

The Township of Horton Policy and Procedures			
SECTION: ACCESSIBILITY POLICIES			POLICY #: K-02
POLICY: Accessible Customer Service Standards & Policy			
DATE: January 2010	REV. DATE: September 2023 By-Law 2023-40	COVERAGE: All Employees & Volunteers	PAGE #: 1 of 7

POLICY STATEMENT:

The Corporation of the Township of Horton is committed to providing friendly and quality customer service which addresses the diverse needs of all residents, visitors, and businesses within its jurisdiction. To provide goods and services that are accessible to everyone, Horton Township must recognize the diverse needs of all residents and visitors.

The Township of Horton will promote accessibility to goods and services through developing policies, procedures, and practices and by ensuring the consideration of people with disabilities. To achieve this, reasonable efforts will be made to ensure that all policies, procedures, and practices address the principles of integration, independence, dignity, and equal opportunity.

This Statement of Policy and Procedure applies to all employees, members of Council, members of Committees, as well as all volunteers and contractors who interact with the public on behalf of the Township of Horton.

PURPOSE:

This policy provides documentation concerning the Township of Horton’s adoption and implementation of the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07 in accordance with the Accessibility for Ontarians Disability Act, 2005 (AODA). The Customer Service Regulation is the first of five regulations that will replace the Ontarians with Disability Act, 2001. This Regulation lays out the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service as it applies to every designated public sector organization.

RESPONSIBILITY

The Township of Horton Council, Committees of Council and Staff (including contractors and volunteers) shall be responsible for adhering to the parameters of this policy, and for ensuring accessible customer service is provided. The Corporate Services Department shall be responsible for implementing this policy and for ensuring that all service providers are adequately trained.

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DEFINITIONS:

Accessible: means able to be reached or entered by a person with a disability; able to be easily obtained, used, and/or understood by everyone including those persons with varying disabilities.

Assistive Device: is any device that is designed, made, or adapted to assist a person with a disability in completion of various tasks, or in accessing goods and/ or services.

Goods and Services: are those goods and services provided by the Township of Horton.

Persons with Disabilities: are defined according to the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 as:

- a) 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, include diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical co-ordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device;
- b) a condition of mental impairment or developmental disability;
- c) learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language;
- d) a mental disorder;
- e) an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan, established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997. This definition includes disabilities of differing severity, visible as well as non-visible disabilities, and disabilities to the effects of which may come and go.

Principles of Accessible Customer Service: are as follows:

- a) Dignity: meaning making sure a customer with a disability is valued and provided respect and ethical treatment, along with effective and full service;
- b) Independence: which means freedom from control or influence of others; freedom to make one's own choices;
- c) Integration: meaning customers with disabilities fully benefit from the same services, in the same place and in the same or similar way as other customers;

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- d) Equal Opportunity: is a stipulation that all people should be treated similarly, unhampered by artificial barriers, prejudices, or preferences.

Service Animals: are defined as either:

- a) a “guide dog”, as defined in Section 1 of the Blind Persons Rights Act; a dog trained as a guide for a blind person and having the qualifications prescribed by the regulations;
- b) a “service animal” for a person with a disability. For the purpose of this policy, an animal is a service animal for a person with a disability, if:
 - i. it is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for the reasons relating to his or her disability;
 - ii. the person provides a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that they require the animal for reasons relating to their disability.

Support Person: is defined as another person who accompanies a person with a disability, to help him or her with communication, mobility, personal care, medical needs and/or with access to goods and services.

PROCEDURES:

Meeting Access:

The Township of Horton holds various public meetings. If any of these meetings are to be held in a location that is not accessible, the Corporation will relocate the meeting to a location that is accessible, if requested.

Document Format:

- a) Should the Township of Horton be requested to provide a copy of a document to a person with a disability, the Township shall give the person the document, or the information contained in the document, in an accessible format that considers the person’s disability.
- b) Material printed in-house and publications produced on behalf of the Township of Horton should contain a note indicating “alternate formats are available upon request” and include relevant contact information.

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- c) The Township of Horton will consult the person requesting the document to determine what an accessible alternate format of the document or information would be, in accordance with the provisions of this policy.
- d) The time frame attached to the conversion process varies depending on the media chosen, the size, complexity, quality of source documents, and number of documents to be converted. Documents shall be returned in a timely manner depending on the factors previously noted.
- e) Conversion shall be processed in-house wherever possible. When a member of the public requests a Township document, or portion thereof, in an alternate format, the Township shall be responsible for the cost of the conversion, materials and distribution, not the public requestor.
- f) In-house printing, where possible, should adhere to the Canadian National Institute for the Blind Clear Print Standards or any subsequent accessible information and communication policies.

Training:

- a) The Township of Horton shall ensure that the following persons are trained on the policies, practices and procedures establishing the accessible provision of its goods and services to persons with disabilities:
 - i. Every person who deals with members of the public or other third parties on behalf of the Corporation, whether the person does so as an employee, agent, volunteer or otherwise.
 - ii. Every person who participates in developing the Township of Horton's policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of goods and services to members of the public or other third parties.
- b) This training will include a review of the purpose of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), the requirements of this policy, and instructions about the following matters:
 - i. How to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disabilities, as outlined in this policy and associated practices and procedures. This will consider the principles of accessible customer service.
 - ii. How to interact with persons with disabilities who use an assistive device, require the assistance of a guide dog or other service animal, or

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the assistance of a support person, as outlined in this policy and associated practices and procedures.

- iii. How to use equipment or devices available on premises owned or leased by the Township of Horton, or otherwise provided by the Township, that may help with the provision of goods and services to a person with a disability.
- iv. What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing goods and services provided by the Township of Horton.
- c) The Township's Executive Assistant will log and maintain records detailing the training provided, as well as the name of the person, location, and date the training was completed.
- d) Training is available, upon request, in accessible formats.

Assistive Devices:

- a) The Township of Horton acknowledges that persons with disabilities may elect to use their own personal assistive devices to obtain, use or benefit from the goods and services offered by the Township.
- b) Should a person with a disability be unable to access the Township's goods and services by their own personal assistive device, the Township will ensure the following measures:
 - i. Determine if the provision of the goods and services are inaccessible, based upon the individual's requirements.
 - ii. Assess potential accessible service delivery options to meet the needs of the individual.
 - iii. Notify the person with a disability of an alternative method of providing the goods and services and how they can access the alternative, temporarily or on a permanent basis.
- c) The Township of Horton will ensure that staff members are trained as required to use assistive devices available in our various facilities (Ex. computer programs, chair lift, etc.)

Service Animals:

Persons with disabilities accompanied by a guide dog or service animal will be permitted in those areas of the premises owned or operated by the Township of Horton that are typically open to the public, unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law. The guide

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dog or service animal must be under the complete control of the person being accompanied. Should the said guide dog or service animal be excluded by law from the premises, alternative measures will be made available to ensure the delivery of adequate customer service.

Support Persons:

- a) Persons with disabilities accompanied by a support person will be permitted to be accompanied by that support person in premises normally open to the public.
- b) If an amount is payable by a person for admission to the premises, or in connection with a person’s presence at the premises, the Corporation of the Township of Horton will ensure that notice is given in advance about the amount, if any, payable in respect to the support person.

Service Disruption:

- a) If there is a planned temporary disruption to any of the Corporation’s facilities or services (including those used by persons with disabilities) the Township of Horton shall give notice of the disruption to the public.
- b) Notice of the disruption must include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration and a description of alternative facilities or services, if any, that are available.
- c) Notice will be given by posting the information about the service disruption at a conspicuous place on premises owned and operated by the Township of Horton, as well as by posting the information on the Township’s Website (www.hortontownship.ca). Audio messages will also be provided by the automated telephone attendant, for the facility where the service disruption is going to take place, if available. If deemed appropriate and time permits, planned disruptions of services may also be published in the local newspapers.

Feedback Process:

- a) The Township of Horton has established a process for receiving and responding to:
 - i. Feedback about the way it provides goods, services, or facilities to persons with disabilities; and

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- ii. The feedback process must specify the actions that the provider will take if a complaint is received about the way it provides goods, services, or facilities to persons with disabilities.

- b) Every provider shall ensure that the feedback process is accessible to persons with disabilities by providing, or arranging for the provision of, accessible formats and communication supports, on request.

- c) Information about the feedback process is readily available to the public.

- d) A document describing the feedback process and, on request, shall give a copy of the document to any person.

- e) The Township shall notify persons to whom it provides goods, services, or facilities that the document required is available on request.

- f) The notice required may be given by posting the information at a conspicuous place on premises owned or operated by the provider, by posting it on the provider's website, if any, or by such other method as is reasonable in the circumstances.