

## 4.11 Accessible Customer Service Policy

### Intent

This policy is intended to meet the requirements of *Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07* under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, and applies to the provision of goods and services to the public or other third parties, not to the goods themselves. The employer will meet this standard for all customers across the country, at all its properties.

All goods and services provided by the employer shall follow the principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity.

### Scope

This policy applies to all employees always and without exception. This policy applies to the provision of goods and services on all premises owned and operated by the employer.

Unionized employees shall adhere to their current Collective Agreement for policies governing accessible customer service. Where the Collective Agreement is silent, bargaining members shall refer to the contents of this policy. In situations where the directions of this policy cover issues also in the Collective Agreement, the Collective Agreement will be the final authority.

*The employer understands that not all staff members employed by the organization will be subject to the legal ramifications of Ontario's Accessibility Standards due to their geographic location and employment outside of the province of Ontario. Nonetheless, all employees of the organization shall be subject to the principles and requirements of this policy as the employer endeavours to treat all its clients equitably regardless of geographic location.*

### Definitions

Assistive Device – is a technical aid, communication device or other instrument that is used to maintain or improve the functional abilities of people with disabilities. Personal assistive devices are typically devices that customers bring with them such as a wheelchair, walker, oxygen tank or anything that might assist in hearing, seeing, communicating, moving, breathing, remembering and/or reading.

Disability – the term disability as defined by the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, and the *Ontario Human Rights Code*, refers to:

- 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 dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or 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*.

Guide Dog – is a highly-trained working dog that has been trained at one of the facilities listed in Ontario Regulation 58 under the *Blind Persons' Rights Act*, to provide mobility, safety and increased independence for people who are blind.

Service Animal – as reflected in *Ontario Regulation 429/07*, an animal is a service animal for a person with a disability if:

it is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to his or her disability; or

if the person provides a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability.

Service Dog – as reflected in *Health Protection and Promotion Act, Ontario Regulation 562* a dog other than a guide dog for the blind is a service dog if:

- it is readily apparent to an average person that the dog functions as a service dog for a person with a medical disability;
- or the person who requires the dog can provide on request a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires a service dog.

Support Person – as reflected in *Ontario Regulation 429/07*, a support person means, in relation to a person with a disability, another person who accompanies him or her to help with communication, mobility, personal care, medical needs or access to goods and services.

## Guidelines

In accordance with the *Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07*, this policy addresses the following:

- The Provision of Goods and Services to Persons with Disabilities;
- The Use of Assistive Devices
- The Use of Guide Dogs, Service Animals and Service Dogs
- The Use of Support Persons
- Notice of Service Disruptions
- Customer Feedback
- Training
- Notice of Availability and Format of Required Documents

## The Provision of Goods and Services to Persons with Disabilities

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

- ensuring that all customers and guests receive the same value and quality;
- allowing customers and guests with disabilities to do things in their own ways, at their own pace when accessing goods and services as long as this does not present a safety risk;
- using alternative methods when possible to ensure that customers and guests with disabilities have access to the same services and in a similar manner;
- considering individual needs when providing goods and services; and

- communicating in a manner that considers the customer or guests' disability.

### **Assistive Devices**

Persons with disabilities may use their own assistive devices as required when accessing goods or services.

In cases where the assistive device presents a safety concern or where accessibility might be an issue, other reasonable measures will be used to ensure the access of goods and services.

For example, where elevators may be out of service and where an individual requires assistive devices for the purposes of mobility, the guest shall be accommodated on the main floor and a location that meets the needs of the individual.

Some assistive devices may be available at employer properties but will vary from location to location. Please refer to your manager in order to familiarize yourself with the complete list of your location's available assistive devices. In providing such devices, employees will be trained on the proper use and set up of such devices in order to ensure ease of use and proper functioning.

### **Guide Dogs, Service Animals and Service Dogs**

A guest or customer with a disability that is accompanied by guide dog, service animal or service dog will be allowed access to premises that are open to the public unless otherwise excluded by law. "No pet" policies do not apply to guide dogs, service animals and/or service dogs.

A guest or customer with a disability that is accompanied by guide service dog will be allowed access to the hotels' food service areas that are open to the public unless otherwise excluded by law. Other types of service animals are not permitted into food service areas due to the Health Protection and Promotion Act, Ontario Regulation 562 Section 60.

### **Exclusion Guidelines**

If a guide dog, service animal or service dog is excluded by law as detailed below, alternative methods will be offered to enable the person with a disability to access goods and services, when possible (for example, securing the animal in a safe location and offering the guidance of an employee).

### **Applicable Laws**

The Health Protection and Promotion Act, Ontario Regulation 562 Section 60, normally does not allow animals in places where food is manufactured, prepared, processed, handled, served, displayed, stored, sold or offered for sale. It does allow guide dogs and service dogs to go into places where food is served, sold or offered for sale. However, other types of service animals are not included in this exception.

Dog Owners' Liability Act, Ontario: If there is a conflict between a provision of this Act or of a regulation under this or any other Act relating to banned breeds (such as pitbulls) and a provision of a by-law passed by a municipality relating to these breeds, the provision that is more restrictive in relation to controls or bans on these breeds prevails.

### **Recognizing a Guide Dog, Service Dog and/or Service Animal**

If it is not readily apparent that the animal is being used by the guest or customer for reasons relating to his or her disability, verification from the individual may be requested and may include:

- a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons related to the disability;
- 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.

The guest or customer that is accompanied by a guide dog, service dog and/or service animal is responsible for maintaining care and control of the animal at all times.

If a health and safety concern presents itself for example in the form of a severe allergy to the animal, the employer will make all reasonable efforts to meet the needs of all individuals.

### **Support Persons**

If a guest or customer with a disability is accompanied by a support person, both persons are allowed to enter the premises together and the guest/customer will not be prevented from having access to the support person. In situations where confidential information might be discussed, consent will be obtained from the guest/customer, prior to any conversation where confidential information might be discussed.

### **Notice of Disruptions in Service**

Service disruptions may occur due to reasons that may or may not be within the control or knowledge of the employer. In the event of any temporary disruptions to facilities or services that guests or customers with disabilities rely on, reasonable efforts will be made to provide notice. In some circumstances such as in the situation of unplanned temporary disruptions, notice may not be possible.

If a notification needs to be posted the following information will be included unless it is not readily available or known:

- goods or services that are disrupted or unavailable
- reason for the disruption
- anticipated duration
- a description of alternative services or options

When disruptions occur, notice will be provided by:

- posting notices in conspicuous places including at the point of disruption, at the main entrance and the nearest accessible entrance to the service disruption and/or on the company's website or social media;
- contacting guests with reservations;
- verbally notifying customers and guests when they are making a reservation or checking in; or
- by any other method that may be reasonable under the circumstances.

### **Feedback Process**

Any guest wishing to provide feedback can do so by emailing the general manager or other appropriately designated person, as found on the contact information page of the Hotel's website or social media.

### **Training**

Training will be provided to:

- a) all employees, volunteers, agents and/or contractors who deal with the public or other third parties that act on behalf of the employer.; for example: front of house staff, valets, housekeeping, food and beverage employees, other vendors; and,
- b) those who are involved in the development and approval of customer/guest service policies, practices and procedures.

As reflected in Ontario Regulation 429/07, regardless of the format, training will cover the following:

- A review of the purpose of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005.
- A review of the requirements of the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07.
- 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;
  - require the assistance of a guide dog, service dog or other service animal; or
  - require the use of a support person (including the handling of admission fees).
- Instructions on how to use equipment or devices that are available at our premises or that we provide that may help people with disabilities.
- Instructions on what to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing your services.
- policies, procedures and practices pertaining to providing accessible customer service to customers with disabilities.