

Service Disruption

In the event of a temporary service disruption occurring that would limit a person with a disability from gaining access to a Town facility, goods or service, the Town will post notice or otherwise make the disruption known to customers in the following methods/ places:

- web-site;
- reception or customer service counter;
- notice on entrance doors; and
- with delivery agents, where applicable.

If an unexpected disruption occurs, persons with disabilities will be accommodated by the use of other means if possible to deliver the goods and services.

Feedback

Feedback from our customers gives us the opportunity to learn and improve. Feedback may be provided by an individual with a disability in a format that is most convenient for them such as by telephone, in person, in writing, by e-mail or by delivering a diskette. All feedback will be kept in strict confidence and used to improve how we deliver accessible customer service. A response to the feedback will be provided in the manner in which it was received.

Communication

Provide communication in a way that is usable and meaningful to your customer. Offer various methods such as phone, in person, electronic, hard copy, pictures, etc.

Be patient and clear, be concise and respectful. Provide a quiet environment and reduce background noise. Ensure adequate lighting.

T. A. L. K. !!

- T- Take the time to ask
“May I help you?”**
- A - Ask - don’t assume.
Never assist unless asked.**
- L - Listen attentively and speak
directly to the customer.**
- K - Know the accommodations
and special services that are
available.**

For more information on accessibility, please visit us on the web at www.forterrie.on.ca — click on **accessibility!**

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ACCESSIBLE CUSTOMER SERVICE



Dignity Integration
Equality Independence
Responsive Sensitive
Inclusive

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)

The AODA applies to both public and private sectors and was written to ensure a fully accessible Ontario by 2025. This Act requires that standards be developed and enforced.

Five Standards have been developed to date:

1. Customer Service
2. Transportation
3. Information and Communications
4. Employment
5. Design of Public Spaces.

Ontario Regulation 429/07 sets out how to provide accessible customer service and the municipality had to meet all the requirements for the customer service standard by January 1, 2010. Those requirements are:

- Policies, procedures and practices be established including the use of personal assistive devices, support persons and service animals to access services;
- Staff training, including volunteers, contractors and any other people who interact with the public such as board members;
- A feedback method be established to allow customers to let you know how well you are providing accessible customer service or areas for improvement;
- Alternate communication methods;
- A notice of service disruption.

The private sector had to comply by January 1, 2012.

The four remaining standards are part of the Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulation.

What is Accessible Customer Service?

- Providing **good customer service** is the goal, **regardless of ability**
- **Flexible service** that meets the needs of an individual customer
- Putting the **person** first
- Understanding that some methods of service may **not work for all people**
- Allowing for **comments and suggestions** on how to improve accessible customer service
- Providing as much **notice** as possible if there is a **disruption** in service.

The key principles of accessible customer service are:

DIGNITY- Service is provided in a respectful manner consistent with the needs of the individual;

INDEPENDENCE- Service for persons with disabilities support their independence while respecting their right to safety and personal privacy;

EQUITY/EQUALITY- Service outcome is the same for persons with disabilities as for persons without disabilities;

INTEGRATED- Services will allow people with disabilities to fully benefit from the same services in the same place and in the same or similar way as other customers;

SENSITIVE- Service is provided in a manner that is respectful to an individual's needs;

RESPONSIVE- Service is delivered in a timely manner, considering the nature of the service and the accommodation required;

INCLUSIVE - We are committed to an inclusive environment as one where people experience both the feeling and reality of belonging and where, as a result, they are able to fulfill their potential.

Assistive Devices

An assistive device is a tool, technology or other mechanism that enables a person with a disability to do everyday tasks and activities. Personal assistive devices can include things like wheelchairs, scooters, walkers, braces, computer software programs, hearing aids, white canes or speech amplification devices.

Allow customers to keep and use assistive devices as needed. Make room to accommodate if needed. Do not touch or handle an assistive device without permission. Let your customer know about accessible features in the immediate environment such as elevators or accessible washrooms.

Support Persons

Some people with disabilities may be accompanied by a support person who might help with a variety of things from communicating, to helping with mobility, personal care or medical needs. A support person can accompany a customer to any part of the premises open to the public. If admission to an event is permitted and fees are payable to the Town, the support person is permitted at no cost. If the fees are payable to a third party, the support person is permitted to attend the event at their own cost.

If you're not sure which person is the customer, take your lead from the person using or requesting the goods or services, or simply ask. Speak directly to your customer, not to their support person

Service Animals

Guide dogs assist a person who is blind and service animals might open doors, pick up items, predict seizures and alert an individual to sounds. Service animals are allowed in all areas open to the public unless excluded by law. You may ask a person for a letter from a physician or nurse verifying that their animal is required for reasons relating to their disability if it is not apparent. Remember that a service animal is not a pet, it is a working animal. Avoid touching or addressing a service animal as they need to pay attention at all times. Provide the location of fresh water for the service animal and where service animals may be walked to relieve themselves.