

POLICY & PROCEDURE MANUAL

SECTION	ADMINISTRATION	POLICY NUMBER	2-7-07
SUB-SECTION	Accessibility	EFFECTIVE DATE	2017-12-15
SUBJECT	Integrated Accessibility Standards – Customer Service		
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 built environment for 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 customer service 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;

POLICY:

Goods and services will be provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities;

All goods and services provided to a person with a disability will be integrated with the provision of goods and services to others unless an alternative measure is absolutely necessary to allow the person with a disability to benefit;

All communications between the County of Dufferin and a person with a disability will take into account the specific challenges of the disability;

People with disabilities will be welcome and encouraged to use assistive devices, service animals and support persons as is necessary to access goods and services provided by the County of

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Dufferin unless superseded by other legislation.

PROCEDURES:

Customer Service

Training

The County of Dufferin will provide training to all employees, volunteers and others who deal with customers and the public on the County of Dufferin's behalf, and persons who are involved in the development and approval of policies, practices and procedures on the requirements under the Integrated Regulation and the Human Rights Code as it pertains to persons with disabilities.

Procedure:

- Training may be delivered by lecture, interactive on-line programming or approved self-study programs. Regardless of the type of training delivery method the lessons will meet the following criteria:
 - Review the purpose of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act and the requirements of each of the AODA's designated standards;
 - How to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities;
 - How to interact with people who use assistive devices, service animals or support persons;
 - How to use the equipment or assistive devices available at County of Dufferin locations, if applicable;
 - What to do if a person is having difficulty accessing your goods or services;
 - Information on the County of Dufferin's policies, practices and procedures relating to the customer service standard.
- All employees, volunteers, contractors and others who deal with the public on behalf of the County of Dufferin will receive training within 90 days of being hired.
- All employees, volunteers, contractors and others who deal with the public on behalf of the County of Dufferin that assume a new role which puts them in contact with the public will receive training within 90 days of beginning their new role.
- All employees, volunteers, contractors and others who deal with the public on behalf of the County of Dufferin will receive refresher training when policies, procedures or practices are changed or modified.
- Some employees, volunteers, contractors and others who deal with the public on behalf of the County of Dufferin may require job specific training which differs from that of other employees.
- The County of Dufferin is required to maintain a record of all training provided under the AODA and the associated regulations. The training record will be administered by Human Resources and shall contain the date of training, the type of training and the names of the participants.

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Disruption of Service

A service disruption at the County of Dufferin may include an anticipated event resulting in a major shut down of services, such as an official holiday, or an unanticipated occurrence such as an out of service accessible washroom. In the case of an anticipated service disruption, notice will be provided a minimum of two days in advance on both the municipal website and at each site affected by the disruption. Notice of service disruption for an unanticipated event will be posted as soon as it occurs.

Procedure:

- The department or division responsible for the site or service will prepare a “Notice of Service Disruption” and forward it to the Corporate Services Department,
- The relevant department will post any Notice of Service Disruption to the County of Dufferin website when the service disruption affects any space open to the public.
- A staff member working at the site will be designated to post a hard copy of the Notice of Service Disruption at all entrances to the facility as well as at the site of the service disruption. Notices posted on site should be at a height that is accessible to a person in a wheelchair
- The Notice of Service Disruption must include the reason for the service disruption and the duration of the service disruption.
- Alternative facilities or services available to meet the needs of persons with disabilities must be included on the notice.
- A “Notice of Service Disruption” template is available on SharePoint.

Support Persons

Some people with disabilities rely on support persons for certain services or assistance. The support person, in relation to the person with the disability, is a person hired or chosen to accompany the person with the disability to assist with communication, mobility, personal care, medical needs or with access to services.

Procedure

- The County of Dufferin will permit people with disabilities to be accompanied by support persons in all areas open to the public or third parties in all County of Dufferin sites.
- Any fees charged for admission will be waived for a Support Person.
- Where there is a significant risk to the health and safety of the person with the disability or the health and safety of other people at the facility, the County of Dufferin may request that the person with the disability be accompanied by a support person. To facilitate such a situation the following process will be adhered to:
 - Staff member observes the situation and discusses his/her concerns with a supervisor.
 - Supervisor determines whether there is significant risk to the person/other persons in allowing him/her to continue to use County of Dufferin services without additional support.

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- If a support person is deemed necessary, the person with the disability will be informed of our concern and will be asked to bring a support person of his/her choice on the next visit to the facility.
- Every effort will be made to protect privacy and maintain confidentiality. If there is a requirement to share information of a confidential nature in the presence of the support person the person with the disability or the assigned guardian or trustee will be asked to complete the “Accessible Customer Service Consent Form” available in the designated area at each site.

Use of Assistive Devices

In order to fully access services, persons with disabilities will be permitted to use assistive devices at all County of Dufferin sites.

Procedure:

- Persons with disabilities may bring onto any County of Dufferin site assistive devices that will allow them to fully access our supports and services.
- Staff will not lean on, reach over, touch, adjust or move these personal assistive devices without the knowledge or permission of the person with the disability.
- Wherever possible, staff will remove obstacles to the use of personal assistive devices. If a person with a disability is unable to access the service using his/her own personal assistive device, the staff will try to provide alternative service options to meet the needs of the individual.
- Any assistive devices that are installed in a County of Dufferin facility will be provided to persons with a disability free of charge.
- Any staff required to use or assist with an assistive device will be trained in the safe and appropriate use of each device.

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Use of Service Animals

The County of Dufferin will permit people with disabilities to be accompanied by service animals in all areas open to the public or third parties in all County of Dufferin sites unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law. Animals would be excluded by law from those places where food is prepared or medical procedures are performed.

Procedure:

- When a person with a disability enters a COUNTY OF DUFFERIN site with an animal that is obviously a service animal, he/she will be permitted to enter all areas of the facility that are normally open to the public and third parties.
- If it is not readily apparent that the animal is a service animal, a letter from a doctor or nurse documenting the need for a service animal must be presented.
- Staff should not touch, speak to, feed or in any other way distract the service animal.
- The service animal must be kept under control by its handler at all times.
- When staff or other members of the public declare a severe allergy or fear/phobia in the relation to the service animal, the following steps should be taken:
 - Meet with all concerned parties and work out a solution that is acceptable to everyone involved.
 - **Examples:** assign a different staff member to the person with the service animal, keep the individuals separated, ask them to attend on alternative days, etc.
 - If a workable solution cannot be achieved, the animal may need to remain in a safe place outside of the area and the person with disability enter without the animal.
 - **Example:** A person with a visual impairment would leave the guide animal outside and would be guided to the service by a member of the staff.
 - The manager or supervisor should be consulted in those situations where a workable solution cannot be found.
- When a person with a disability wishes to enter an area where animals are prohibited by law with their service animal the following steps should be taken:
 - Offer to assist the person so that the animal can remain in a safe place outside.
 - Accommodate the individual (if possible) by delivering goods and services in an area outside of the prohibited space.

The manager or supervisor should be consulted in those situations where a workable solution cannot be found.