

10.1 Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act

Policy

Community Living York South is committed to complying with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) and all of the standards under it in order to create a barrier-free Ontario.

10.1.1 Background

The AODA was passed by the Ontario legislature with the goal of creating a barrier-free Ontario by 2025. Under the AODA, the government will develop and enforce specific standards to improve accessibility across the province. The standards will set requirements in a number of key areas. Five sets of standards are planned, including:

1. Customer Service - regulation now in force
2. Transportation
3. Information and Communication
4. Built Environment
5. Employment

The Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07, (O.Reg 429/07) is the first standard that has been developed and officially made law. It sets out specific and general requirements to ensure goods and services are provided in ways that are accessible to people with disabilities.

O. Reg 429/07 does not set accessibility requirements for the goods themselves, but rather the way in which they are provided to customers.

10.1.2 Definitions

“Alternative format” shall mean any other ways of publishing information beyond traditional printing (e.g. large print, audio format, etc.).

“Assistive devices” shall mean an auxiliary aid such as communication aids, cognition aids, personal mobility aids and medical aids (e.g. canes, crutches, wheelchairs, hearing aids, etc.).

“Customers” shall mean any person who receives goods or services.

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“Disabilities” shall mean the same as the definition of disability found in the Ontario Human Rights Code:

- (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.

“Employees” shall mean every person who deals with members of the public or other third parties on behalf of Community Living York South, whether the person does so as an employee, agent, volunteer or otherwise.

“Persons with Disabilities” shall mean people that are afflicted with a disability as defined under the Ontario Human Rights Code.

“Service Animals” shall mean any animal individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of a person with a disability.

“Support persons” shall mean any person, whether a paid professional, volunteer, family member or friend, who accompanies a person with a disability in order to help with communications, personal care or medical needs or with access to goods or services.

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10.1.3 Application

The policies developed by Community Living York South in compliance with the Visitors & Public AODA and O. Reg 429/07 shall apply to every employee/agent.

10.1.4 Exclusions

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, O. Reg 429/07 shall not apply during any period declared as a “State of Emergency” as defined under the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act.

10.1.5 Review and Changes to Policies

No changes will be made to this policy before considering the impact on people with disabilities. Any policy of Community Living York South that does not respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities will be modified or removed.

10.1.6 Questions about Policies

These policies exist to achieve service excellence for customers with disabilities. If anyone has a question about a policy, or if the purpose of the policy is not understood, an explanation will be provided by contacting Human Resources.

10.1.7 Overview of Policies and Procedures

Under the AODA and O. Reg 429/07 Community Living York South is required, by law, to develop and maintain policies, practices and procedures specifically addressing:

- accessible customer service (the manner in which goods and services are provided to people with disabilities)
- assistive devices
- communication
- service animals

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- support persons
- notice of temporary disruptions
- training
- customer feedback.

Please refer to each individual policy for information described in greater detail.



10.2 Accessible Customer Service

Policy

Community Living York South is committed to providing goods and services that are accessible to all people.

10.2.1 Objective (s)

The objective of this policy is to outline the manner in which we intend to provide goods and services to people with disabilities.

10.2.2 Procedures

Guiding Principles

To ensure accessible customer service, Community Living York South will use reasonable effort to ensure that all policies, procedures and practices related to the provision of goods and services to people with disabilities are consistent with the following principles:

Dignity

- Goods and services will be provided in a way that allows people to maintain self-respect and the respect of others
- People with disabilities are as valued and as deserving of full and effective services as any other customer.

Independence

- Goods and services will be provided without unnecessary help or interference from others
- Independence means freedom to make one's own choices and decisions
- Integrated services are those that are designed to be accessible to everyone including people with disabilities
- People with disabilities will be able to benefit from the same services, in the same place, and in the same or similar ways as other customers
- In some cases, based on individual needs, integration may not serve the needs of all people. If this is the case alternative measures to integration will be provided.

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Equality of Opportunity

- Goods and services will be provided in such a way that a person with a disability will have the same opportunity to benefit from our goods and services as other customers
- A person with a disability should not have to make significantly more effort to access or obtain our goods and services and should not have to accept less quality or more inconvenience.

Customer Service Channels

Community Living York South will provide accessible customer service in all areas of our organizations including:

- In person on any Community Living York South owned/leased property
- In person, off site in the community
- Communications by email
- Communications by telephone
- Communications by regular mail
- On the Community Living York South website.



10.3 Communication

Policy

Community Living York South is committed to providing accessible information and communications to all customers.

10.3.1 Objective

The objective of this policy is to identify the manner in which Community Living York South employees will accommodate people with disabilities with their communication needs.

10.3.2 Procedures

Community Living York South employees will address each person's service needs by asking how they would prefer to communicate.

Community Living York South will ensure that employees receive training on how to communicate with customers with various disabilities.

Employees are responsible to communicate as per the request of the customer within the available means of in person, email, telephone, and/or regular mail. If the request for the communication method is not available, explain what communication methods are available and do our best to accommodate.



10.4 Assistive Devices

Policy

Community Living York South is committed to providing exceptional customer service to all customers, including those who use assistive devices in order to obtain, use or benefit from our goods and services.

It is the policy of Community Living York South to support people to use their own personal assistive devices, unless otherwise prohibited by law, to access our goods and services.

10.4.1 Objective (s)

The objectives of this policy are to:

- Ensure people are supported to use their own assistive devices to access our goods and services
- Outline all other measures Community Living York South offers to enable people to access our goods and services.

10.4.2 Procedures

Use of Personal Assistive Devices

Personal assistive devices are often used by people with disabilities to help them with daily living. They are usually devices that people bring with them.

Personal assistive devices are any auxiliary aids such as communication aids, cognition aids, personal mobility aids and/or medical aids. They may include (but are not limited to):

- Manual and motorized wheelchairs
- Canes, crutches and walkers
- White canes
- Hearing aids
- Magnifiers
- Oxygen tanks
- Electronic communication devices

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Employees of Community Living York South will be familiar with and supportive of the use of various assistive devices that may be used by our customers while accessing Community Living York South goods and services.



10.5 Customer Feedback

Policy

Community Living York South recognizes that receiving feedback provides a valuable opportunity to learn and improve. Community Living York South also recognizes the rights of our customers to offer a suggestion, make a complaint, or compliment us on the way we provide goods or services.

It is the policy of Community Living York South to have an established process for receiving and responding to feedback on the manner in which we provide our goods and services to people with disabilities and to make information about this process readily available.

10.5.1 Objective (s)

The objectives of this policy are to:

- Outline the process for receiving and responding to feedback,
- Detail how and where information regarding our Feedback Policy will be posted.

10.5.2 Procedures

Receiving Feedback

People with disabilities may use different methods of communication. In order to make our feedback process as accessible as possible, Community Living York South accepts complaints, suggestions and/or compliments in a variety of formats.

Customers are invited to provide their feedback on the way we provide our goods and services to people with disabilities in the following ways:

- In person
- By telephone
- In writing
- By email
- Agency Website

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In order to help Community Living York South fully address the feedback received, where possible, the following information must be included:

- Time and date
- Description of complaint, suggestion or compliment
- Additional Comments
- Contact information (should the person wish to be contacted).

Employees will be familiar with how to direct and assist with complaints, suggestions or compliments on agency services.

Responding to Feedback

All feedback received regarding the way in which Community Living York South provides goods and services to people with disabilities will be directed to Human Resources. Feedback will be grouped, reviewed and stored by category (complaint, suggestion, or compliment).

A record will be maintained outlining the details, follow-up and actions to be taken.

If the Feedback Form indicates the customer wishes to be contacted, Community Living York South will respond within ten (10) business days either in writing, in person, by e-mail or by telephone acknowledging the receipt of feedback and outlining the action(s) to be taken.

Notice of Feedback Process

Information about Community Living York South's process for receiving and responding to feedback will be readily available to the public.

Community Living York South informs the public about our feedback process in a number of ways. These include:

- Notice posted and forms available in reception area(s)
- Notice posted and forms available on our website.



10.6 Notice of Availability of Documents

Policy

It is the policy of Community Living York South to provide notice that any document required under the Customer Service Standard, Ontario Regulation 429/07 (O. Reg 429.07) are available upon request.

10.6.1 Objective

The objective of this policy is to outline the method for providing notice of availability of all documents required under O. Reg 429/07.

10.6.2 Procedures

Notice of Availability of Documents

Notice will be posted at all reception locations on Community Living York South premises and will also be published on Community Living York South's web site. The notice will include information on what documents are available and how customers can obtain a copy.

Providing Documents

Community Living York South will provide notice that all documents required under O. Reg 429/07 are available upon request.

A copy of the required documents will be provided to anyone who asks for them in their preferred format within ten (10) business days. A request for these documents can be made by contacting Human Resources.

When providing documents required by O. Reg 429/07 to a person with a disability, Community Living York South will do so in a format that takes into account the person's communication needs.



10.7 Notice of Temporary Service Disruption

Policy

It is the policy of Community Living York South to provide notice of service disruptions when any office location, service, technology or method that a person with a disability usually uses to access our goods and services is temporarily unavailable or if expected to be temporarily unavailable in the near future.

10.7.1 Objective (s)

The objectives of this policy are to:

- Outline where a notice of disruption will be posted and what information must be included
- Describe the process of providing notice of an expected, planned service disruption
- Detail the process of providing notice of an unexpected service disruption.

10.7.2 Procedures

Notice of Temporary Disruptions

A notice of temporary disruption will be placed on the front door at all office location entrances. The notice will also be announced on Community Living York South telephone voice messaging service and be published on Community Living York South's website.

The Notice of Disruption will include the following information:

- Type of disruption
- Reason for disruption
- Anticipated duration of disruption
- Description of alternate location or services, if any.

Planned Service Disruptions

It is possible that from time to time there will be disruptions in service, such as renovations, that limit access to an area, or technology that is temporarily unavailable.

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If a disruption in service is planned and expected, it is important to provide the public with reasonable notice. In this case, reasonable notice is defined as at least ten (10) business days in advance, or as soon as possible if less than ten (10) business days.

It is the responsibility of the department directly affected by or responsible for the location, service, technology or method that is disrupted to communicate the disruption to the building administrative assistant or designated alternate who will then be responsible for posting the notice in the prescribed areas.

Unplanned Service Disruptions

If a disruption in service is not planned and is unexpected, it is important to provide the public with notice as soon as possible.

It is the responsibility of the department directly affected by or responsible for the location, service, technology or method that is disrupted to communicate the disruption to the building administrative assistant or designated alternate who will then be responsible for posting the notice in the prescribed areas.



10.8 Support Persons and Service Animals

Policy

Community Living York South is committed to providing exceptional customer service to all customers, including those who use support persons or service animals in order to obtain, use or benefit from our goods and services.

It is the policy of Community Living York South to ensure that people with disabilities who are accompanied by support persons and/or service animals are allowed entry to all parts of our premises that are open to the public, unless otherwise excluded by law.

10.8.1 Objective

The objectives of this policy are to ensure that people with disabilities accompanied by a support person and/or service animal are permitted access to those areas on our premises that are open to the public.

10.8.2 Procedures

Support Persons

Some people with disabilities rely on support persons in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care, medical needs, or with access to goods or services. A support person may be a paid professional, a volunteer, a family member or a friend of the person with a disability. He or she does not necessarily need to have special training or qualifications.

If a person with a disability is accompanied by a support person, Community Living York South will permit both persons to enter the premise together (those areas open to the public) and ensure that the person with a disability is not prevented from having access to their support person.

In some cases a support person may have to agree to rules or requirements that are specific to the kinds of goods or services that we provide. Where confidentiality is important because of the kinds of information discussed, we may require the support person to sign a confidentiality/privacy agreement.

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Employees/agents of Community Living York South or others dealing with the public on Community Living York South's behalf will receive training on how to interact with people with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person.

Service Animals

Service animals are used by people with many different kinds of disabilities to overcome barriers. Service animals are not pets – they are working animals.

A few examples of service animals include dogs used by people who are blind, hearing alert animals for people who are deaf, deafened or hard of hearing, and animals trained to alert an individual to an oncoming seizure and lead them to safety.

To be considered a service animal under the Customer Service Standard, O. Reg 429/07, it must be either readily apparent (obvious by its appearance or by what it is doing) that the animal is being used because of a person's disability or the person with a disability must provide a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that it is required because of his or her disability.

Community Living York South will permit any person with a disability who is accompanied by a guide dog or other service animal to enter our premises (those areas that are open to the public) with the service animal and to keep the animal with him/her, unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law.

Employees/agents of Community Living York South or others dealing with the public on Community Living York South's behalf will receive training on how to interact with people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal.



10.9 Training

Policy

It is the policy of Community Living York South to train all employees/agents who deal with members of the public or other third parties and all employees who participate in developing our policies, practices and procedures on providing customer service to people with disabilities.

This includes employees/agents and contractors or others who could reasonably be expected to interact with the public on our behalf or influence the development of policies, procedures and practices.

10.9.1 Objective (s)

The objectives of this policy are to:

- Identify who needs to receive training
- List the content of the training
- Outline the timing of training for current and new employees
- Describe the formats of training
- Outline the process for keeping a record of training.

10.9.2 Procedures

Who Requires Training?

All employees who deal with members of the public or other third parties and all employees who participate in developing/have influence over our policies, practices and procedures on providing customer service to people with disabilities require training under O. Reg 429/07. This includes (but is not limited to) employees in the following areas:

- All direct care employees
- All outreach employees
- Administration employees
- Accounting employees
- Bright Ideas employees
- Supervisors
- Managers
- Directors/Executive Director

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- Board of Directors
- Students
- Volunteers.

Content of Training

Training will include the following:

- Review of the purposes of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and the requirements of the Customer Service Standard, O. Reg 429/07 which include:
 - Policies, practices and procedures
 - Key principles
 - Independence
 - Dignity
 - Integration
 - Equality of Opportunity
 - Assistive Devices
 - Communication
 - Service animals
 - Support persons
 - Admission for support persons
 - Service disruptions
 - Train employees
 - Feedback.

Timing of Training

Training must be provided to all current employees by January 1, 2012. For any new employees, training will be provided during agency Orientation and/or when practical after they are assigned applicable duties.

Employees will also be trained on an ongoing basis when changes are made to these policies, practices and procedures.

Method of Training

All employees must be trained in accordance with the requirements as outlined in the content section.

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Record of Training

Community Living York South will keep a record of all training provided under the AODA and O. Reg 429/07 including the dates on which the training was provided and the participants present.



10.10 Emergency Evacuation Plan – Office Locations

Policy

In the event of an emergency requiring an evacuation, all employees must be familiar with evacuation routes, the location and use of emergency equipment.

10.10.1 Priorities of Evacuation

- A. Persons with immediate danger of injury or death.
- B. Persons in risk situations for possible injury or death.
- C. Precautionary evacuations when uncertain.

10.10.2 General Evacuation Instructions

- 1. A building evacuation is mandatory whenever a fire alarm sounds. All occupants must exit the building immediately (see also [Emergency Evacuation Plan for Persons with a Disability](#)).
- 2. After the building has been evacuated, occupants must wait for a safety inspection (e.g. by the fire department) prior to re-entry. The silencing of the fire alarm is normally used as the “all clear” signal.
- 3. It may, or may not be necessary to vacate a specific area during an emergency incident. Occupants in the area may simply be directed to remain on-site and if possible shut down systems, or they may be asked to move to other areas of their floor or building.
- 4. Building specific evacuation instructions must be followed at all times.

10.10.3 General Principles to Implement an Office Evacuation

An evacuation is necessary any time the fire alarm sounds, an evacuation announcement is made by Police Services or a designated Emergency Medical Staff orders you to evacuate.

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In The Event of an Evacuation:

1. Remain calm.
2. Notify others in the area of the alarm if they did not hear it.
3. If a situation exists where people or property is immediately at risk call 911 and contact the On Call Emergency Pager System.
4. Do not use elevators.
5. Assist persons with a physical disability.
6. Check offices and restrooms.
7. If possible, turn all equipment off.
8. Close doors, but do not lock them. Leave the lights on.
9. Take emergency supplies.
10. Exit the building via the nearest safe exit route.
11. Walk. Do not run. Do not use elevators to exit.
12. Keep exiting groups together.
13. Gather at the pre-arranged evacuation assembly site and await instructions from Police or Fire Services, or EMT.
14. If possible, account for staff and volunteers.

When Engaged with a Person Supported in a Work Setting:

1. Employees are required to familiarize themselves with the evacuation plan established for each building they work in. This includes but is not limited to: knowing the nearest exist, fire alarm and fire extinguisher locations.
2. Evacuation Plans are filed by Municipality and each building is required to identify people supported that may need assistance in evacuating.
3. Employees are responsible for ensuring their own safety and it is imperative that they do not put themselves or the people supported at risk by attempting to evacuate them.
4. Ensure the person supported is safe and not left in a vulnerable position such as in a mechanical lift; ensure that the person supported has access to a telephone.
5. Ensure that all doors and windows are closed.

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6. Exit the building.
7. Report the incident to the Director or designate and complete an incident report.

10.10.4 Assisting an Employee/Agent or People Supported with a Disability or Mobility Impairment

Always evaluate the situation first to determine whether trained emergency services personnel should assume responsibility for assisting with an evacuation. Consider your options and the risks of injuring yourself and others in an evacuation attempt.

Evacuation is difficult and uncomfortable for both the rescuers and people being assisted. Some people have conditions that can be aggravated or triggered if they are moved incorrectly. Remember that environmental conditions (smoke, debris, loss of electricity) will complicate evacuation efforts.

The Following Guidelines are General and May Not Apply in Every Circumstance:

- If the situation is life threatening, call 911.
- Employees should be invited to volunteer ahead of time to assist employees/agents with a disability in an emergency. Willingness to volunteer to assist can be shared with Human Resources.
- Attempt a rescue evacuation ONLY if you have had rescue training (through a certified course) or the person is in immediate danger and cannot wait for professional assistance.
- Always ASK how you can help BEFORE attempting any rescue technique or giving assistance. Ask how they can best be assisted or moved, and if there are any special considerations or items that need to come with them.
- Ask permission of the evacuee if any device is being considered as an aid in an evacuation. When using such devices ensure the person is secured properly. Be careful on stairs and rest at landings if necessary.
- DO NOT use elevators, unless authorized to do so by police or fire personnel.

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10.10.5 Responses to an Emergency

Blindness or Visual Impairment:

- Give verbal instructions to advise person about safest route or course using directional terms (straight, left, right, behind), estimated distances, and directional terms.
- DO NOT grasp a visually impaired person's arm. Ask if he or she would like to hold onto your arm as you exit, especially if there is debris or a crowd.
- Give other verbal instructions or information (e.g. elevators cannot be used).

Deafness or Hearing Loss:

- Get the attention of a person with a hearing disability by touch and eye contact. Clearly state the problem. Gestures and pointing are helpful, but be prepared to write a brief statement if the person does not seem to understand.
- Offer visual instructions to advise person of safest route or direction by pointing toward exits or evacuation maps.

Mobility Impairment:

- Police or fire personnel will decide whether people are safe where they are and will evacuate them as necessary, based on the building's evacuation plan. The Fire Department may and can only determine that it is safe to override the rule against using elevators.

Evacuating from a Person Support Home:

- Employees are responsible for ensuring their own safety and it is imperative that they do not put themselves or the people supported at risk by attempting to evacuate them.
- Ensure people supported are safe and not left in a vulnerable position such as in a mechanical lift; ensure that the people supported has access to a telephone.
- Ensure that all doors and windows are closed.
- Exit the building.

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- Meet emergency personnel and provide them with the apartment/unit number of the people supported who require evacuation.

