



Policy Title:	Accessible Customer Service Policy
Policy No:	GA 1-09
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1. Policy Statement

The Corporation of the Township of Dawn-Euphemia is committed to providing quality goods and services that are accessible to all persons.

2. Purpose / Background Information

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (the "AODA") is a Provincial Act with the purpose of developing, implementing and enforcing accessibility standards in order to achieve accessibility for persons with disabilities with respect to goods, services, facilities, accommodation, employment, buildings, structures and premises.

Under the AODA, Ontario Regulation 429/07 entitled "Accessibility Standards for Customer Service" came into force on January 1, 2008. This Regulation establishes accessibility standards specific to customer service for public sector organizations and other persons or organizations that provide goods and services to members of the public or other third parties.

This policy is drafted in accordance with the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service (Ontario Regulation 429/07) and addresses the following:

- the provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities;
- the use of assistive devices by persons with disabilities;
- the use of service animals by persons with disabilities;
- the use of support persons by persons with disabilities;
- notice of temporary disruptions in services and facilities;
- training;
- customer feedback regarding the provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities;
and
- notice of availability and format of documents.

3. Application

This policy applies to all persons who deal with members of the public or other third parties on behalf of the Township, whether the person does so as an employee, member of Council, agent, volunteer, student on placement, or otherwise and all persons who participate in developing the Township's policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of goods and services to members of the public or other third parties.

4. Definitions

Assistive Device

A device used to assist persons with disabilities in carrying out activities or in accessing the services of persons or organizations covered by the Customer Service Standard.

Disability

- (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, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, 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 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.

Guide Dog

A guide dog as defined in Section 1 of the Blind Persons' Rights Act is a dog trained as a guide for a blind person and having qualifications prescribed by the regulations under the Blind Persons' Rights Act.

Nurse

A Registered Nurse or Registered Practical Nurse who is a registered member in good standing with the College of Nurses of Ontario.

Physician

A physician who is a registered member, in good standing, with the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario.

Service Animal

Any animal used by a person with a disability for reasons relating to the disability where it is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to his or her disability; or where the person provides a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that he or she requires the animal for reasons relating to his or her disability; or a valid identification card signed by the Attorney General of Canada or a certificate of training from a recognized guide dog or service animal training school.

Support Person

A person who accompanies a person with a disability in order to assist him or her with communication, mobility, personal care, medical needs or with access to goods or services.

5. General Principles

a) The Provision of Goods and Services to Persons with Disabilities

The Township of Dawn-Euphemia will use reasonable efforts to ensure that its policies, practices and procedures are consistent with the following principles:

- the Township's goods and services are provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities;
- the provision of the Township's goods and services to persons with disabilities are integrated with those provided to persons who do not have disabilities unless an alternative measure is necessary to enable a person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the Township's goods or services and;
- persons with disabilities are given an opportunity equal to that of persons without disabilities to obtain, use or benefit from the Township's goods and services.

b) Communication with Persons with Disabilities

When communicating with a person with a disability, Township personnel will do so in an appropriate manner that takes into account the person's disability.

c) Notice of Temporary Disruptions in Services and Facilities

The Township is aware that the operation of its services and facilities is important to the public. However, temporary disruptions in the Township's services and facilities may occur due to reasons that may or may not be within the Township's control or knowledge.

The Township will make reasonable effort to provide notice of the disruption to the public, including information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if any, that may be available. The Township will make reasonable effort to provide prior notice of planned disruption if possible, recognizing that in some circumstances such as in the situation of unplanned temporary disruption, advance notice will not be possible. In such cases, the Township will provide notice as soon as possible.

When temporary disruptions occur to the Township's services or facilities, the Township will provide notice by posting the information in visible places, or by any other method that may be reasonable under the circumstances as soon as reasonably possible.

d) Assistive Devices and other Measures that Assist with Accessibility

A person with a disability may provide their own assistive device for the purpose of obtaining, using and benefiting from the Township's goods and services. Exceptions may occur in situations where the Township has determined that the assistive device may pose a risk to the health and safety of a person with a disability or the health and safety of others on the premises.

In these situations and others, the Township may offer a person with a disability other reasonable measures to assist him or her in obtaining, using and benefiting from the Township's goods and services, where the Township has such other measures available.

It should be noted that it is the responsibility of the person with a disability to ensure that his or her assistive device is operated in a safe and controlled manner at all times.

e) Service Animals

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.

If the service animal is excluded by law from the premises, the provider of goods and 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.

If it is not readily apparent that the animal is a service animal, the Township may ask the person with a disability for a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to his or her disability. The Township may also, or instead, ask for a valid identification card signed by the Attorney General of Canada or a certificate of training from a recognized guide dog or service animal training school.

It should be noted that it is the responsibility of the person with a disability to ensure that his or her service animal is kept in control at all times.

f) Support Persons

A person with a disability may enter premises owned and operated, or operated, by the Township with a support person and have access to the support person while on the premises.

The Township may require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person while on Township premises in situations where it is necessary to protect the health or safety of the person with a disability or the health and safety of others on the premises.

A support person, when assisting a person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the Township's goods and services, will be permitted to attend at no charge where an admission fee is applicable.

g) Feedback

The Township of Dawn-Euphemia is committed to providing high quality goods and services to all members of the public it serves. Feedback from the public is welcomed as it may identify areas that require change and encourage continuous service improvements.

Feedback from a member of the public about the delivery of goods and services to persons with disabilities should be submitted to the Clerk's office and may be given by telephone, in person, in writing, in electronic format or through other methods.

A response will be provided within 14 working days in a suitable format.

h) Training

The Township will ensure that all persons to whom this policy applies receive training as required by the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service. The amount and format of training given will be tailored to suit each person's interactions with the public and his or her involvement in the development of policies, procedures and practices pertaining to the provision of goods and services. The content of the training will include:

- a review of the purposes of the AODA;
- the requirements of the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service (Ontario Regulation 429 / 07);
- instruction on the Township's policies, procedures and practices pertaining to the provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities;
- how to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disabilities;
- what to do if a person with a particular type of disability is having difficulty accessing the Township's goods or services;
- how to interact with persons with disabilities who use assistive devices or who require the assistance of a support person or service animal; and
- information about the equipment or devices available on the Township's premises that may help with the provision of goods or services to persons with disabilities.

i) Timeline for Training

Training will be provided as soon as practicable upon an individual being assigned the applicable duties as well as on an ongoing basis as changes occur to the Township's policies, procedures and practices governing the provision of goods or services to persons with disabilities.

j) Records of Training

The Township will keep records of the training, including the date on which training is provided and the number of individuals to whom it is provided. The names of individuals trained will be recorded for training administration purposes, subject to the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act ("MFIPPA"). See Appendix "A" – Training Documentation

6. Availability and Format of Documents Required by the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service (Ontario Regulation 429/07)

All documents required by the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, including the Township's Accessible Customer Service policies, procedures and practices, notices of temporary disruptions, training records, and written feedback process are available upon request, subject to MFIPPA.

When providing a document to a person with a disability, the Township will provide the document, or the information contained in the document, in a format that takes the person's disability into account.

7. Notice of the Availability of Documents

Notice of the availability of all documents required by the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service will be available upon request through the Township Administrator-Clerk's office.

Appendix "A"
Training Record

NAME: _____ DEPARTMENT: _____

DATE OF TRAINING: _____

PERSON/AGENCY ADMINISTERING TRAINING _____

I have attended a training session on Accessible Customer Service and received instruction about the following matters:

- 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; and
- 5) Instruction on what to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing your services.

Signature of person trained

Date

Signature of trainer

Date

I have reviewed independently the Township of Dawn-Euphemia's policy on Accessible Customer Service. I am aware of regulations under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and the importance of implementing and enforcing accessibility standards in order to achieve accessibility for persons with disabilities with respect to goods, services, facilities, accommodation, employment, buildings, structures and premises. I will abide by the Township of Dawn-Euphemia's Accessible Customer Service Policy.

Signature

Date

Appendix “B”

TERMINOLOGY

The Following is an excerpt from the Ministry of Community and Social Services - gov.on.ca/mcss/english/how/howtochoose.html

Talk about Disabilities — Choose the Right Word

Words can influence and reinforce the public's perception of people with disabilities. They can create either a positive view of people with disabilities or an indifferent, negative depiction. Here are some general tips that can help make your communication and interactions with or about people with all types of disabilities more successful.

- Use disability or disabled, not handicap or handicapped.
- Never use terms such as retarded, dumb, psycho, moron or crippled. These words are very demeaning and disrespectful to people with disabilities.
- Remember to put people first. It is proper to say person with a disability, rather than disabled person.
- If you don't know someone or if you are not familiar with the disability, it's better to wait until the individual describes his/her situation to you, rather than to make your own assumptions. Many types of disabilities have similar characteristics and your assumptions may be wrong.

The following preferred words and phrases will help you choose language that is neither demeaning nor hurtful. People with disabilities generally prefer these terms.

Instead of	Please Use
Afflicted by cerebral palsy, multiple sclerosis, arthritis, etc.	Person who has cerebral palsy Person who has multiple sclerosis Person who has arthritis, etc. Person with a disability
Aged (the)	Seniors
Autistic	A person with autism A person who has autism
Birth defect, congenital defect, deformity	A person who has a congenital disability A person with a disability since birth
Blind (the), visually impaired (the)	A person who is blind A person with a vision disability A person with vision loss A person with a visual impairment A person with a head injury
Brain damaged	A person with a brain injury A person with a head injury
Confined to a wheel chair, wheelchair bound	A person who uses a wheelchair
Crazy, insane, lunatic, psycho, mental, mental patient, maniac, neurotic, psychotic, unsound mind, schizophrenic	A person with a mental health disability. A person who has depression. A person with schizophrenia.
Cripple, crippled, lame	A person with a disability A person with a mobility impairment or, more specifically,

	<p>a person who walks with crutches.</p> <p>A person who uses a walker.</p> <p>A person who uses a mobility aid.</p> <p>A person with arthritis</p>
Deaf (the), hearing impaired (the)	<p>A person who is deaf (person with profound hearing loss who communicates using sign language)</p> <p>A person who is deafened (deaf later in life)</p> <p>A person who is hard of hearing (person with hearing loss who communicates primarily by speech)</p> <p>A person with a hearing loss.</p> <p>When referring to the deaf community and their culture (whose preferred mode of communication is sign language) it is acceptable to use "the Deaf"</p>
Deaf and dumb, deaf mute	A person who is deaf without speech.
Deaf-blind (the)	A person who is deaf-blind (person who has any combination of visual auditory impairments.)
Differently Abled	A person with a disability.
Disabled (the)	People with disabilities.
Elderly (the)	Seniors, older adults.
Epileptic	Person who has epilepsy.
Fits, spells, attacks	Seizures.
Handicapped (the)	<p>Person with a disability</p> <p>The term handicapped may be used when referring to an environmental or attitudinal barrier as in "a person who is handicapped by a set of stairs leading to the entrance."</p>
Hidden disability	Non-visible disability.
Invalid	Person with a disability.
Learning disabled, learning disordered, the dyslexics	A person with a learning disability or people with learning disabilities.
Mentally retarded, idiot, simple, retarded, feeble minded, imbecile	A person with an intellectual disability. A person with a developmental disability.
Midget, dwarf	A person of short stature. A person who has a form of dwarfism. A little person. A person diagnosed with "Achondroplasia, SED, or what ever their specific diagnosis is", a form of dwarfism.
Mongoloid, Mongolism	Person with Down Syndrome. One can use this terminology only when it is directly relevant. A person with an intellectual or developmental disability.
Normal	A person who is not disabled. Person who is able bodied. Specifically, a person who is sighted, a hearing person, a person who is ambulatory.
Patient	Person with a disability. The word patient may be used when referring to a relationship between a medical professional and a client

Physically challenged	Person with a physical disability.
Spastic	A person who has muscle spasms
Stutterer	A person with a speech impairment or impediment
Victim of / suffers from / stricken with cerebral palsy, multiple sclerosis, arthritis, etc.	A person who has cerebral palsy. Person who has multiple sclerosis, etc. Person with a disability.
Visually impaired (the)	A person with a visual impairment. A person with low vision. A person with vision loss. A person with a vision disability

For additional information visit the Ministry of Community and Social Services website at <http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/mcass>.

Appendix “C”

Best Practices

Best practices and procedures for Customer Service: PHYSICAL

There are many types and degrees of physical disabilities, and not all require a wheelchair. It may be difficult to identify a person with a physical disability.

Here are some tips on serving customers who have physical disabilities:

- Speak normally and directly to your customer. Don't speak to someone who is with them
- People with physical disabilities often have their own way of doing things. Ask before you help.
- Wheelchairs and other mobility devices are part of a person's personal space, don't touch, move or lean on them
- Provide your customer information about accessible features of the immediate environment (automatic doors, accessible washrooms, etc.)
- Keep ramps and corridors free of clutter
- If a counter is too high or wide, step around it to provide service
- Provide seating for those that cannot stand in line
- Be Patient. Customers will identify their needs to you.

Best practices and procedures for Customer Service: 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:

- Attract the customer's attention before speaking. The best way is a gentle touch on the shoulder or gently waving your hand
- Always ask how you can help. Don't shout. Speak clearly
- Be clear and precise when giving directions, and repeat or rephrase if necessary. Make sure you have been understood
- Face the person and keep your hands and other objects away from your face and mouth
- Deaf people may use a sign language interpreter to communicate—always direct your attention to the Deaf person—not the interpreter
- Any personal (e.g. financial) matters should be discussed in a private room to avoid other people overhearing
- If the person uses a hearing aid, try to speak in an area with few competing sounds
- If necessary, write notes back and forth to share information
- Don't touch service animals — they are working and have to pay attention at all times

Best practices and procedures for Customer Service: DEAF-BLINDNESS

Most people who are deaf-blind will be accompanied by an intervener, a professional who helps with communicating.

Interveners are trained in special sign language that involves touching the hands of the client in a two-hand, manual alphabet or finger spelling, and may guide and interpret for their client.

Here are some tips on serving customers who are deaf-blind:

- Do not assume what a person can or cannot do. Some people who are deaf-blind have some sight or hearing, while others have neither.
- A customer who is deaf-blind is likely to explain to you how to communicate with them or give you an assistance card or a note explaining how to communicate with them
- Do not touch or address the service animals they are working and have to pay attention at all times
- Never touch a person who is deaf-blind suddenly or without permission unless it's an emergency
- Understand that communication can take some time-be patient.
- Direct your attention to you customer, not the Intervener.

Best practices and procedures for Customer Service: VISION

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 white cane.

Here are some tips on serving customers who have vision disabilities:

- Verbally identify yourself before making physical contact
- If the person uses a service animal- do not touch or approach the animal-it is working.
- Verbally describe the setting, form, location as necessary
- Offer your arm to guide the person. Do not grab or pull.
- Never touch your customer without asking permission, unless it is an emergency
- Don't leave your customer in the middle of a room. Show them to a chair, or guide them to a comfortable location
- Don't walk away without saying good-bye

Best practices and procedures for Customer Service: INTELLECTUAL

People with intellectual or developmental disabilities may have difficulty doing many things 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 that 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 an intellectual or developmental disability like 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 who have an intellectual or developmental disability:

- Don't assume what a person can or cannot do
- Use clear, simple language
- Be prepared to explain and provide examples regarding information
- Remember that the person is an adult and unless you are informed otherwise, can make their own decisions
- Be patient and verify your understanding
- If you can't understand what is being said, don't pretend. Just ask again
- Provide one piece of information at a time
- Speak directly to your customer, not to their companion or attendant

Best practices and procedures for Customer Service: SPEECH

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 on serving customers with speech or language impairments:

- If possible communicate in a quiet environment
- Give the person your full attention. Don't interrupt for finish their sentences.
- Ask them to repeat as necessary, or to write their message.
- If you are able, ask questions that can be answered 'yes' or 'no'
- Verify your understanding
- Patience, respect and willingness to find a way to communicate are your best tools

Best practices and procedures for Customer Service: LEARNING

Learning disabilities are generally invisible and ability to function varies greatly- respond to any requests for verbal information, assistance in filling in forms and so on with courtesy. Allow extra time to complete tasks if necessary.

Best practices and procedures for Customer Service: MENTAL HEALTH

- Treat each person as an individual. Ask what would make him/her the most comfortable and respect his/her needs to the maximum extent possible.
- Try to reduce stress and anxiety in situations.
- Stay calm and courteous, even if the customer exhibits unusual behavior, focus on the service they need and how you can help.

Best practices and procedures for Customer Service: OTHER

SMELL disabilities can involve the inability to sense smells or a hypersensitivity to doors and smells. A person with a smelling disability may have allergies to certain doors, scents or chemicals or may be unable to identify dangerous gases, smoke, fumes and spoiled food.

TOUCH disabilities can affect a person's ability to sense texture, temperature, vibration or pressure. Touch sensations may be reduced or heightened resulting in a hypersensitivity to touch, temperature, or the opposite, numbness and the inability to feel touch sensations

TASTE disabilities can limit the experience of the four primary taste sensations; sweet, bitter, salty and sour. A person with a taste disability may be unable to identify spoiled food or noxious substances.

OTHER disabilities result from a range of other conditions, accidents, illnesses and diseases including ALS, asthma, diabetes, cancer, HIV/AIDs, environmental sensitivities, seizure disorders, heart disease, stroke and joint replacement.

Disabilities are not always visible or easy to distinguish.

Appendix “D”

Sample Forms

1. Notice — Expected service disruption
2. Notice — Unexpected disruption in service

TOWNSHIP OF DAWN-EUPHEMIA

NOTICE

SERVICE DISRUPTION

There will be a scheduled service disruption at the municipal office. The disruptions will be from _____ until _____.

These disruptions include:

- _____(repairs to doors)
- _____(repairs to technology)

On behalf of the Township of Dawn-Euphemia we would like to thank you for your patience in this matter.

Administrator-Clerk
519-692-5148

TOWNSHIP OF DAWN-EUPHEMIA

NOTICE

UNEXPECTED DISRUPTION IN SERVICE

There is currently an unexpected service disruption. The estimated time of the service disruption will be from _____ to _____.

These disruptions include:

- _____(repairs to doors)
- _____(repairs to technology)

On behalf of the Township of Dawn-Euphemia we would like to thank you for your patience in this matter.

Administrator-Clerk
519-692-5148