



Title:

Accessible Customer Service Policy

Policy No.:

ADM-009

Revisions:

August 2017 – Complete revision in an accessible format

May 2021 – Policy entirely revised and reformatted to meet accessibility standards

Effective Date:

January 1, 2010

Applies to:

All employees of the Corporation, volunteers, and third parties who deal with the public on behalf of the Corporation.

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1. Policy Statement

1.1. Statement

1.1.1. This policy sets out a policy on accessible customer service.

2. Definitions

2.1. Definitions

2.1.1. "Corporation" means the Corporation of the United Counties of Prescott and Russell.

3. Purpose of the Policy

3.1. Purpose

3.1.1. The purpose of this policy is to establish a general framework to guide the review and development of the Corporation's goods, services, programs, and facilities in an inclusive manner that considers the needs of people with disabilities.

4. Policy Application

4.1. Application

4.1.1. This policy applies to all employees of the Corporation, volunteers, and third parties who deal with the public on behalf of the Corporation.

5. Policy Requirements

5.1. Providing Goods, Services, and Facilities to People with Disabilities

5.1.1. The Corporation:

a. understands that obligations under the *Accessibility for Ontarians With Disabilities Act, 2005*, S.O. 2005, Chapter 11 (the "AODA"), as amended, and its *Accessibility Standards for Customer Service* as per *Ontario Regulation 191/11: Integrated Accessibility Standards* do not substitute or limit its current and ongoing obligations under the *Human Rights Code* respecting non-discrimination or its obligations to people with disabilities under any other law.

b. is committed to ensuring equal access and participation for people with disabilities. We are committed to treating people with disabilities in a way that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence. We believe in integration, and we are committed to meeting the needs of people with disabilities in a timely manner. We will do so by removing and preventing barriers to accessibility and meeting our accessibility requirements under the AODA and Ontario's accessibility laws.

c. is committed to excellence in serving and providing goods, services, or facilities to all customers, including people with disabilities.

5.1.2. Our accessible customer service policies are consistent with the principles of independence, dignity, integration, and equality of opportunity for people with disabilities.

5.2. Training

5.2.1. We are committed to training all staff and volunteers in accessible customer service, other Ontario's accessibility standards, and aspects of the *Human Rights Code* that relate to persons with disabilities.

5.2.2. In addition, we will train:

- a. all persons who participate in developing the Corporation's policies; and
- b. all other persons who provide goods, services, or facilities on behalf of the Corporation.

5.2.3. Training of our employees and volunteers on accessibility relates to their specific roles.

5.2.4. Employees who have already been trained on accessible customer service will be informed about the changes and provided training on the updated *Accessibility Customer Service Policy*.

5.2.5. The Corporation will update its training records and its *Accessibility Customer Service Policy* when changes occur.

5.2.6. Training includes:

- a. the purpose of the *AODA*, and the requirements of the *Accessibility Standards for Customer Service*;
- b. our policies related to the *Accessibility Standards for Customer Service*;
- c. how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities;
- d. how to interact with people with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or a support person;
- e. how to use the equipment or devices available on-site or otherwise that may help with providing goods, services, or facilities to people with disabilities;
- f. what to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing our organization's goods, services, or facilities.

5.2.7. We train every person as soon as practicable after being hired and provide training in respect of any changes to the policies.

5.2.8. We maintain records of the training provided, including the dates on which the training was provided and the number of individuals to whom it was provided.

5.3. Assistive Devices

5.3.1. People with disabilities may use their personal assistive devices when accessing our goods, services, or facilities.

5.3.2. In cases where the assistive device presents a significant and unavoidable health or safety concern or may not be permitted for other reasons, other measures will be used to ensure the person with a disability can access our goods, services, or facilities.

5.3.3. We ensure that our staff are trained and familiar with various assistive devices we have on site or that we provide that may be used by customers with disabilities while accessing our goods, services, or facilities.

5.4. Communication

5.4.1. We communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability. This may include the following:

- a. Regular mail
- b. Email
- c. Telephone communications

5.4.2. We will work with the person with disabilities to determine what method of communication works for them.

5.5. Service Animals

5.5.1. We welcome people with disabilities and their service animals. Service animals are allowed on the parts of our premises that are open to the public and third parties.

5.5.2. When we cannot easily identify that an animal is a service animal, our staff may ask for documentation (template, letter, or form) from a Regulated Health Professional that confirms the person needs the service animal for reasons relating to their disability.

5.5.3. A service animal can be easily identified through visual indicators, such as when it wears a harness or a vest, or when it helps the person perform certain tasks.

5.5.4. A Regulated Health Professional is defined as a member of one of the following colleges:

- a. College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists of Ontario
- b. College of Chiropractors of Ontario
- c. College of Nurses of Ontario
- d. College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario
- e. College of Optometrists of Ontario
- f. College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario
- g. College of Physiotherapists of Ontario
- h. College of Psychologists of Ontario
- i. • College of Registered Psychotherapists and Registered Mental Health Therapists of Ontario

5.5.5. If service animals are prohibited by another law, we will do the following to ensure people with disabilities can access our goods, services, or facilities:

- a. explain why the animal is excluded;
- b. discuss with the customer another way of providing goods, services, or facilities.

5.6. Support Persons

5.6.1. A person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person will be allowed to have that person accompany them on our premises.

5.6.2. In certain cases, the Corporation might require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person for the health or safety reasons of:

- a. the person with a disability;
- b. others on the premises.

5.6.3. Before making a decision, the Corporation will:

- a. consult with the person with a disability to understand their needs;
- b. consider health or safety reasons based on available evidence;
- c. determine if there is no other reasonable way to protect the health or safety of the person or others on the premises.

5.6.4. If the Corporation determines that a support person is required, we will waive the admission fee or fare (if applicable) for the support person.

5.7. Notice of Temporary Disruption

5.7.1. In the event of a planned or unexpected disruption to services or facilities for customers with disabilities, the Corporation will notify customers promptly. This clearly posted notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated length of time, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available.

5.7.2. Notice may be given by posting the information about the service disruption in a conspicuous place on the premises owned and operated by the Corporation of goods or services, by posting it on [the Public Notices page of the Corporation's website](#), or by such other methods as is reasonable in the circumstances.

5.8. Feedback Process

5.8.1. The Corporation welcomes feedback on how we provide accessible customer service. Customer feedback will help us identify barriers and respond to concerns.

5.8.2. Customers who wish to provide feedback or suggestions on the way the Corporation provides goods, services, or facilities to people with disabilities can provide feedback by filling out [the feedback form on the Accessibility page of the Corporation's website](#) or by communicating directly with:

- a. Alain Lacelle, Accessibility Standards Advisory Committee Coordinator, by email at alacelle@prescott-russell.on.ca or by telephone at (613) 675-4661 or toll free at 1-800-667-6307.

5.8.3. The Coordinator will make sure to share the comments or complaints with the Chief Administrative Officer as well as provide a response to the feedback within 48 hours of the request. The Coordinator can then share the comments or complaints with the appropriate Department and assess the need for corrective measures or improvements to be brought to the facilities and services in place.

5.8.4. The Corporation ensures our feedback process is accessible to people with disabilities by providing or arranging for accessible formats and communication supports, on request.

5.9. Notice of Availability of Documents

5.9.1. The Corporation notifies the public that documents related to accessible customer service are available upon request by posting [a notice on the Accessibility page of the Corporation's website](#).

5.9.2. The Corporation will provide these documents in an accessible format or with communication support, on request. We will consult with the person making the request

to determine the suitability of the format or communication support. We will provide the accessible format in a timely manner and at no additional cost.

5.10. Modifications to This or Other Policies

5.10.1. Any policies that do not respect and promote the principles of dignity, independence, integration, and equal opportunity for people with disabilities will be modified and removed or interpreted and applied to include those principles.

6. Responsibilities (n/a)

7. Legislative Authority

7.1. Authority

7.1.1. [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005](#)

7.1.2. [Ontario Regulation 191/11: Integrated Accessibility Standards](#)

7.1.3. [Human Rights Code](#)

8. References (n/a)

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Officer