



**CORPORATE PROCEDURE**

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**DEPARTMENT: ADMINISTRATION**

**SUBJECT: ACCESSIBLE CUSTOMER SERVICE PRACTICES & PROCEDURES**

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**PURPOSE STATEMENT:**

The following practices and procedures address all the accessibility requirements outlined under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* - Ontario Regulation 429/07 Accessibility Standards for Customer Service.

Town staff will ensure reasonable efforts are made to provide goods and services in a manner that respects the independence and dignity of persons with disabilities. Equal opportunity shall be given to all persons to use, benefit and obtain the goods and services provided by the Town.

The delivery of goods and services to persons with disabilities shall be:

- emphasized through mandatory training on Accessibility Awareness,
- made accessible by the use of service animals, support persons, assistive devices, unless otherwise prohibited by law,
- a component of the Town's standard business practice.

**SCOPE:**

These practices and procedures are applicable to all Town employees, Members of Council, volunteers and any contracted services or agents acting or performing works on behalf of the Town.

**PRACTICES & PROCEDURES:**

**1. FEEDBACK PROCESS**

Feedback from the public is highly encouraged as it helps in the continuous improvement of service.

Feedback shall be received in any method most convenient to the individual. Such methods can include but are not limited to, by telephone, in writing, fax, in person, by email or any other format that is most convenient to the individual, provided that technical support is available.

The Town shall ensure a form is made available to members of the public that wish to comment on their experience obtaining, using or benefiting from goods and services offered by the Town.

Acknowledgement of questions or concerns submitted shall be made within 3 business days from the date of receipt. Additional response time shall not exceed 14 business days, unless the

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<b>APPROVAL AUTHORITY:</b>	<b>N/A</b>	
<b>SUPERSEDES:</b>	<b>New</b>	

situation is complex or requires further action. Communication shall be made with the individual submitting the inquiry at all times, unless the feedback is left anonymously.

Initially, all feedback shall be securely sealed and sent to the Legislative Services Section or the Customer Service Section of the Administration Department. Appropriate Departments will be notified where necessary.

## **2. SERVICE DISRUPTION PROTOCOL**

In the event of a planned disruption of goods or services offered by the Town, notice shall be posted at the location in which the goods or services is offered, additionally, notice will be posted on the Town's website.

In the event of an unexpected disruption to services offered by the Town, reasonable efforts shall be made to post notice at the facility or the location of the service, as well as on the Town's website, in a reasonable time frame. All known information pertaining to the disruption shall be included in the notice, such as reason for disruption, duration, etc.

When a planned or unplanned service disruption occurs, Town Facility Managers and/or Departmental Directors shall be responsible to ensure all appropriate notices are posted and communicated via email to the Senior Management Team, Members of Council, Manager of Communications and to the Town's Customer Service Section at [info@caledon.ca](mailto:info@caledon.ca). Planned service disruptions and closures, including designated statutory holidays, shall be communicated two weeks in advance to those listed above.

The following information shall be included:

- reason for the disruption,
- expected duration of the disruption,
- if available, an alternative means of obtaining the service.

The Town's Customer Service Section and Manager of Communications will be responsible for updating and maintaining the Service Disruption and Closures section of the website as well as, when possible, advertise the closures and service disruptions in the local papers.

A registration form will be made available to all persons who use or rely on particular services provided by the Town to be notified should a planned disruption of the service occur. Notice will be provided to the registered contact person through email, by mail or by telephone. All completed registration forms shall be submitted to the Legislative Services Section of the Administration Department.

## **3. SERVICE ANIMALS**

Persons with disabilities may access all Town premises open to the public accompanied by a service animal, unless the animal is prohibited by law. The service animal must be kept in the care of the person they are accompanying at all times.

Service Dogs are permitted as an exception where food is offered for sale. No other service animal is permitted under this exception.

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In circumstances where it is not apparent the animal is a service animal, the Town may ask the person with a disability for a letter verifying the person requires the service animal for reasons related to their disability. The letter must be from a qualified medical physician.

In the event that a service animal is prohibited by law, Town staff shall make reasonable efforts to ensure the person with a disability is able to use, benefit and obtain goods and services in an alternative format most suitable to them.

#### **4. SUPPORT PERSONS**

The Town recognizes the need of support persons to assist and support a person with a disability. The Town allows individuals with disabilities to be accompanied by a support person when accessing goods or services provided. The support person shall not be prevented from having access to the person they are supporting while on Town premises.

In circumstances where it is not apparent the support person is required, the Town may ask the person with a disability for a letter verifying the person requires a support person for reasons related to their disability. The letter must be from a qualified medical physician.

If a person with a disability requires a support person, but does not have access to one, the Town, when possible, will make arrangements to provide the service in an alternative format with the customers consent.

Where admission or a fee is a requirement of a service, the support person shall be waived from enduring the cost. The Town may ask the person with a disability, at the time of purchase, to provide a letter from a qualified physician verifying the requirement of a support persons for reasons related to their disability.

#### **5. ASSISTIVE DEVICES**

Individuals requiring the use of their own assistive devices to benefit and obtain services provided by the Town shall be permitted to do so, unless the device is prohibited by law or poses a privacy issue or raises a health and safety concern.

Please note: It is the responsibility of the person with a disability to ensure their assistive device is operating in a safe and controlled manner while on Town premises.

#### **6. DOCUMENTATION**

All documents required under the Customer Service Standard shall be provided to the individual in a format that takes their disability into account. In addition, all documents in accordance with the Customer Service Standard shall be posted on the Town's website.

#### **7. ACCESSIBILITY AWARENESS TRAINING**

The Town shall ensure all employees, Members of Council, volunteers and any other individual acting or performing works on behalf of the Town are trained within thirty (30) days of assuming their duties.

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All staff will receive the same format of training. Once the trainee has successfully completed the training module, an electronic confirmation will be sent to the Training Coordinator and a certified certificate of completion will be issued, with a copy kept for record purposes.

The Accessibility Awareness Training will be comprised of the following:

- Background information on the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*.
- Specific Requirements of Ontario Regulation 429/07 - Accessibility Standards for Customer Service.
- Tips on how to serve customers with specific disabilities. These include, physical disabilities, speech and language impairments, visual impairments, developmental or intellectual disabilities, hearing impairments, mental health and learning disabilities.
- The Town's policies, practices and procedures regarding service animals, support persons, service disruptions, feedback process, assistive devices and responsibility of documentation.
- Information on identifying and working towards removal of barriers.
- An additional component regarding sensitivity to all customers.

Training shall be in accordance with the Town's Human Resource Training Protocol and Purchasing Policy and included in the Human Resources Orientation Package. All Accessibility Awareness Training material shall be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure it continues to comply with legislation.

Where applicable, the Town will ensure employees are trained on communication devices that are made available through the Town.

*Related Documents:*

Accessibility Policy

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005

Accessible Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429-07

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**DEFINITIONS:**

**Barrier** - as defined by the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, means anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of his or her disability, including a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, an information or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy or a practice.

**Disability** - as defined by the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, 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 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 and Insurance Act, 1997*.

**Service Animal** - As outlined in Ontario Regulation 429/07 - an animal is a service animal for a person with a disability if it is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to his or her disability; or if the person provides a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability.

**Support Persons** - As outlined in Ontario Regulation 429/07 - a 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.

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