

POLICY & PROCEDURE MANUAL

SECTION	ADMINISTRATION	POLICY NUMBER	2-7-10
SUB-SECTION	Accessibility	EFFECTIVE DATE	2017-12-15
SUBJECT	Integrated Accessibility Standards – Information and Communications		
AUTHORITY	Council		

PURPOSE:

The County of Dufferin is obligated to develop Accessibility Policies under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and Ontario Regulation 191/11. This regulation establishes general requirements for accessibility compliance as well as accessibility standards for customer service, information and communications, employment, transportation and the design of public spaces.

STATEMENT:

The County of Dufferin is committed to the principles of independence, dignity, integration and equality of opportunity described in the AODA and to meeting the needs of people with disabilities, in a timely manner, through the implementation of this policy.

The County of Dufferin is committed to establishing, implementing and maintaining policies, practices and procedures that meet the requirements of the Integrated Accessibility Standard and all reasonable efforts will be made to ensure that People with disabilities are provided equal opportunity to obtain, use and benefit from the goods and services of the County of Dufferin;

The purpose of this policy is to create the framework within which accessibility plans and initiatives are to be created in order to move the County of Dufferin towards the goal of improved accessibility for people with disabilities, specifically with regard to the information and communications standard in the Integrated Regulation.

POLICY:

The County of Dufferin is committed to working towards being compliant with the information and communications standard under the AODA as they are introduced and become law.

The County of Dufferin is committed to excellence in serving everyone including persons with disabilities. When providing information to, or communicating with, a person with a disability, we will provide the information and communication in a manner that takes into account the persons abilities as provided in the customer service standard and under the Integrated Regulation.

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The County of Dufferin is committed to ongoing improvements to the accessibility of its information and communication systems offered to the public, employees, contractors and volunteers.

The County of Dufferin is committed to promoting values that support relationships between people with disabilities and the COUNTY OF DUFFERIN.

The County of Dufferin is committed to meeting alternative format requests in a timely fashion that is appropriate to the situation.

The County of Dufferin will identify, remove and prevent barriers to access of information and communications of the County of Dufferin.

The County of Dufferin will provide or make arrangements for accessible formats and information and communication supports when a person with a disability requests them.

The County of Dufferin will make accessible formats and communications supports available in a timely manner and at no additional cost other than the regular price charged to everyone for the same information.

The County of Dufferin will conform to the World Wide Web Consortium’s Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 as outlined in the Information and Communications Standard for accessible websites and web content.

The County of Dufferin will ensure that emergency procedures, plans or public safety information meet the needs of persons with disabilities.

The County of Dufferin will provide emergency procedures, plans or public safety information in an accessible format or with communications supports on request.

The County of Dufferin will notify the public of the availability of accessible information and communications.

The County of Dufferin will ensure that it has a process for receiving and responding to feedback that is accessible to persons with disabilities.

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Accessible Website and Web Content

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the County of Dufferin will achieve an accessible website and web content through meeting the requirements under the Information and Communications Standard.

Procedure:

- The County of Dufferin is committed to the process of providing online information and communications and services that are accessible to all. This includes working with web designers, hosts and IT professionals to:
 - Identify, remove and prevent barriers to access of online information and communications systems. Create, provide and receive information and communications in ways that are accessible for people with disabilities.
 - Provide or make arrangements for accessible formats and information and communications supports when a person with a disability requests them.
 - Make accessible formats and communication supports available in a timely manner and at a cost not more than the regular price charged to everyone for the same information.
 - Conform to the World Wide Web Consortium's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 for accessible website and web content.
 - Notifying members of the public about the availability of accessible information and communications.
 - Providing a feedback process to the public.
- The County of Dufferin will plan how to achieve accessibility, including assessing and testing the website for barriers.
- The County of Dufferin will implement the appropriate solutions and guidelines to remove any barriers discovered.
- The County of Dufferin will advise the public of the steps taken to remove any barriers to accessibility on the County of Dufferin website.
- The County of Dufferin will ensure that the appropriate staff are trained on the policies, practices and procedures for web accessibility and the creation of accessible web content.

Accessible Formats and Communications Supports

The purpose of this procedure is to address how, in a timely manner, County of Dufferin will ensure all information and methods of communications to and from a person will be designed to be accessible to everyone.

Procedure:

- The County of Dufferin will provide or arrange for the provision of accessible formats and communications supports for persons with disabilities in a timely manner that takes into account the person's accessibility needs upon request.
- The County of Dufferin will consult with the person making the request in determining the suitability of an accessible format or communication support.

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- The County of Dufferin will notify the public about the availability of accessible formats and communications supports in publicly accessible spaces as well as on The County of Dufferin website.

Feedback Process

The purpose of this procedure is to address how, in a timely manner the County of Dufferin will ensure that anyone, including people with disabilities, can provide feedback to the County of Dufferin.

A notice inviting the public to provide feedback on service delivery to persons with disabilities will be posted at a prominent place at each County of Dufferin site, as well as on the County of Dufferin website.

Comments and complaints may be received in person, by telephone, online or in an alternative format.

As there may be some overlap between a comment (feedback) and a complaint, each will be dealt with using the same form. This form, the “Accessible Customer Service Feedback Form” will be kept in a designated area at each County of Dufferin site. All complaints, regardless of how insignificant they may appear to be, will be dealt with in accordance with the procedural guidelines outlined below.

Procedure:

- A staff member receives feedback or a complaint about the service provided to a person with a disability. There may be some discussion to clarify the issue or to resolve it if it is a complaint.
- The person will be asked to complete the relevant form. The staff member may assist, if necessary.
- If the person refuses to include personal information, write “refused” across the top of the page and inform the person that we will not be able to inform them about the outcome/action taken.
- The form will be forwarded to the appropriate County of Dufferin manager or supervisor for review and action/resolution.
- The person will be notified by the appropriate County of Dufferin manager or supervisor of the action/resolution.
- A copy of the completed form including documentation of the outcome/action taken will be forwarded to the Clerk’s Office. The original form will remain with the manager or supervisor at the respective County of Dufferin site.