



The Corporation of the Township of Hamilton

Schedule "A" to By-Law 2009-59

Accessible Customer Service Standards Policy

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Accessible Customer Service Standards Policy

1. Policy Statement:

The Corporation of the Township of Hamilton recognizes that persons of varying ability should be provided with an equal opportunity to access goods, services and information in a manner consistent with the principles of independence, dignity, integration and equality as stated in the regulations of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and amendments thereto.

Definitions:

“**Person with a disability**” shall mean those individuals with a disability as defined under the Ontario Human Rights Code.

“**Support Person**” shall mean any person, whether a paid professional, volunteer, family member, or friend who accompanies a person with a disability to aid him or her with communication, mobility, personal care, medical needs, or with access to goods and services.

2. Strategic Plan:

Our Strategic Plan adopted by Council calls for us to “implement legislated requirements with the goal of improving and expanding opportunities for persons with disabilities, and identify, remove and prevent barriers to their full participation in the life of the community.” We are committed to providing persons with varying abilities opportunities to access goods, services, and information as provided by Council to all members of the Township.

3. Purpose:

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, provides for the establishment of accessibility standards. Accordingly, Ontario Regulation 429/07, Accessible Standards for Customer Service, was enacted. Under this Regulation we are to establish policies, procedures and practices governing the provision of our goods and services to persons with varying abilities. In addition, we must use reasonable efforts to ensure that our policies, procedures and practices provide accessible customer services to people with various kinds of disabilities and that the core principles of independence, dignity, integration and equal opportunity, as defined herein, are respected.

In addition Ontario Regulation 191/11 provided for changes to the Integrated Accessibility Standard.

The purpose of this policy is to fulfill legislative requirements.

4. Administration:

The Customer Service Accessibility Policy may be amended or added to as necessary and appropriate in order to ensure that it is current and applicable. Such amendments or additions shall be approved by Council.

5. Establishment of Policies, Practices and Procedures:

The Township of Hamilton shall use reasonable efforts to ensure that its policies, procedures and practices are consistent with the following principles:

- a) The goods, services and information must be provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of people with varying abilities.
- b) The provision of goods, services and information to people with varying abilities, must be integrated (temporarily or permanently), equal to that given to others.
- c) The Township of Hamilton's employees, volunteers and agents/contractors shall communicate with a person with varying abilities respecting the person's disability.

6. Communication:

- a) Our staff members will be trained to communicate with customers on how to interact with people of varying abilities.
- b) Our staff shall communicate via email or written text if verbal communication is not suitable to our customers' needs.
- c) Our staff will provide copies of distributed material in larger print when requested. Our staff will describe, paraphrase, repeat communications more clearly, or communicate through note writing to describe our goods, services and information. Writing material will be available for this purpose.
- d) Our staff will provide additional time, discussion and explanation of any documentation, and shorten lengthy conversations, ensuring people with varying abilities the opportunity to process the information.

7. Implementation

Assistive Devices:

The Township of Hamilton policy is to allow persons with varying abilities to use and keep with them their own personal assistive devices to obtain, use or benefit from the goods, services and information offered by the Township. Staff trained and knowledgeable of the presence and use of Township owned assistive devices, will be available to aid the individual with the assistive devices by request.

Support Persons:

People with varying abilities, who are accompanied by a support person, are welcomed into all Township premises that are owned and operated public facilities.

In the event that admission fees are charged, advance notice concerning what admission, if any, would be charged to a support person shall be posted in a conspicuous place.

Service Animals:

A person with varying abilities with a guide dog or other service animal is welcomed to all facilities that are owned and operated by the Township for public use and will ensure that the person is permitted to keep the animal with him or her unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law.

In certain cases, we may require a person with varying ability to be accompanied by a support person for health or safety reasons. Before making a decision we must:

- Consult with the person to understand their needs,
- Consider health or safety reasons based on available evidence,
- Determine if there is no other reasonable way to protect the health or safety of the person or others on the premises.

If it is determined that a support person is required by the municipality, the fee or fare (if applicable) for the support person shall be waived (Legislative change effective July 1, 2016.)

If the Township staff cannot easily identify that an animal is a service animal, we shall ask the person to provide documentation from a regulated

health professional. The documentation must confirm that the person needs the service animal for reasons relating to their disability. (Legislative change effective July 1, 2016.)

If the service animal is excluded by law from the facility, the Township of Hamilton will make every effort to ensure that other measures are available to enable the person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the Township's goods, services and information.

Notice of Temporary Disruption:

Notice of Service Disruptions will be provided when facilities or services, or information that people with varying abilities may use to access the Township of Hamilton's goods or services and information are temporarily, or in the near future, to be temporarily unavailable.

The Notice must include the following information:

- a) The reason and information for disruption
- b) Anticipated duration
- c) Description of alternate facilities or services, if available
- d) Contact information

In the case of an unscheduled disruption, the Notice will be posted at the location of the service disruption as soon as practically applicable.

In the case of a scheduled disruption the Township of Hamilton will post the Notice three full business days prior to the disruption, at the physical location, on its website, and if appropriate will advertise the disruption with local media outlets.

8. Documentation and Feedback:

The Township of Hamilton shall, upon request, give a copy of the policies, practices and procedures required under the Ontario Regulation 429/07 – Accessibility Standards for Customer Service to any person.

The Township will have a mechanism to allow the public to provide feedback on the accessibility of the provision of goods and services.

9. Training:

The Township of Hamilton will provide training to its employees and volunteers about the provision of its goods, services and information to persons with varying abilities. All employees or volunteers who deal with the public or other third parties, and those involved in developing customer service policies, practices, and procedures, will receive Accessibility Awareness training as soon as practical after beginning their employment. The Township will also provide ongoing training to changes to its policies, practices, and procedures to those individuals who require such training as soon as practical. The Township will keep records of the training provided.

Agents hired by the Township of Hamilton who deal with the public during their work will provide proof of Accessibility Awareness training (as part of their contractual agreement) prior to their work for the Township. Record of all training must be sent to the appropriate department for documentation.

10. Forms (attached):

- 10.1 Service Interruption – Expected or Unexpected
- 10.2 Customer Request – Feedback Form
- 10.3 Record of Customer Feedback
- 10.4 Notice – Admission Fees

Form 10.1

Notice of Disruption

Type of Disruption: _____

Expected____ or Unexpected____ (check one)

Reason for Disruption: _____

Duration of Disruption: _____

Other Comments: _____

Thank you for your patience.

Form 10.2

Customer Feedback Form

Thank you for visiting the Township of Hamilton. We value all of our customers and strive to meet everyone's needs.

Please tell us the date and time of your visit: _____

Did we respond to your customer service needs today?

Yes No

Was our customer service provided to you in an accessible manner?

Yes Somewhat No (Please Explain)

Did you have any problems accessing our goods, services and information?

Yes (Please Explain) Somewhat (Please Explain) No

Please add any other comments you may have: _____

Contact Information (optional): _____

Thank you, Management

Form 10.3

Record of Customer Feedback

Date feedback received: _____

Name of customer (optional): _____

Contact information (if appropriate): _____

Details: _____

Follow-up: _____

Action to be taken: _____

Staff member: _____

Date: _____

Form 10.4

Notice

Admission Fees

Admission fees shall be charged to a “support person” accompanying persons with disabilities.

The cost will be \$_____.