or her unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law from the premises. For example, under the *Health Protection and Promotion Act* animals are not allowed in places where food is manufactured, prepared, or processed.

Where the animal is excluded by law, other arrangements must be explored in order to provide service to a person with a disability. For example, if a guide dog is excluded by law a person with low or no vision might need someone to guide him or her while the animal waits in a safe location.

Where the Service Animal may affect the health and safety of other customers, staff should discuss the situation with both parties and make every effort to meet the needs of both customers.

USE OF SUPPORT PERSONS

If a person with a disability is assisted by a Support Person, the person with a disability must not be prevented from having access to the Support Person.

Each department is required to communicate their practice to the public in regards to fees for Support Persons. If a participant fee is charged, such as an admission or registration fee, notice must be given in advance about the amount, if any, payable by the accompanying Support Person. Notice regarding fees for Support Persons must be clearly posted.

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Providers of goods and services may require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a Support Person if it is the only means available to allow the person to access their goods or services and, at the same time, protect the health and/or safety of the person with a disability or others on the premises.

NOTICE OF TEMPORARY DISRUPTIONS

If there is a temporary disruption in facilities or services in whole or in part, notice of the disruption must be provided to the public in a timely manner.

Notice of the disruption must include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration and a description of alternative facilities or services, if any, that are available.

Notice will be given by posting the information at a conspicuous place on the premises (on doors, at service counters, on bulletin boards, etc.), by posting it on the City's website, or by such other method as is reasonable in the circumstances.

TRAINING

The following persons shall receive training about the provision of goods or services to persons with disabilities:

- Every person who deals with members of the public or other third parties on behalf of the City, whether the person does so as an employee, agent, volunteer or otherwise.
- Every person who participates in developing policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of goods or services to members of the public or other third parties.

The training must include a review of the purposes of the Act and the requirements of the Regulation and instruction about the following matters:

- How to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disability.
- How to interact with persons with disabilities who use an

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assistive device or require the assistance of a guide dog or other service animal or the assistance of a support person.

- How to use equipment or devices available on the provider's premises or otherwise supplied by the provider that may help with the provision of goods or services to a person with a disability.
- What to do if a person with a particular type of disability is having difficulty accessing the provider's goods or services.

The training must be provided to each person as soon as practicable after he or she is assigned the applicable duties.

Training must also be provided on an ongoing basis in connection with changes to the policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of goods or services to persons with disabilities.

The Human Resources Division is responsible for ensuring records are kept of the training provided, including the dates on which the training was provided and the number of individuals to whom it was provided.

FEEDBACK PROCESS

Each department or section's feedback process must allow for input on how it provides customer service to persons with disabilities. Information about the process must be readily available to the public and permit feedback to be provided by any of the following means: in person; by telephone; in writing; or by delivering an electronic text by email or otherwise. Feedback that is received at a generic City address will be forwarded to the applicable department or section.

Feedback may take the form of a complaint; an observation or comment, such as an opportunity for improvement; or a commendation. The customer should include their contact details, a description of the feedback and, if applicable, what the customer requests to resolve the concern. For information on

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resolving complaints from the public regarding specific employee conduct, refer to Corporate Policy and Procedure, Human Resources, Employee Conduct, Public Complaints Procedure.

Feedback must be responded to in a timely manner. The recipient of the feedback will determine the best course of action to be taken, if applicable. This could include, but is not limited to, referring the feedback to another department to rectify a physical barrier, or advising a Manager that further employee training is required. If the resolution to the feedback involves multiple steps, or will occur over a lengthy period of time, updates should be provided.

A copy of the feedback received regarding the provision of customer service will be forwarded to, or shared with, the City of Mississauga's Accessibility Co-ordinator. This will allow the City to identify gaps and/or trends and monitor progress.

NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY OF DOCUMENTS

The City of Mississauga will provide notice to the public that this policy, and any documents that describe practices and procedures with respect to the provision of goods or services to persons with disabilities, are readily available upon request. Notice will be posted at a conspicuous place, such as but not limited to the City's external web site.

Documents will be provided to anyone asking for them. All documents will be made available in an alternative format upon request.

REFERENCE:

GC- 0190-2009 2009 04 08

CONTACT:

For more information on Accessibility in the City contact the Accessibility Coordinator, Facilities and Property Management.
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