



ACCESSIBLE CUSTOMER SERVICE POLICY

Intent

This policy is intended to meet the requirements of the 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.

All goods and services provided by the Ontario Tourism Education Corporation (OTEC) shall follow the principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity.

Scope

- a) This policy applies to the provision of goods and services at premises leased and operated by OTEC.
- b) This policy applies to employees, volunteers, OTEC trainers and contractors who deal with the public or other third parties that act on behalf of OTEC.
- c) The section of this policy that addresses the use of guide dogs, service animals and service dogs only applies to the provision of goods and services that take place at premises leased and operated by OTEC.
- d) This policy shall also apply to all persons who participate in the development of OTEC's policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of goods and services to members of the public or third parties.

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 guests bring with them such as a wheelchair, walker or a personal oxygen tank 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
- 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 in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care, medical needs or access to goods and services.

General Principles

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

- A. The Provision of Goods and Services to Persons with Disabilities
- B. The Use of Assistive Devices
- C. The Use of Guide Dogs, Service Animals and Service Dogs

- D. The Use of Support Persons
- E. Notice of Service Disruptions
- F. Customer Feedback
- G. Training

A. The Provision of Goods and Services to Persons with Disabilities

OTEC 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 guests receive the same value and quality;
- allowing 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 guests with disabilities have access to the same services, in the same place and in a similar manner;
- taking into account individual needs when providing goods and services; and
- communicating in a manner that takes into account the guest's disability.

B. Assistive Devices

Guest's own assistive device(s):

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

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, open flames and oxygen tanks cannot be near one another. Therefore, the accommodation of a guest with an oxygen tank may involve extinguishing candles and ensuring the guest is seated in a location that would be considered safe for both the guest and other patrons. Or, where elevators are not present and where an individual requires assistive devices for the purposes of mobility, seats that are easily accessible will be made available based on the availability of seats.

C. Guide Dogs, Service Animals and Service Dogs

A guest with a disability that is accompanied by a 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.

Food Service Areas:

A guest with a disability that is accompanied by a guide dog or service dog will be allowed access to 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 (see applicable laws below) OTEC will offer alternative methods 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 for reasons relating to his or her disability, OTEC may request verification from the guest.

Verification 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 Ontario; or,
- a certificate of training from a recognized guide dog or service animal training school.

Care and Control of the Animal:

The guest 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 time.

Allergies:

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

D. Support Persons

If a guest with a disability is accompanied by a support person, OTEC will ensure that both persons are allowed to enter the premises together and that the guest is not prevented from having access to the support person.

In situations where confidential information might be discussed, consent will be obtained from the guest, prior to any conversation where confidential information might be discussed.

Admission Fees:

Fees will not be charged for support persons for admission to OTEC's premises.

E. Notice of Disruptions in Service

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

Notifications will Include:

In the event that 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

Notifications Options:

When disruptions occur OTEC will provide notice 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 OTEC website;
- contacting registered clients;
- verbally notifying clients when they are registering; or
- by any other method that may be reasonable under the circumstances.

F. Feedback Process

OTEC shall provide guests with the opportunity to provide feedback on the service provided to guests with disabilities. Information about the feedback process will be readily available to all guests and notice of the process will be made available on our website and on premises.

Feedback forms along with alternate methods of providing feedback such as verbally (in person or by telephone) or written (hand written, delivered, website or email), will be available upon request.

Submitting Feedback:

Guests can submit feedback to:

Wendy Paradis, Vice President, Client Services

416.622.1975 ext. 212

21 Four Seasons Place, Suite 300

Toronto, ON, M9B 6J8

wparadis@otec.org

www.otec.org

Guests who wish to provide feedback by completing an onsite customer feedback form or verbally can do so to any OTEC employee.

Guests that provide formal feedback will receive acknowledgement of their feedback, along with any resulting actions based on concerns or complaints that were submitted.

G. Training

Training will be provided to:

- all employees, volunteers, OTEC trainers and/or contractors who deal with the public or other third parties that act on behalf of OTEC; and,
- those who are involved in the development and approval of customer service policies, practices and procedures.

Training Provisions:

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 our services.
- OTEC's policies, procedures and practices pertaining to providing accessible customer service to guests with disabilities.

Training Schedule:

OTEC will provide training to all existing employees, agents and/or contractors before December 31st, 2011. Training will be provided to new employees, volunteers, agents and/or contractor who deal with the public or act on OTEC's behalf during orientation. Revised training will be provided in the event of changes to legislation, procedures and/or practices.

Record of Training:

OTEC will keep a record of training that includes the dates training was provided and the number of employees who attended the training.

Referenced Documents:

- Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005
- Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07
- Blind Person's Rights Act, 1990
- Dog Owners' Liability Act, Ontario
- Health Protection and Promotion Act, Ontario Regulation 562
- Ontario Human Rights Code, 1990

If you have any questions or concerns about this policy or its related procedures please contact:

Wendy Paradis, Vice President, Client Services

416.622.1975 ext. 212

21 Four Seasons Place, Suite 300

Toronto, ON, M9B 6J8

wparadis@otec.org

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This policy and its related procedures will be reviewed as required in the event of legislative changes.

Accessible Customer Service Policy

Acknowledgement & Agreement

I, _____, acknowledge that I have read and understand the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Policy of OTEC. Further, I agree to adhere to this Policy and will ensure that employees working under my direction adhere to these guiding principles. I understand that if I violate this Policy, I may face corrective action, up to and including termination of employment.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Witness: _____