

### What you have to do to comply with the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service

Excellence in customer service is the goal of any successful business today. Ensuring you are accessible and open to all your customers, including people with disabilities, is what the customer service standard is all about. Improving accessibility to your goods and services by removing and preventing barriers helps everyone.

By January 1st, 2012, the private sector must be compliant. A summary of requirements are:

#### **POLICIES**

Set up policies, practices and procedures on providing goods and services to people with disabilities. Include a policy on how people with disabilities who use assistive devices can access your goods and services.

#### **COMMUNICATION**

Communicate with people with disabilities in a manner that takes into account his or her disability.

#### **TRAINING**

Provide training - to staff and any other people who interact with the public, or other third parties, on your behalf on a number of topics as outlined in the customer service standard. Also train those involved in developing your policies, practices and procedures on the provision of goods or services on a number of topics as outlined in the customer service standard.

#### **SERVICE ANIMALS**

Allow people with disabilities to be accompanied by their guide dog or service animal in your areas open to the public.

#### **SUPPORT PERSONS**

Permit people with disabilities who use a support person to bring that person with them. If you have an admission fee, have a way to let a person with a disability know ahead of time what admission, if any, would be charged for a support person.

#### **TEMPORARY DISRUPTIONS**

Provide notice when facilities or services that people with disabilities rely on to access or use your goods or services are temporarily disrupted.

#### **FEEDBACK**

Make sure people can provide feedback on how you provide goods or services to people with disabilities and how you will respond to them. Make it clear how people can provide this feedback.

This package is your toolkit with materials that are designed to help you comply. The last page lists a number of additional resources like [www.AccessON.ca](http://www.AccessON.ca) & Toll-free: 1-866-515-2025.



## Customer Service Policy – Example Template

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This is a policy template on providing customer service to people with disabilities. You can use it to form the basis of your own policy or to give you ideas on what to include in your policy.

This sample policy template contains items that meet the requirements of the customer service standard, and also items that are not specifically required, but are good practices. Note that the policy may be revised as other standards are introduced under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005.

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### **CUSTOMER SERVICE POLICY STATEMENT:**

Providing Goods and Services to People with Disabilities

#### **1. Our mission**

The mission of *[insert name of business]* is to *[insert mission of business]*.

#### **2. Our commitment**

In fulfilling our mission, *[insert name of business]* strives at all times to provide its goods and services in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. We are also committed to giving people with disabilities the same opportunity to access our goods and services and allowing them to benefit from the same services, in the same place and in a similar way as other customers.

#### **3. Providing goods and service to people with disabilities**

*[Insert name of business]* is committed to excellence in serving all customers including people with disabilities and we will carry out our functions and responsibilities in the following areas:

##### **3.1 Communication**

We will communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability.

We will train staff who communicate with customers on how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities.

##### **3.2 Telephone services**

We are committed to providing fully accessible telephone service to our customers. We will train staff to communicate with customers over the telephone in clear and plain language and to speak clearly and slowly.

We will offer to communicate with customers by *[insert other means of communication that apply, e.g. email, TTY, relay services]* if telephone communication is not suitable to their communication needs or is not available.

##### **3.3 Assistive devices**

We are committed to serving people with disabilities who use assistive devices to obtain, use or benefit from our goods and services. We will ensure that our staff are trained and familiar with various assistive devices that may be used by customers with disabilities while accessing our goods or services.

We will also ensure that staff know how to use the following assistive devices available on our premises for customers: *[insert list of assistive devices available on premises]*

### **3.4 Billing**

We are committed to providing accessible invoices to all of our customers. For this reason, invoices will be provided in the following formats upon request: *[insert formats, for example, hard copy, large print, e-mail, etc., in which provider will business will provide invoices]*.

We will answer any questions customers may have about the content of the invoice in person, by telephone or email.

**3.5** *[Insert any other policies, practices or procedures the provider will establish that are specific to the nature of the goods and services offered]*

### **4. Use of service animals and support persons**

We are committed to welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal on the parts of our premises that are open to the public and other third parties. We will also ensure that all staff, volunteers and others dealing with the public are properly trained in how to interact with people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal.

We are committed to welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person. Any person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person will be allowed to enter *[insert name of provider]*'s premises with his or her support person. At no time will a person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person be prevented from having access to his or her support person while on our premises.

*[Fees will not be charged for support persons]* or *[insert amount]* *[will be charged to the support person]* for admission to *[insert name of business]*'s premises. Customers will be informed of this by a notice that will be posted in *[insert name of provider]*'s premises and *[include any other means by which provider will business will notify customers of fee]*.

### **5. Notice of temporary disruption**

*[Insert name of business]* will provide customers with notice in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in the facilities or services usually used by people with disabilities. This notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available.

The notice will be placed at all public entrances and service counters on our premises.

### **6. Training for staff**

*[Insert name of business]* will provide training to all employees, volunteers and others who deal with the public or other third parties on their behalf, and all those who are involved in the development and approvals of customer service policies, practices and procedures. Individuals in the following positions will be trained:

*[Insert list of positions that require training, for example, customer service representatives, sales associates, managers etc.]*

This training will be provided *[insert how long after hiring staff that training will be provided]* after staff commence their duties.

Training will include the following:

- The purposes of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and the requirements of the customer service standard
- How to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities
- How to interact with people with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or a support person
- How to use the *[name equipment or devices, devices, e.g. TTY, wheelchair lifts, etc., available on provider's premises or otherwise that may help with the provision of goods or services to people with disabilities]*
- What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing *[Insert name of business]*'s goods and services
- *[Insert name of business/provider]*'s policies, practices and procedures relating to the customer service standard.

Applicable staff will be trained on policies, practices and procedures that affect the way goods and services are provided to people with disabilities. Staff will also be trained on an ongoing basis when changes are made to these policies, practices and procedures.

## 7. Feedback process

The ultimate goal of *[insert name of business]* is to meet and surpass customer expectations while serving customers with disabilities. Comments on our services regarding how well those expectations are being met are welcome and appreciated.

Feedback regarding the way *[insert name of business]* provides goods and services to people with disabilities can be made by *[insert the ways feedback can be provided, for example, e-mail, verbally, suggestion box, feedback card, etc.]*. All feedback will be directed to *[insert title of person responsible for receiving feedback]*. Customers can expect to hear back in *[indicate number of days]*.

Complaints will be addressed according to complaint categories already established in our company's complaint management procedures.

## 8. Modifications to this or other policies

We are committed to developing customer service policies that respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. Therefore, no changes will be made to this policy before considering the impact on people with disabilities. Any policy of *[insert name of business]* that does not respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities will be modified or removed.

## 9. Questions about this policy

This policy exists to achieve service excellence to customers with disabilities. If anyone has a question about the policy, or if the purpose of a policy is not understood, an explanation should be provided by, or referred to, *[insert title of supervising staff]* of *[insert name of business]*.



## What training must be provided? – A Condensed Summary

The training could be provided through handouts at an orientation session, individually at a computer, in a classroom setting, or some other format.

Regardless of format, the training must cover the following:

1. Review of the purposes of the AODA and requirements of the customer service standard;
2. Instruction on how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities;
3. Instruction on how to interact with people with disabilities who use assistive devices or require the assistance of a guide dog, other service animal or a support person;
4. Instruction on how to use equipment or devices available at your premises or that you provide otherwise, that may help people with disabilities access your services, such as TTY telephones, elevators, lifts, accessible interactive kiosks or other technology; and
5. Instruction on what to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing your services.
6. Instruction on your customer service policies, practices and procedures on providing goods and services for people with disabilities.



## Customer Service Training Resources

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### Booklet – Training Resources for Small Business and Organizations

#### **Serve-Ability: Transforming Ontario's Customer Service**

<http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/mcass/serve-ability/splash.html>

click on Flash

*It will take approximately 45 minutes to complete.*

#### **Retail Council Accessible Customer Service**

<http://www.redwoodlearning.com/rcc/>

click on Retail Council Accessible Customer Service

*It will take approximately 30 minutes to complete.*



## Sample Documents for Notifying the Public about Disruptions in Service

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### **SAMPLE 1**

Dear Customers,

The east elevators will be out of service from April 1 to 15 for routine maintenance. To access the upper level of the shopping centre, please use the elevators at the west end of the building next to the food court. We regret any inconvenience this may cause. If you have questions or concerns, please call [phone number].

Thank you.

Management

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### **SAMPLE 2**

Dear Guests,

Our accessible washroom is out of service due to a broken pipe. A repair person will be on the premises tomorrow to fix it. In the interim, we have made arrangements for our guests to use the accessible washroom at 123 Main Street, which is located next door to our premises. We apologize for any inconvenience.

Thank you.

Management



## Sample Notices on the Feedback Process

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Feedback process on provision of goods or services to people with disabilities.

### SAMPLE 1

Dear Valued Customers,

We strive to improve accessibility for our customers with disabilities. We would like to hear your comments, questions and suggestions about the provision of our goods or services to people with disabilities. Please contact Customer Service in person, by mail or at [phone number] or by email [email address] to share your comments.

Thank you.

Management

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### SAMPLE 2

Dear Valued Customers,

We strive to improve accessibility for our customers with disabilities. We welcome your feedback. Please call [phone number] or email [email address] to share your comments, or request a copy of our accessibility policy.

Thank you.

Management





## NEED MORE ASSISTANCE?

You can order a copy of the customer service standard or get more information about it by contacting the following:

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) Contact Centre Service Ontario

Toll-free: 1-866-515-2025

TTY: 416-325-3408 / Toll-free 1-800-268-7095

You may also want to refer to the Guide to the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07.

Further information that will help providers comply with the standard may be found on the Accessibility Directorate's compliance assistance website at [www.AccessON.ca/compliance](http://www.AccessON.ca/compliance).

To read the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act:

1. Go to the website [www.AccessON.ca](http://www.AccessON.ca)
2. Click on Understanding Accessibility