

ACCESSIBILITY POLICY MANUAL CUSTOMER SERVICE

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Purpose and Application

Under the **Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005** all businesses must meet the requirements of accessibility standards established by regulation. This policy establishes the accessibility standards for customer service for Alectra Utilities (formerly Brampton Hydro), in accordance with Ontario Regulation 429/07. This policy applies to all employees of Alectra Utilities, agents, volunteers and contracted service staff.

Definitions

Accessible means customer service is provided in a manner that is capable of being easily understood or appreciated; easy to get at; capable of being reached, or entered; obtainable.

Disability means:

Any degree of physical 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 impairment, 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,

A condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability

A learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,

A mental disorder,

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 means a dog trained as a guide for a blind person and having the qualifications prescribed by the Blind Persons' Rights Act R.S.O. 1990, c. B.7, s. 1 (1).

Service Animal is an 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/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.

Policy Statement

Alectra Utilities is committed to providing exceptional and accessible service to its customers. Goods and services will be provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence to all customers. The provision of services to persons with disabilities will be integrated wherever possible. Persons with disabilities will be given an opportunity equal to that given to others, to obtain, use or benefit from the goods and services provided by and on behalf of Alectra Utilities.

Policy Requirements

Accessibility Training Policy

- a) Every person who deals with members of the public or who participates in developing Alectra Utilities policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of goods and services to the public; including company staff, volunteers, agents, contractors and others who provide service on behalf of Alectra Utilities will receive training regarding the provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities.
- b) The training will include the following information:
 - i. The purposes of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act,
 - ii. How to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disabilities,
 - iii. How to interact with persons with disabilities who use an assistive device, or require the assistance of a service animal or support person
 - iv. How to use equipment made available by the company to help people with disabilities to access goods and services
 - v. What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing services.
- c) Training will be provided to each person according to his or her needs and duties and as soon as is practicable on an ongoing basis in connection with changes to policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of goods or services to persons with disabilities. A record of the dates on which training is provided and the number of individuals to whom it is provided will be kept.

Feedback Process

Alectra Utilities accepts feedback from the public in a variety of methods including:

- Phone
- In person
- Fax
- Email
- And, through feedback forms

All feedback is reviewed, complaints will be investigated and follow up is provided to the customer if requested.

Use of Service Animals and Support Persons

- a) If a person with a disability is accompanied by a guide dog or other service animal, Alectra Utilities will ensure that the person is permitted to enter Alectra Utilities and to keep the animal with him or her unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law. Where a service animal is excluded by law, Alectra Utilities will ensure that other measures are available to enable the person with a disability to obtain, use and benefit from the Company's goods and services. The service animal must be under the care and control of the individual at all times.

- b) If a person with a disability is accompanied by a support person, Alectra Utilities will ensure that both persons are permitted to enter a Company facility, and that the person with a disability is not prevented from having access to the support person. Alectra Utilities may require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person when in a Company facility, but only if a support person is necessary to protect the health or safety of the person with a disability or the health or safety of others in the facility. If an amount is payable by a support person for admission, or otherwise, to a premise, Alectra Utilities will ensure notice is given in advance about the amount.

Notice of Temporary Disruptions

Alectra Utilities shall provide notice of disruption of services to the public.

Any Notice of Disruption will contain the following:

- Reason for the disruption
- Anticipated duration
- Alternative facilities or services

Company staff will provide such notice in at least one of the following three methods:

- Notice physically posted at the site of the disruption
- Notice on Company website
- Notice in local newspaper

Notice of availability of documents

Alectra Utilities will provide the public notice of the availability of the documents, required by the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, (O. Reg 429/07) upon request. Notice of availability will be provided Alectra Utilities' web site and through other printed methods.

Format of documents

If Alectra Utilities is required, by the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, to give a copy of a document to a person with a disability, the Company will take into account the person's ability to access the information and will provide the document or information contained in the document in a format that meets those needs as agreed upon with the person.

Related and Supporting Documentation

- a) Ontario Regulation 429/07, Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 – Accessibility Standards for Customer Service
- b) Outline of Accessible Customer Service Training Provided to Staff

References

ONTARIO REGULATION 429/07

made under the

ACCESSIBILITY FOR ONTARIANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT, 2005

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ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS FOR CUSTOMER SERVICE

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Purpose and application

1. (1) This Regulation establishes accessibility standards for customer service and it applies to every designated public sector organization and to every other person or organization that provides goods or services to members of the public or other third parties and that has at least one employee in Ontario.

(2) In this Regulation,

“designated public sector organization” means the Legislative Assembly and the offices of persons appointed on the address of the Assembly, every ministry of the Government of Ontario, every municipality and every person or organization listed in Schedule 1 or described in Schedule 2 to this Regulation; (“organisation désignée du secteur public”)

“provider of goods or services” means a person or organization to whom this Regulation applies. (“fournisseur de biens ou de services”)

Effective dates

2. The accessibility standards for customer service apply to the designated public sector organizations on and after January 1, 2010 and to other providers of goods or services on and after January 1, 2012.

Establishment of policies, practices and procedures

3. (1) Every provider of goods or services shall establish policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of its goods or services to persons with disabilities.

(2) The provider shall use reasonable efforts to ensure that its policies, practices and procedures are consistent with the following principles:

1. The goods or services must be provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.

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2. The provision of goods or services to persons with disabilities and others must be integrated unless an alternate measure is necessary, whether temporarily or on a permanent basis, to enable a person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the goods or services.
3. Persons with disabilities must be given an opportunity equal to that given to others to obtain, use and benefit from the goods or services.
- (3) Without limiting subsections (1) and (2), the policies must deal with the use of assistive devices by persons with disabilities to obtain, use or benefit from the provider's goods or services or the availability, if any, of other measures which enable them to do so.
- (4) When communicating with a person with a disability, a provider shall do so in a manner that takes into account the person's disability.
- (5) Every designated public sector organization and every other provider of goods or services that has at least 20 employees in Ontario shall prepare one or more documents describing its policies, practices and procedures and, upon request, shall give a copy of a document to any person.

Use of service animals and support persons

4. (1) This section applies if goods or services are provided to members of the public or other third parties at premises owned or operated by the provider of the goods or services and if the public or third parties have access to the premises.
- (2) 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.
- (3) If a service animal is excluded by law from the premises, the provider of goods or 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.
- (4) If a person with a disability is accompanied by a support person, the provider of goods or services shall ensure that both persons are permitted to enter the premises together and that the person with a disability is not prevented from having access to the support person while on the premises.
- (5) The provider of goods or services may require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person when on the premises, but only if a support person is necessary to protect the health or safety of the person with a disability or the health or safety of others on the premises.
- (6) If an amount is payable by a person for admission to the premises or in connection with a person's presence at the premises, the provider of goods or services shall ensure that notice is given in advance about the amount, if any, payable in respect of the support person.
- (7) Every designated public sector organization and every other provider of goods or services that has at least 20 employees in Ontario shall prepare one or more documents describing its policies, practices and procedures with respect to the matters governed by this section and, upon request, shall give a copy of a document to any person.
- (8) In this section,
"guide dog" means a guide dog as defined in section 1 of the *Blind Persons Rights' Act*; ("chien-guide")
"service animal" means an animal described in subsection (9); ("animal d'assistance")
"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. ("personne de soutien")
- (9) For the purposes of this section, an animal is a service animal for a person with a disability,
 - (a) if it is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to his or her disability;
 - or

- (b) if the person provides a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability.

Notice of temporary disruptions

5. (1) If, in order to obtain, use or benefit from a provider's goods or services, persons with disabilities usually use particular facilities or services of the provider and if there is a temporary disruption in those facilities or services in whole or in part, the provider shall give notice of the disruption to the public.
- (2) Notice of the disruption must include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration and a description of alternative facilities or services, if any, that are available.
- (3) Notice may be given by posting the information at a conspicuous place on premises owned or operated by the provider of goods or services, by posting it on the provider's website, if any, or by such other method as is reasonable in the circumstances.
- (4) Every designated public sector organization and every other provider of goods or services that has at least 20 employees in Ontario shall prepare a document that sets out the steps to be taken in connection with a temporary disruption and, upon request, shall give a copy of the document to any person.

Training for staff, etc.

6. (1) Every provider of goods or services shall ensure that the following persons receive training about the provision of its goods or services to persons with disabilities:
1. Every person who deals with members of the public or other third parties on behalf of the provider, whether the person does so as an employee, agent, volunteer or otherwise.
 2. Every person who participates in developing the provider's policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of goods or services to members of the public or other third parties.
- (2) The training must include a review of the purposes of the Act and the requirements of this Regulation and instruction about the following matters:
1. How to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disability.
 2. 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.
 3. How to use equipment or devices available on the provider's premises or otherwise provided by the provider that may help with the provision of goods or services to a person with a disability.
 4. What to do if a person with a particular type of disability is having difficulty accessing the provider's goods or services.
- (3) The training must be provided to each person as soon as practicable after he or she is assigned the applicable duties.
- (4) Training must also be provided on an ongoing basis in connection with changes to the policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of goods or services to persons with disabilities.
- (5) Every designated public sector organization and every other provider of goods or services that has at least 20 employees in Ontario shall prepare a document describing its training policy, and the document must include a summary of the contents of the training and details of when the training is to be provided.
- (6) Every designated public sector organization and every other provider of goods or services that has at least 20 employees in Ontario shall keep records of the training provided under this section, including the dates on which the training is provided and the number of individuals to whom it is provided.

Feedback process for providers of goods or services

7. (1) Every provider of goods or services shall establish a process for receiving and responding to feedback about the manner in which it provides goods or services to persons with disabilities and shall make information about the process readily available to the public.

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- (2) The feedback process must permit persons to provide their feedback in person, by telephone, in writing, or by delivering an electronic text by email or on diskette or otherwise.
- (3) The feedback process must specify the actions that the provider of goods or services is required to take if a complaint is received.
- (4) Every designated public sector organization and every other provider of goods or services that has at least 20 employees in Ontario shall prepare a document describing its feedback process and, upon request, shall give a copy of the document to any person.

Notice of availability of documents

8. (1) Every designated public sector organization and every other provider of goods or services that has at least 20 employees in Ontario shall notify persons to whom it provides goods or services that the documents required by this Regulation are available upon request.
- (2) The notice may be given by posting the information at a conspicuous place on premises owned or operated by the provider, by posting it on the provider's website, if any, or by such other method as is reasonable in the circumstances.

Format of documents

9. (1) If a provider of goods or services is required by this Regulation to give a copy of a document to a person with a disability, the provider shall give the person the document, or the information contained in the document, in a format that takes into account the person's disability.
- (2) The provider of goods or services and the person with a disability may agree upon the format to be used for the document or information.

Commencement

10. **This Regulation comes into force on January 1, 2008.**