



THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF NORWICH

DEPARTMENT: Administrative Services

POLICY NO: C-A 2009- 01

SUBJECT: Accessible Customer Service Policy

APPROVED BY COUNCIL:

RES. NO. 37

DATE: October 13, 2009

REVISION NO:

AUTHORIZED REF:

DATE:

POLICY STATEMENT

The Township of Norwich is committed to providing accessible goods and services to all who live, work, visit and invest in our Community.

PURPOSE

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act S.O. 2005 (AODA) purpose is to develop, implement and enforce accessibility standards in order to make Ontario barrier-free by the year 2025. Under the AODA, the Accessible Standards for Customer Service (Ontario Regulation 429/07) came into force and effect on January 1, 2008.

This policy is to provide compliance to these standards by addressing the following:

- The provision of goods and service to persons with disabilities
- The use of assistive devices by persons with disabilities
- The use of service animals by persons with disabilities
- The use of support person by persons with disabilities
- Notice of temporary disruptions in services and facilities
- Training
- Customer feedback regarding the provision of goods and services to person with disabilities; and
- Notice of availability and format of documents

SCOPE

This policy applies to all township departments, members of council, volunteers and contractors who interact with the public on the municipality's behalf.

DEFINITIONS

Assistive Device

A technical aid, communication aid or medical device that is used to increase, maintain or improve the abilities of persons with disabilities.

Disability

As defined by the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, and the Ontario Human Rights Code, is:

- 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,
- 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, or
- An injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997

Service Animal

As defined 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 related to their 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 Person

As defined 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.

POLICY & PROCEDURES

1. PROVISION OF GOODS AND SERVICES

The Township of Norwich shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure that its goods and services are provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.

The Township of Norwich shall make this policy available to the public through the municipal website and office upon request.

2. USE OF ASSISTIVE DEVICES

The Township of Norwich shall permit any individual with a disability to utilize and keep with them, their own personal assistive devices to obtain, use or benefit from the goods or services offered.

Appropriate staff will be trained and knowledgeable of the location and use of any assistive devices available within their work environment. Staff will be available to assist if so requested by an individual.

3. USE OF SERVICE ANIMALS

Individuals with a disability may enter facilities / lands open to the public which are owned and operated by the township while accompanied by their service animal unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law. If a service animal is excluded by law, the township will provide alternative means of enabling the person with a disability to access the goods or services available.

If it is not apparent that the animal is a service animal, staff may ask for a letter from a medical professional confirming that the individual requires the animal for reasons related to their disability, or staff may ask for a certificate of training from a recognized service animal training school.

4. USE OF SUPPORT PERSON

Persons with disabilities are permitted to be accompanied by their support person in all township owned facilities / lands which are open to the public, when accessing goods and services provided by the Township of Norwich. The Township 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.

When admission fees are charged by the Township of Norwich, these fees will be waived for a support person, unless advance notice of a fee is posted on the township website.

5. NOTICE OF TEMPORARY DISRUPTIONS IN SERVICE AND FACILITIES

The Township of Norwich is aware that the operation of its facilities and the services it provides are important to its residents and the public as a whole. However, temporary disruptions to services and facilities may occur that are beyond the control and/or knowledge of the township.

In the event a disruption is expected, notification will be posted in a public place, prior to the disruption, and if possible the anticipated duration and any alternative service that may be offered. Notification will also be posted on the township website. When unexpected disruptions occur, the township will post the information in a visible place as well as on the township website, as soon as possible.

6. TRAINING

The Township of Norwich will provide training to all employees, Council members, volunteers and other third parties providing service on their behalf. Training will be provided as soon as practicable after a new employee commences their duties.

Training will include the following:

- 6.1 Review the purpose of the AODA and requirements of the Customer Service Standard

- 6.2 Direction on how to interact with individuals with various types of disabilities
- 6.3 Direction on interacting with individuals with disabilities who require the assistance of a service animal or a support person or use an assistive device
- 6.4 Instruction on how to use any equipment or devices available at the employee's premise of employment that may help with the provision of goods and / or services
- 6.5 Instruction on the procedure if an individual is unable to access township goods or services
- 6.6 Review of the Township of Norwich's policy, practices and procedures as relating to the provision of goods and / or services to individuals with a disability.

Records will be kept of all customer service training, which is to include the date of the training session and attendance record.

Staff will receive on-going training when changes are made to these policies, practices or procedures.

7. FEEDBACK PROCESSES

A feedback form shall be available to allow members of the public to comment on the provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities. This form shall be available at the municipal office and on the township website. Feedback may be received in any format (e.g. in person, telephone, in writing, fax, email, etc.). All concerns shall be sent to the attention of the Deputy Clerk and a response will be provided to the complainant within fifteen (15) business days unless there are extenuating circumstances involved.

8. AVAILABILITY OF ALTERNATE FORMATS

The Township of Norwich shall, upon request, make every reasonable effort to provide a person with a disability a document or information in a format which takes the communication needs of the individual into consideration.

Cross-References:

Guide to the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07
Compliance Manual: Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07
The Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario



NOTICE OF DISRUPTION

Type of Disruption: _____

Reason for Disruption: _____

Anticipated Duration: _____

Alternative Facilities or Services: _____

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT: _____