



Municipality of Dysart et al

Policies and Procedures Manual

Accessible Customer Service Policy

Policy No. 58

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is intended to meet the requirements of the AODA, 2005 and all related provisions relative to the Accessibility Standard for Customer Services in order to ensure that persons with disabilities are provided equal opportunities to use the benefit from the goods and services that are provided by the Corporation of the Municipality of Dysart et al.

This policy has been developed in accordance with the Accessibility Standards for Customer Services (O.Reg. 165/16) 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;
- Employer Training on the AODA and related corporate policies;
- Communication to persons with disabilities;
- Customer service feedback regarding the provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities, and
- Notice of availability and format documents.

POLICY STATEMENT:

The Corporation of the Municipality of Dysart et al is committed to providing quality goods and services that are accessible to all persons by eliminating barriers and providing accessible, quality customer service. The Corporation of the Municipality of Dysart et al will strive to provide its goods and services in a manner that respects the dignity, independence, and integration of each individual.

APPLICATION:

This policy applies to every person who deals with members of the public or other third parties on behalf of the Municipality of Dysart et al, whether the person does so as an employee, member of Council, committee member, agent, volunteer, contracted service staff, or otherwise; and every person who participates in developing the Municipality's

policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of goods or services to members of the public or other third parties.

DEFINITIONS:

“Assistive Device” means any auxiliary tool, aid, technology or other mechanism that enables a person with a disability to do everyday tasks and activities such as moving, communicating or lifting; assist in accessing goods or services and helps the person to maintain their independence. Examples include but are not limited to, communication aids, cognitive aids, personal mobility aids, and medical aids.

“Customer” means both external and internal customers. External customers relate to residents of the Municipality, business owners, community groups and organizations, visitors to the Municipality, volunteers, vendors, other third parties, and other levels of government. Internal customers include Municipal employees, agents and Council.

“Disability” as per the Human Rights Code means:

- 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 in 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, 1987*.

“Guide Dog” means a guide dog as defined in section 1 of the *Blind Persons’ Rights Act*.

“Municipality” means the Municipality of Dysart et al.

“Service Animal” as reflected in O.Reg. 165/16, an animal is a service animal for a person with a disability, means:

- a) If it is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to his or her disability as a result of visual indicators such as the vest or harness worn by the animal; or
- b) If the person provides documentation from one of the following regulated health professionals confirming that the person requires the animal relating to the disability:

- A member of the College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists of Ontario;
- A member of the College of Chiropractors of Ontario;
- A member of the College of Nurses of Ontario;
- A member of the College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario;
- A member of the College of Optometrists of Ontario;
- A member of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario;
- A member of the College of Physiotherapists of Ontario;
- A member of the College of Psychologists of Ontario; and
- A member of the College of Registered Psychotherapists and Registered Mental Health Therapists of Ontario.

“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, services or facilities.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

1) Provision of Goods and Services to Persons with Disabilities

- a) The Municipality will use reasonable efforts to ensure that its policies, practices and procedures are consistent with the following principles:
 - i) The Municipality’s goods and services are provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of all persons with disabilities;
 - ii) The provision of the Municipality’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 Municipality’s goods, services or facilities; and
 - iii) Persons with disabilities are given an opportunity equal to that given to others, to obtain, use or benefit from the goods, services or facilities provided by and on behalf of the Municipality.

2) Communication with Persons with Disabilities

- a) The Municipality will communicate with people with disabilities in a timely manner that takes into account their disability.

3) Assistive Devices

- a) The Municipality is committed to serving people with disabilities who use assistive devices to obtain, use or benefit from our goods, services or facilities.
- b) The Municipality will make reasonable efforts to ensure that any person with a disability may utilize his or her own assistive device, unless prohibited by law; for the purpose of obtaining, using and benefiting from the Municipality’s goods, services, and facilities. The Municipality may offer reasonable alternatives to assist a person with a disability in obtaining, using and benefiting from the Municipality’s goods, services and facilities.

- c) It is the responsibility of the person with a disability to ensure that his or her assistive device is operated with the consideration for the health and safety of themselves and others.

4) Service Animals

- a) The Municipality is committed to welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by a guide dog, or other service animal, in areas open to the public, unless the animal is excluded by another law.
- b) If the guide dog or other service animal is excluded by law, the Municipality will ensure that alternate means are available to enable the person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the Municipality's goods, services and facilities.
- c) A customer that is accompanied by a guide dog or other service animal shall be considerate of the health and safety of themselves and others.
- d) If it is not readily apparent that the animal is a service animal, the Municipality may ask the customer for documentation from a regulated health professional confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to his or her disability.

5) Support Persons

- a) The Municipality is committed to welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person.
- b) Any person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person will be allowed to enter any premises owned or operated by the Municipality with his or her support person. At no time will a person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person be prevented from having access to his or her support person while on any premises owned or operated by the Municipality.
- c) The Municipality may require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person while on a premises owned or operated by the Municipality, but only if, after consulting with the person with the disability and considering the available evidence determines that:
 - i) The support person is necessary to protect the health or safety of the person with a disability or the health and safety of others on the premises; and
 - ii) There is no other reasonable way to protect the health and safety of the person with a disability and the health or safety of others on the premises.
- d) Where admission fees are charged, the Municipality will provide notice ahead of time on what admission, if any, would be charged for a support person of a person with a disability.

- e) If the Municipality requires a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person when on a premises owned or operated by the Municipality, the Municipality shall waive payment of the amount, if any, payable in respect to the support person.

6) Notice of Temporary Disruption of Services and Facilities

- a) The Municipality will make reasonable effort to provide customers with notice in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in the facilities or services usually used by people with disabilities.
- b) This notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available. Additional information such as a contact person or time with which the notice will be updated may also be included were reasonable.
- c) When a temporary disruption occurs to the Municipality's services or facilities, the Municipality will provide notice by posting the information in visible places, or on the Municipality's website, or by any other method that may be reasonable under the circumstances, as soon as reasonably possible.

7) Training

- a) The Municipality will ensure that accessible customer service training will be provided to whom this policy applies. The amount and format of training given will be tailored to suit each person's level of interaction with customers.
- b) Training will include the following:
 - i) A review of the purposes of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, and the requirements of the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service (O.Reg. 165/16);
 - ii) Instruction on the following matters:
 - (1) The Municipality's policies, procedures and practices pertaining to the provision of goods, services or facilities to persons with disabilities;
 - (2) How to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities;
 - (3) 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;
 - (4) How to use equipment or devices available on the Municipality's premises or otherwise provided by the Municipality that may help with the provision of goods, services or facility to a person with a disability; and
 - (5) What to do if a person with a particular type of disability is having difficulty accessing the Municipality's goods, services or facilities.

- c) Training will be provided as soon as possible to whom the policy applies. Training will be provided on an ongoing basis, as changes occur to the Municipality's Customer Service Policy, other policies, procedures and practices governing the provision of goods or services to persons with disabilities.
- d) The Municipality will keep records of training, including the dates on which training is provided and number of individuals to who 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.

8) Customer Feedback Process

- a) The ultimate goal of the Municipality is to meet and surpass customer service expectations while serving people with disabilities. Comments on our services regarding how well those expectations are being met are welcome and appreciated.
- b) Feedback regarding the way the Municipality provides goods and services to people with disabilities can be made in person, by telephone, regular mail, facsimile, email, or by completing and submitting a Customer Feedback Form which is available through staff or via the Municipality's website. Alternative formats and communication supports will be provided or arranged on request.
- c) Customer Feedback Forms will be directed to the Clerk's office.
- d) The appropriate member of the Management team will contact the individual who submitted the Customer Feedback form to discuss the concern and attempt to resolve the concern.
- e) Individuals that wish to submit feedback or a complaint, and does not wish to, or is not able to, complete a Customer Feedback Form may dictate their comments to a member of staff. The member of staff who receives the comments will complete the Customer Feedback Form and submit it to the Clerk's office.
- f) Information about the feedback process will be readily available to the public and notice of the process will be posted on the Municipality's website and/or in other appropriate locations.

9) Notice of Availability of Documents and Alternate Formats

- a) The Municipality of Dysart et al is committed to giving people with disabilities the opportunity to access all documents required by the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, upon request, subject to the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA). These documents include the Municipality's Accessible Customer Service Policy, procedures and policies, notes of temporary disruptions, training records, and written feedback process.

- b) Upon request the Municipality will make reasonable efforts to provide, or arrange, for the provision of accessible formats or communication supports for persons with disabilities in a timely manner that takes into account the person's accessible needs due to disability and at a cost no more than the regular cost charged to other persons. The Municipality will consult with the person making the request in determining the suitability of an accessible format or communication support.

- c) Notice of the availability of all documents required by the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service will be posted on the Municipality's website and made available by contacting the Clerk's office.