



Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005

Accessibility Standards for Customer Service,
Ontario Regulation 429/07
and
Training Guide

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Definitions

- Assistive Device:
 - Instrument to improve functional abilities.
- Guide Dog:
 - Highly trained working dog (reg. 58 approved facilities).
- Service Dog:
 - A dog other than a “Guide Dog” that relates to the disability (medical may be required).
- Service Animal:
 - A trained animal that relates to the person’s disability (medical may be required).

Definitions

- Support Person:
 - A person that accompanies a person with a disability to support and assist.
- Disability:
 - any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes, mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury and any degree of paralysis or 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 in a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device.

Definitions

- Disability (Continued):
 - 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.*

Overview of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)

- The AODA was designed to:
 - Remove and prevent barriers for persons with disabilities.
 - Five Standards.
 - Customer Service. (first to be implemented)
 - Information & Communication.
 - Employment.
 - Transportation.
 - Built Environment.
 - Each standard has separate rules making Ontario barrier free by 2025.

Overview of the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service

- The first standard:
 - Policy.
 - Procedures.
 - Removal of Service Barriers.
 - Allowance for the use of assistive devices, guide dogs, service animals, service dogs and support persons.
 - Training.
 - Feedback Process.
 - Record Keeping.

Core Principles

- Dignity:
 - Respect the disability.
- Independence:
 - Allow freedom of choice.
- Integration:
 - Provide alternatives where accessibility is limited.
- Equal Opportunity:
 - Opportunity to access services.
- Reasonable Effort:
 - Search for other solutions.

Disabilities

- Vision
- Hearing
- Deaf-Blind
- Physical
- Speech or Language
- Mental Health
- Intellectual, Learning and Development

Service Tips - Vision

- Speak normally, be patient and friendly.
- Offer assistance, but wait for an acceptance or wait for a request for help.
- When offering to guide someone offer your elbow and walk slowly. Advise of upcoming objects, doors or walkways.
- When providing written material offer to read it or summarize it.
- If you need to leave to get something, let them know where you are going and when you will return.

Service Tips - Hearing

- Make sure that the person sees you and knows that you are communicating with them.
- Avoid placing your hands, papers, menus or other objects in front of your mouth while talking.
- Avoid talking while leading them.
- In emergency situations, assist the customer in recognizing and responding to the emergency.
- If you cannot communicate in sign language, offer paper and pen so you can write notes back and forth.
- Persons with a hearing aid may require a quieter environment, offer to move to another location

Service Tips – Deaf-Blindness

- Understand that communication can take some time, be patient.
- Always direct your questions and responses to the customer/client.
- Ask what would make the customer/client the most comfortable and respect his/her needs to the maximum extent possible.
- Avoid sudden movements or touching of the individual that may catch them off guard, unless it is an emergency.

Service Tips – Physical

- If you are providing extended service, consider pulling up a chair and talking to the person at their eye level.
- Ask how you can help.
- If you notice the person struggling or in distress, offer assistance.
- Always ask before touching or moving any assistive device.
- Ensure your environment is clear and free of obstacles that could make it difficult for a person to pass.
- If shaking hands is a service standard, do not back away or not offer to shake hands with a person with a prosthetic hand.

Service Tips – Speech or Language

- If you don't understand, it is okay to ask a person to repeat the information.
- Wherever possible ask close-ended questions inviting a yes or no response.
- Ask how you can help them.
- Be patient, it may take longer for the individual to share information and ask questions.
- Never interrupt or assume you know what the person wants or needs.

Service Tips – Mental Health

- Listening skills are important when dealing with such situations as you need to understand the real issue to know how you can offer help.
- Ask how you can help and try to work with the individual to find a solution.
- Be self confident, patient and reassuring.
- Always try to comfort the individual by showing respect and providing support.

Service Tips – Intellectual, Learning and Development

- Be prepared to explain and provide examples regarding information.
- Remember that the customer/client is an adult and unless you are informed otherwise can make his/her own decisions.
- Be patient and verify your understanding.
- Provide information in small detail.
- Respond to any requests for verbal information, assistance in completing forms and so on with courtesy.
- Allow extra time to complete tasks if necessary.

Service Tips (Other) – Speaking by Telephone

- Speak normally, do not shout and listen carefully.
- Avoid interrupting the customer/client.
- Patiently wait while the person explains themselves.
- It is okay to politely ask the person to repeat information if you do not understand.
- If after numerous attempts you are not able to communicate and understand, consider making other arrangements.

Service Tips (Other) – Working with Assistive Devices

- Never refuse to work with the device.
- Do not stare or gawk at the device.
- Never touch or move the device without asking permission from the customer/client.
- Ensure that the customer/client and the assistive device have appropriate amount of space.
- Do not block, knock or bump into assistive devices.
- Offer assistance if the person is having trouble with their assistive device.
- Keep walkways, entrances clear.

Service Tips (Other) – Working with Guide Dogs, Service Animals and Service Dogs

- Never separate customer/client and their animal.
- Do not touch, pet or talk to the animal – when the animal is working.
- Do not feed or offer treats to the animal.
- If you unsure if the animal is in fact providing a service to the customer/client, ask.
- It is okay to provide water to the animal as long as the customer requests it.
- If others are approaching the animal to pet it, politely stop them and explain that they should ask permission before petting the animal.

Service Tips (Other) – Working with Support Persons

- If you are unsure of which person is the customer/client, politely ask and do not assume.
- Introduce yourself to both the customer/client and the support person.
- Talks directly to the customer/client even if the support person is responding.
- Address the customer/client appropriately.
- Do not have side conversations with the support person.
- Provide written materials to both the customer/client and the support person.
- Never separate the customer/client from the support person.

Service Disruptions

- Content of Notifications:
 - Services that are disrupted.
 - Reason for disruption.
 - Anticipated duration.
 - A description of alternative services or options.
- Posting Options to Consider:
 - Main entrance or nearest accessible entrance.
 - At the point of disruption such as; elevator/washroom.
 - On the website.
 - Contacting customers/clients or verbally on arrival.

Tips for Handling Service Disruptions

- Any service disruption should take top priority.
- Check to ensure that no one is trapped or stuck due to the service disruption.
- Notify the appropriate individuals to ensure a timely response.
- If required post notifications in designated locations.
- Apologize to visiting customers/clients.
- Determine if an accommodation plan can be implemented to enable the customer/client to access the services provided.
- Monitor the progress of the corrective action.

Customer /Client Feedback

- Businesses are required to have a feedback process:
 - If a customer/client approaches or call to provide feedback, explain the methods that are available to them and ask which option would work best.
 - Use the feedback form whenever possible.
 - Read back what you have written for accuracy.
 - After the customer/client has agreed with the recorded information, let them know the process for addressing and resolving issues.