

# The Corporation of the Township of Horton

## Accessible Customer Service Policy



Effective Date: January 1, 2010

Employees Covered: All

Council Adoption Date:

Revision No.: 0

Person Responsible:

## Table of Contents

Section 1.....	Introduction
Section 2.....	Background
Section 3.....	Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005
Section 4.....	Definitions
Section 5.....	Horton Township Accessible Customer Service Policy
Section 6.....	Presentations & Training
Section 7.....	Appendices

## SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

This Manual provides documentation concerning Horton Township'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).

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

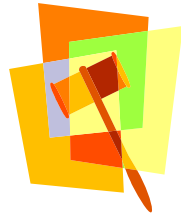
Horton Township will promote accessibility to goods and services through developing policies, procedures and practices and by ensuring the consideration of people with disabilities. To achieve this, reasonable efforts will be made to ensure that all policies, procedures and practices address the principles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

## **SECTION 2: BACKGROUND**

### **Accessibility Standards for Customer Service**

#### **WHAT IS IT?**

The Accessibility Standards for Customer Service is a Regulation under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities 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.



#### **WHY DOES IT EXIST?**

The Government of Ontario recognizes that people with disabilities face numerous barriers, and not only those that are environmentally built. The majority of individuals with disabilities do not use wheelchairs and not all disabilities are physical. Various barriers affect those with the following conditions:

- Hard of hearing, deafened or deaf
- Partially sighted or blind
- Poor grip, limited manual dexterity or mobility limitations
- Learning or intellectual disabilities
- Speech impairments
- Mental health problems

Despite the growth of awareness, accessibility remains limited. People with disabilities still do not have equal access to services, employment, transportation, information or buildings that others in Ontario enjoy. They cannot count on accessibility being available. The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 was passed with the goal of creating standards, such as the customer service standard, to improve accessibility across the province.

## WHAT MUST WE DO?

As a municipal organization, we must develop policies, procedures and practices to ensure that:

- Municipal services are provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.
- The provision of municipal services to persons with disabilities and others must be integrated, unless an alternative measure is necessary, whether temporary or on a permanent basis, to enable a person with a disability to obtain use or benefit from the municipal services.
- Persons with disabilities must be given opportunity equal to that given to others in order to obtain, use and benefit from the municipal services.

## HOW WILL WE ACHIEVE THAT?

Employee training will include reviewing the purposes of the Act and the requirements of the Regulation as it applies to Customer Service.



## WHAT WILL WE LEARN?

- ✚ How to interact and communicate with persons who have various disabilities
- ✚ How to interact with persons who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a guide dog, or other service animal or the assistance of a support person
- ✚ How to use the equipment or devices available on the provider's premises or otherwise provided by the provider that may help with the provision of municipal services to a person with a disability
- ✚ What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing our municipal services

**HOW & WHEN WILL WE LEARN THIS?**

[INSERT TRAINING INFORMATION]

## SECTION 3: AODA, 2005

### ONTARIO REGULATION 429/07

made under the

### ACCESSIBILITY FOR ONTARIANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT, 2005

Made: July 25, 2007

Filed: July 27, 2007

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### ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS FOR CUSTOMER SERVICE

#### [SKIP TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)

#### CONTENTS

<a href="#">1.</a>	Purpose and application
<a href="#">2.</a>	Effective dates
<a href="#">3.</a>	Establishment of policies, practices and procedures
<a href="#">4.</a>	Use of service animals and support persons
<a href="#">5.</a>	Notice of temporary disruptions
<a href="#">6.</a>	Training for staff, etc.
<a href="#">7.</a>	Feedback process for providers of goods or services
<a href="#">8.</a>	Notice of availability of documents
<a href="#">9.</a>	Format of documents
<a href="#">10.</a>	Commencement
<a href="#">Schedule 1</a>	Boards, Commissions, Authorities and Agencies
<a href="#">Schedule 2</a>	Broader Public Sector

#### **Purpose and application**

1. (1) This Regulation establishes accessibility standards for customer service and it applies to every designated public sector organization and to every other person or organization that provides goods or services to members of the public or other third parties and that has at least one employee in Ontario.

(2) In this Regulation,

“designated public sector organization” means the Legislative Assembly and the offices of persons appointed on the address of the Assembly, every ministry of the Government of Ontario, every municipality and every person or organization listed in Schedule 1 or described in Schedule 2 to this Regulation; (“organisation désignée du secteur public”)

“provider of goods or services” means a person or organization to whom this Regulation applies. (“fournisseur de biens ou de services”)

## **Effective dates**

2. The accessibility standards for customer service apply to the designated public sector organizations on and after January 1, 2010 and to other providers of goods or services on and after January 1, 2012.

## **Establishment of policies, practices and procedures**

3. (1) Every provider of goods or services shall establish policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of its goods or services to persons with disabilities.

(2) The provider shall use reasonable efforts to ensure that its policies, practices and procedures are consistent with the following principles:

1. The goods or services must be provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.
2. The provision of goods or services to persons with disabilities and others must be integrated unless an alternate measure is necessary, whether temporarily or on a permanent basis, to enable a person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the goods or services.
3. Persons with disabilities must be given an opportunity equal to that given to others to obtain, use and benefit from the goods or services.

(3) Without limiting subsections (1) and (2), the policies must deal with the use of assistive devices by persons with disabilities to obtain, use or benefit from the provider's goods or services or the availability, if any, of other measures which enable them to do so.

(4) When communicating with a person with a disability, a provider shall do so in a manner that takes into account the person's disability.

(5) Every designated public sector organization and every other provider of goods or services that has at least 20 employees in Ontario shall prepare one or more documents describing its policies, practices and procedures and, upon request, shall give a copy of a document to any person.

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

4. (1) This section applies if goods or services are provided to members of the public or other third parties at premises owned or operated by the provider of the goods or services and if the public or third parties have access to the premises.

(2) If a person with a disability is accompanied by a guide dog or other service animal, the provider of goods or services shall ensure that the person is permitted to enter the premises with the animal and to keep the animal with him or her unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law from the premises.

(3) If a service animal is excluded by law from the premises, the provider of goods or services shall ensure that other measures are available to enable the person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the provider's goods or services.



(4) If a person with a disability is accompanied by a support person, the provider of goods or services shall ensure that both persons are permitted to enter the premises together and that the person with a disability is not prevented from having access to the support person while on the premises.

(5) The provider of goods or services may require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person when on the premises, but only if a support person is necessary to protect the health or safety of the person with a disability or the health or safety of others on the premises.

(6) 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 provider of goods or services shall ensure that notice is given in advance about the amount, if any, payable in respect of the support person.

(7) Every designated public sector organization and every other provider of goods or services that has at least 20 employees in Ontario shall prepare one or more documents describing its policies, practices and procedures with respect to the matters governed by this section and, upon request, shall give a copy of a document to any person.

(8) In this section,

“guide dog” means a guide dog as defined in section 1 of the *Blind Persons Rights’ Act*; (“chien-guide”)

“service animal” means an animal described in subsection (9); (“animal d’assistance”)

“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 or medical needs or with access to goods or services. (“personne de soutien”)

(9) For the purposes of this section, an animal is a service animal for a person with a disability,

(a) if it is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to his or her disability; or

(b) if the person provides a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability.

### **Notice of temporary disruptions**

5. (1) If, in order to obtain, use or benefit from a provider's goods or services, persons with disabilities usually use particular facilities or services of the provider and if there is a temporary disruption in those facilities or services in whole or in part, the provider shall give notice of the disruption to the public.

(2) 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.

(3) Notice may be given by posting the information at a conspicuous place on premises owned or operated by the provider of goods or services, by posting it on the provider's website, if any, or by such other method as is reasonable in the circumstances.

(4) Every designated public sector organization and every other provider of goods or services that has at least 20 employees in Ontario shall prepare a document that sets out the steps to be taken in connection with a temporary disruption and, upon request, shall give a copy of the document to any person.

### **Training for staff, etc.**

6. (1) Every provider of goods or services shall ensure that the following persons receive training about the provision of its goods or services to persons with disabilities:

1. Every person who deals with members of the public or other third parties on behalf of the provider, whether the person does so as an employee, agent, volunteer or otherwise.
2. Every person who participates in developing the provider's policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of goods or services to members of the public or other third parties.

(2) The training must include a review of the purposes of the Act and the requirements of this Regulation and instruction about the following matters:

1. How to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disability.
2. How to interact with persons with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a guide dog or other service animal or the assistance of a support person.
3. How to use equipment or devices available on the provider's premises or otherwise provided by the provider that may help with the provision of goods or services to a person with a disability.
4. What to do if a person with a particular type of disability is having difficulty accessing the provider's goods or services.

(3) The training must be provided to each person as soon as practicable after he or she is assigned the applicable duties.

(4) Training must also be provided on an ongoing basis in connection with changes to the policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of goods or services to persons with disabilities.

(5) Every designated public sector organization and every other provider of goods or services that has at least 20 employees in Ontario shall prepare a document describing its training policy, and the document must include a summary of the contents of the training and details of when the training is to be provided.

(6) Every designated public sector organization and every other provider of goods or services that has at least 20 employees in Ontario shall keep records of the training

provided under this section, including the dates on which the training is provided and the number of individuals to whom it is provided.

### **Feedback process for providers of goods or services**

7. (1) Every provider of goods or services shall establish a process for receiving and responding to feedback about the manner in which it provides goods or services to persons with disabilities and shall make information about the process readily available to the public.

(2) The feedback process must permit persons to provide their feedback in person, by telephone, in writing, or by delivering an electronic text by email or on diskette or otherwise.

(3) The feedback process must specify the actions that the provider of goods or services is required to take if a complaint is received.

(4) Every designated public sector organization and every other provider of goods or services that has at least 20 employees in Ontario shall prepare a document describing its feedback process and, upon request, shall give a copy of the document to any person.

### **Notice of availability of documents**

8. (1) Every designated public sector organization and every other provider of goods or services that has at least 20 employees in Ontario shall notify persons to whom it provides goods or services that the documents required by this Regulation are available upon request.

(2) The notice 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.

### **Format of documents**

9. (1) If a provider of goods or services is required by this Regulation to give a copy of a document to a person with a disability, the provider shall give the person the document, or the information contained in the document, in a format that takes into account the person's disability.

(2) The provider of goods or services and the person with a disability may agree upon the format to be used for the document or information.

### **Commencement**

**10. This Regulation comes into force on January 1, 2008.**

## SCHEDULE 1

### BOARDS, COMMISSIONS, AUTHORITIES AND AGENCIES

1. Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs Appeal Tribunal.

2. Agricorp.
3. Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario.
4. Algonquin Forestry Authority.
5. Assessment Review Board.
6. Board of negotiation continued under subsection 27 (1) of the *Expropriations Act*.
7. Cancer Care Ontario.
8. The Centennial Centre of Science and Technology.
9. Child and Family Services Review Board.
10. College Compensation and Appointments Council.
11. Each community care access corporation as defined in section 1 of the *Community Care Access Corporations Act, 2001*.
12. Consent and Capacity Board.
13. Conservation Review Board.
14. Criminal Injuries Compensation Board.
15. Crown Employees Grievance Settlement Board.
16. Custody Review Board.
17. Deposit Insurance Corporation of Ontario.
18. Echo: Improving Women's Health in Ontario.
19. Education Quality and Accountability Office.
20. Environmental Review Tribunal.
21. Financial Services Commission of Ontario.
22. Financial Services Tribunal.
23. Fire Marshal's Public Fire Safety Council.
24. Fire Safety Commission.
25. Greater Toronto Transit Authority.
26. Greater Toronto Transportation Authority.
27. Health Professions Appeal and Review Board.
28. Health Professions Regulatory Advisory Council.
29. Health Services Appeal and Review Board.
30. Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario.

31. Landlord and Tenant Board.
32. Legal Aid Ontario.
33. Licence Appeal Tribunal.
34. Liquor Control Board of Ontario.
35. Each local health integration network as defined under section 2 of the *Local Health System Integration Act, 2006*.
36. McMichael Canadian Art Collection.
37. Metropolitan Toronto Convention Centre Corporation.
38. Niagara Escarpment Commission.
39. Niagara Parks Commission.
40. Normal Farm Practices Protection Board.
41. Office of the Employer Adviser.
42. Office of the Worker Adviser.
43. Ontario Civilian Commission on Police Services.
44. Ontario Clean Water Agency.
45. Ontario Educational Communications Authority.
46. Ontario Electricity Financial Corporation.
47. Ontario Energy Board.
48. Ontario Farm Products Marketing Commission.
49. Ontario Film Review Board.
50. Ontario Financing Authority.
51. Ontario Food Terminal Board.
52. Ontario French-language Educational Communications Authority.
53. Ontario Health Quality Council.
54. Ontario Heritage Trust.
55. Ontario Highway Transportation Board.
56. Ontario Human Rights Commission.
57. Ontario Infrastructure Project Corporation.
58. Ontario Labour Relations Board.
59. Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corporation.
60. Ontario Media Development Corporation.

61. Ontario Mental Health Foundation.
62. Ontario Municipal Board.
63. Ontario Northland Transportation Commission.
64. Ontario Parole and Earned Release Board.
65. Ontario Pension Board.
66. Ontario Place Corporation.
67. Ontario Police Arbitration Commission.
68. Ontario Racing Commission.
69. Ontario Realty Corporation.
70. Ontario Review Board.
71. Ontario Securities Commission.
72. Ontario Special Education Tribunal (English).
73. Ontario Special Education Tribunal (French).
74. Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership Corporation.
75. Ontario Trillium Foundation.
76. Ottawa Congress Centre.
77. Owen Sound Transportation Company.
78. Pay Equity Hearings Tribunal.
79. Pay Equity Office.
80. Province of Ontario Council for the Arts.
81. Public Service Grievance Board.
82. Royal Ontario Museum.
83. St. Lawrence Parks Commission.
84. Science North.
85. Smart Systems for Health Agency.
86. Social Assistance Review Board.
87. Social Benefits Tribunal.
88. Soldiers' Aid Commission.
89. Trillium Gift of Life Network.
90. Walkerton Clean Water Centre.
91. Workplace Safety and Insurance Appeals Tribunal.

92. Workplace Safety and Insurance Board.

## SCHEDULE 2

### BROADER PUBLIC SECTOR

1. Every district school board as defined in section 1 of the *Education Act*.
2. Every hospital as defined in section 1 of the *Public Hospitals Act*.
3. Every college of applied arts and technology established under the *Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology Act, 2002*.
4. Every university in Ontario, including its affiliated and federated colleges, that receives operating grants from the Government of Ontario.
5. Every public transportation organization in Ontario, including any municipally operated transportation services for persons with disabilities, that provides services for which a fare is charged for transporting the public by vehicles that are operated,
  - i. by, for or on behalf of the Government of Ontario, a municipality, a local board of a municipality or a transit or transportation commission or authority,
  - ii. under an agreement between the Government of Ontario and a person, firm, corporation, or transit or transportation commission or authority, or
  - iii. under an agreement between a municipality and a person, firm, corporation or transit or transportation commission or authority.

## SECTION 4: DEFINITIONS

### Disability

The definition of disability as the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act understands it, means:

- (a) any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is cause 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 coordination, 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,
- (b) a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability,
- (c) a 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, or
- (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;

The definition includes disabilities of different severity, visible as well as non-visible disabilities, and disabilities the effects of which may come and go.

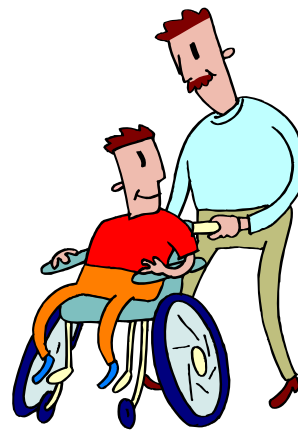
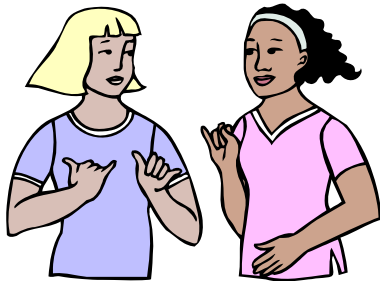
### Service Animal

- ✚ A dog trained as a guide for a blind person and having the qualifications prescribed by the regulations under the Blind Person' Rights Act
- ✚ An animal that is readily apparent as being used for a purpose relating to a disability
- ✚ Includes an animal where the person provides a letter from a physician or nurse confirming the animal is required for reasons relating to a disability



## Support Person

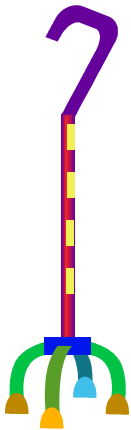
- ✚ A support person is another person who accompanies a person with a disability in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs or with access to goods or services



**SECTION 5:  
HORTON TOWNSHIP CUSTOMER SERVICE POLICY**

**SECTION 6: PRESENTATIONS & TRAINING**

**Assistive Devices come in many forms!**  
Can you name all of the assistive devices below?



Barrier Identification Scenario – Property Tax Inquiry

Mr. and Mrs. Johnston are both 78 years old. They have just received their property tax notice. The rate has gone up much more than they expected. An explanation is given on the form, but it is vague and Mr. and Mrs. Johnston do not understand the legal and financial terminology on their statement. They also find it difficult to make out many of the words and figures due to the small print.

Until recently, Mr. Johnston would have dealt with financial matters but since his stroke a few months ago he is unable to communicate clearly. The stroke has affected his speech and his mobility. Mr. Johnston now uses a wheelchair.

Mrs. Johnston places a telephone call to city hall. The telephone prompt directs her to a series of departments. She is uncertain which department to choose so she stays on the line to speak to the switchboard operator. When Mrs. Johnston mentions her property taxes, she is immediately directed to the Clerks Department. Mrs. Johnston leaves a message which is returned later that day. Mrs. Johnston is given the name and phone number of someone in the Financial Department and leaves a message. Her call is returned when she is out and a message is left on her answering machine. The message is left quickly and is unclear. Mrs. Johnston plays the recording 3 times before she can write down the complete phone number and she still cannot make out the name of caller. She dials the phone number and explains the situation to the person who answers the phone. She does not understand his explanation. He sounds impatient and uses the same terminology that is used on her tax form.

Mrs. Johnston and her husband decide to go to City Hall to speak to someone directly. Mrs. Johnston calls the Financial Department again and speaks to the same person she spoke to earlier. She asks if there is anyone else she can speak to and he tells her that he is the only person who deals with these matters. She tells him that she and her husband would like to speak to someone in person about their property tax. They hope that by speaking to someone in person the matter will be resolved. They set a time for a meeting in 3 days.

Mrs. Johnston does not drive and Mr. Johnston is no longer able to since his stroke. They are on a fixed income and cannot afford cab fare. They book a time with para transit for the day of the meeting and find that they must wait five days for transit. They call to reschedule their appointment and find that they must wait until the following week. They then call para transit with the new date and time.

They arrive for their meeting and they meet with the same person they spoke to on the phone. The financial manager appears impatient and frustrated because Mr. and Mrs. Johnston do not understand his explanation. He also seems impatient with Mr. Johnston's slow speech. He interrupts him, cuts him off, and finishes his sentences. At the end of the meeting Mr. and Mrs. Johnston still do not understand why their taxes have increased by such a large amount. They also feel that their time has been wasted and that the financial manager has been disrespectful towards Mr. Johnston.

## CUSTOMER SERVICE TIPS

### HOW TO WELCOME CUSTOMERS WITH DISABILITIES

Did you know that just over 15.5% of Ontarians have a disability? That's 1 in every 7 Ontarians and as the population ages that number will grow.

People with disabilities travel, shop, and do business in your community with their friends and families, just like everyone else. By providing service that welcomes people with disabilities, you can offer better service to everyone.

Treating all your customers with individual respect and courtesy is at the heart of excellent customer service.

You can broaden your customer base by welcoming everyone to your store, restaurant or services, including customers with disabilities. By learning how to serve customers with disabilities, you can attract more customers and improve your service to everyone.

#### Here are some ways you can provide better service to your customers with disabilities:

- Treat people with disabilities with the same respect and consideration you have for everyone else
- Patience, optimism, and willingness to find a way to communicate are your best tools.
- Smile, relax, and keep in mind that people with disabilities are just people.

- Don't make assumptions about what type of disability, or disabilities a person has.
- Some disabilities are not visible – take the time to get to know your customer's needs.
- Be patient. People with some types of disabilities may take a little longer to understand and respond.
- If you're not sure what to do, ask your customer, "May I help you?"
- If you can't understand what someone is saying, just politely ask again.
- Ask before you help – don't just jump in. Your customers with disabilities know if they need help and how you can provide it.
- Find a good way to communicate. A good start is to listen carefully.
- Look at your customer, but do not stare. Speak directly to a person with a disability, not their interpreter or someone who is with them.
- Use plain language and speak in short sentences
- Don't touch or address service animals – they are working and have to pay attention at all times.
- Ask permission before touching a wheelchair or other pieces of equipment.
- Every business should have emergency procedures for customers with disabilities. Make sure you know what they are.

## **WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW WHEN VISITING OR DELIVERING TO YOUR CUSTOMERS WITH DISABILITIES AT HOME**

**Here are some tips on serving customers with disabilities at home:**

- Don't arrive unexpectedly, and confirm the details before you arrive.
- Be patient. You may need to wait a few moments for your customer to open the door.

- Introduce yourself clearly. Some customers may be able to read identity cards and may instead have a password. Check before you visit.
- Keep your customer up to date with what you are doing.
- If you need to move some of your customer's possessions, make sure you leave their house exactly as when you arrived. For example, you do not want someone with a vision disability to trip because you moved a sofa.
- If you cannot complete the job, clearly explain what will happen next. Make another appointment, and leave a contact number in case there are problems.

## **WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT CUSTOMERS WITH VISION DISABILITIES**

Vision disabilities reduce one's ability to see clearly. Very few people are totally blind. Many have limited vision such as tunnel vision, where a person has a loss of peripheral or side vision, or a lack of central vision which means they cannot see straight ahead. Some can see the outline of objects while other can see the direction of light.

Vision disabilities can restrict your customers' abilities to read signs, locate landmarks or see hazards. In some cases, it may be difficult to tell if a person has a vision disability; others may use a guide dog or a white cane.

### **Here are some tips on serving customer with vision disabilities:**

- Identify yourself and use the person's name in conversation
- Do not assume the person cannot see you
- Never touch a person without alerting them, unless in an emergency.
- Describe your actions while carrying out a service



- To seat a person, gently place his or her hand on the back of the chair
- To guide a person, let him/her take your arm; let the person know if you are approaching stairs, a curb, etc.
- Tell the person if you have to walk-away
- Announce the arrival of others and introduce them individually
- Tell the person if you are extending a handshake
- Ask the person how best to accommodate a guide dog
- Beware of clutter; low hanging signs, displays in open spaces
- Use signs with large letters
- Provide large print alternatives on websites, print materials, etc.

## **WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT CUSTOMERS WHO ARE DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING**

People who have hearing loss may be deaf or hard of hearing. Like other disabilities, hearing loss has a wide variety of degrees. Remember, customers who are deaf or hard of hearing may require assistive devices when communicating.

### **Here are some tips on serving customers who are deaf or hard of hearing:**

- Always ask how you can help. Don't shout.
- Attract the customer's attention before speaking. The best way is a gentle touch on the shoulder or gently waving your hand.
- Make sure you are in a well-lighted area where your customer can see your face.
- Look at and speak directly to your customer. Address your customer, not their interpreter.
- If necessary, ask if another method of communicating would be easier, for example a pen and paper.

- Don't put your hands in front of your face when speaking.
- Be clear and precise when giving directions, and repeat or rephrase if necessary. Make sure you have been understood.
- Don't touch or address service animals – they are working and have to pay attention at all times.
- Any personal (e.g., financial) matters should be discussed in a private room to avoid other people overhearing.
- Be patient. Communication for people who are deaf may be different because their first language may not be English. It may be American Sign Language (ASL). If the person uses a hearing aid, try to speak in an area with few competing sounds.

## **WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT CUSTOMERS WITH PHYSICAL DISABILITIES**

There are many types and degrees of physical disabilities, and not all require a wheelchair. People who have arthritis, heart or lung conditions, or amputations may also have difficulty with moving, standing, or sitting. It may be difficult to identify a person with a physical disability.

### **Here are some tips on serving customers with a physical disability:**

- Open doors, provide rest area with good seating
- Give person time to move or carry out tasks
- Offer assistance in completing forms, etc.
- Offer to arrange transport, e.g. phone taxi
- Do not be afraid to shake hands or use opposite hand
- Put yourself on the same level if possible
- Do not push, pull, or lean against a wheelchair
- Let the person know about accessible features (ramps, washrooms, etc.)

## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT CUSTOMERS WITH MENTAL HEALTH DISABILITIES

People with mental health disabilities look like everyone else. You won't know your customer has a mental health disability unless you are informed of it. And usually, it will not affect your customer service.

But if someone is experiencing difficulty in controlling their symptoms or is in a crisis, you may need to help out. Be calm and professional and let your customer tell you how you can best help.

### Here are some tips on serving customers who have mental health disabilities:

- Be patient, calm and flexible
- Persons with more severe mental health disabilities may have difficulty processing or expressing emotions or may overreact
- If the person appears to be in a crisis, remain calm and ask how you can help
- Talk with a normal voice and intonation
- Do not draw public attention to the person

## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW WHEN DEALING WITH CUSTOMERS WITH DISABILITIES OVER THE PHONE

### Here are some tips on serving customers with disabilities on the phone:

- Speak normally, clearly, and directly.
- Don't worry about how their voice sounds; concentrate on what is being said.
- Be patient, don't interrupt and don't finish your customer's sentences. Give your customer time to explain his or herself.

- Don't try to guess what your customer is saying. If you don't understand, don't pretend. Just ask again.
- If you've not understood what has been said, just repeat or rephrase what you heard.
- If a telephone customer is using an interpreter or a TTY line, just speak normally to the customer, not to the interpreter.
- If your customer is having great difficulty communicating, make arrangements to call back when it's convenient to speak with someone else.

## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT CUSTOMERS WITH INTELLECTUAL/ DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

People with intellectual or developmental disabilities may have difficulty doing many things that most of us take for granted. These disabilities can mildly or profoundly limit one's ability to learn. You may not be able to know if someone has this disability unless you are told, or you notice the way people act, ask questions or use body language.

As much as possible, treat your customers with intellectual/developmental disabilities as you would anyone else. They may understand more than you think, and they will appreciate you treating them with respect.

### Here are some tips on serving customers with intellectual/developmental disabilities:

- Don't assume what a person can or cannot do
- Use plain language and speak in short sentences
- Make sure your customer understands what you have said
- If you can't understand what's being said, don't pretend. Just ask again.

- Provide one piece of information at a time
- Be supportive and patient
- Speak directly to your customer, not their companion or attendant

## **WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT CUSTOMERS WITH SPEECH OR LANGUAGE IMPAIRMENTS**

Some people have problems communicating. It could be the result of cerebral palsy, hearing loss, or another condition that makes it difficult to pronounce words, causes slurring or stuttering, or not being able to express oneself or understand written or spoken language. Some people who have severe difficulties may use communication boards or other assistive devices.

### **Here are some tips for serving customers who have speech or language impairments:**

- Just because a person has one disability doesn't mean they have another. For example, if a customer has difficulty speaking; don't assume they have an intellectual/developmental disability as well.
- If you don't understand, ask your customer to repeat the information
- If you are able, ask questions that can be answered with "yes" or "no".
- Be patient, polite, and give your customer whatever time he/she needs to get his/her point across.
- Don't interrupt or finish your customer's sentences. Wait for them to finish.
- Patience, respect, and willingness to find a way to communicate are your best tools.

## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT CUSTOMERS WHO HAVE LEARNING DISABILITIES

Learning disabilities can result in a host of different communication difficulties for people. They can be subtle as in having difficulty reading, or more pronounced, but they can interfere with your customer's ability to receive, express, or process information. You may not be able to know that someone has one of these disabilities unless you are told, or you notice the way people act, ask questions, or use body language.

### Here are some tips on serving customers with learning disabilities:

- Patience and willingness to find a way to communicate are your best tools
- When you know that someone with a learning disability needs help, ask how you can help
- Speak normally, clearly, and directly to your customer
- Take some time – people with some kinds of learning disabilities may take a little longer to understand and respond
- Try to find ways of providing information that works best for them. For example, have a pen and paper ready.
- If you're dealing with a child, be patient, encouraging and supportive
- Be courteous and patient and your customer will let you know how to best provide service in a way that works for them

## **SECTION 7: APPENDICES**

### **INDEX**

Appendix A.....	Standard Practices: Barriers and Solutions
Appendix B.....	Service Disruption Document
Appendix C.....	Feedback Invitation Poster
Appendix D.....	Obtaining Feedback Document
Appendix E.....	Addressing Customer Feedback Document

## APPENDIX A

### STANDARD PRACTICES Barriers and Solutions

Potential Barriers	Possible Solutions
<b>Vision Loss</b>	
Staff may not be aware of the need to describe goods and services when a person cannot read a sign.	It is The Corporation of the Township of Horton's standard practice to describe to customers the goods and services offered if they are unable to view them due to vision loss.
<b>Deaf, deafened, oral deaf, or hard of hearing</b>	
Staff are not aware of the need to paraphrase or repeat more slowly what is said to customers when the customer has not understood the message.	
Speaking to customers while chewing gum or covering mouth with hands which does not allow for lip reading.	
Loud music and poor acoustics, making hearing difficult for customers using hearing aids.	
<b>Intellectual/Developmental Disability</b>	
Use of complicated or technical language in customer service	
Ignoring customers who are more reserved or those who are afraid to ask for help.	
<b>Learning Disability</b>	
Providing complicated documents to customers without explanation or opportunity to discuss or ask questions.	
Employees who are not flexible in	



offering alternative communication strategies or adequate time in providing service	
<b>Mental Health Disability</b>	
Negative stereotypes about people with mental health disabilities, resulting in disrespectful or impatient treatment.	
<b>Physical Disability</b>	
Failure of staff to offer assistance when some services require particular agility and/or motor skills.	
Failure of staff to offer convenient seating (close to restrooms or exits).	
<b>Speech Impairment</b>	
Verbal speech is the only form of communication used to interact with customers.	

**APPENDIX B**

**Document for Notifying the Public  
About Disruptions in Service**



**NOTICE OF DISRUPTION**

**Type of Disruption**\_\_\_\_\_

**Reason for Disruption**\_\_\_\_\_

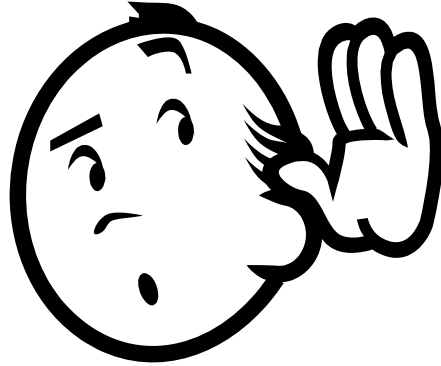
**Duration of Disruption**\_\_\_\_\_

**Alternative Facilities and Services**\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX C

### Invitation for Feedback & Availability of Policy



**WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!**

We strive to improve accessibility for our customers with disabilities.

**We welcome your feedback!**

To share your comments, request a feedback form  
OR ask for a copy of our accessibility policy.

Please call Mackie McLaren, CAO/Clerk at 613-432-6271 or email [mjmhorton@xplornet.com](mailto:mjmhorton@xplornet.com)

Thank you,

The Corporation of Horton Township

**APPENDIX D**

**Document for Obtaining Feedback**

**CUSTOMER FEEDBACK FORM**

**Thank you for visiting the Corporation of Horton Township. We value all of our customers and strive to meet everyone's needs.**

**Please tell us the date of your visit:\_\_\_\_\_**

**Did we respond to your customer service needs today?**

**YES                      SOMEWHAT                      NO (please explain below)**

**Did you have and problems accessing our goods and services?**

**YES                      SOMEWHAT                      NO (please explain below)**

**Please add any other comments you may have:**

**Contact Information (optional)\*:**

**Thank you,**

**The Corporation of Horton Township**

## **APPENDIX E**

### **Document for Addressing Customer Feedback**

Date feedback received:

Name of customer (optional)\*:

Contact information (if appropriate)\*:

Details:

Follow-up:

Action to be taken:

Staff member:

Date: