

# The Corporation of the City of Stratford

## Policy Manual

### A.2 Accessibility

Dept: Corporate Services

Committee: Protection to Persons and Property

#### A.2.1 Accessible Standards for Customer Service

Adopted: June 8, 2009  
Amended:  
Reaffirmed:  
Related Documents:  
 Council Policy  Administrative Policy

##### **PURPOSE AND SCOPE**

The following policy is adopted in accordance with Ontario Regulation 429/07 the "Accessibility Standards for Customer Service" which came into force on January 1, 2008. That Regulation establishes accessibility standards specific to customer service for public sector organizations and other persons or organizations that provide goods and services to members of the public or other third parties

##### **OBJECTIVES**

The City of Stratford is committed to providing quality goods and services that are accessible to all persons that we serve. This policy applies to all individuals who deal with members of the public or other third parties on behalf of the City, whether the person does so as an employee, member of Council, agent, volunteer, or student on placement and ensures that all of our citizens with disabilities are accommodated. This policy is required based on the specifications of Ontario Regulation 429/07 to ensure consistency from all persons delivering municipal services.

##### **BACKGROUND**

Ontario passed the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (OADA) in 2005, becoming the first jurisdiction in Canada to commit to breaking down barriers through mandatory standards. The OADA allows the government to develop specific standards of accessibility that are designed to help make Ontario more accessible.

This policy is drafted in accordance with the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service and addresses the following:

- The provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities;
- The use of assistive devices;
- Service animals;
- Support persons;
- Notice of temporary disruptions in services and facilities;
- Staff training;
- Customer feedback regarding the provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities; and
- Notice of availability and format of documents.

## **DEFINITIONS**

Assistive Device: A device used to assist persons with disabilities in carrying out activities or in accessing the services of persons or organizations covered by the Customer Service Standard.

Disability: Shall mean the same as the definition of a disability found in the Ontario Human Rights Code.

Service Animal: Any animal where it is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to his or her disability.

Support Persons: Any person whether a paid professional, volunteer, family member or friend who accompanies a person with a disability in order to assist them with communications, personal care, medical needs or with access to goods or services.

## **POLICY**

a) Provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities

The city will use reasonable efforts to ensure that its policies and practices are consistent with the following principles:

- The City's goods and services are provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.
- The provisions of the City's goods and services to persons with disabilities are integrated with those provided to persons who do not have disabilities unless an alternative measure is necessary. Persons with disabilities are given an

- When communicating with persons with a disability, the City will do so in a manner that takes into account the person's abilities.
- Persons with disabilities may use assistive devices and/or support persons in the access of goods and services.

b) Assistive Devices

Persons with disabilities shall be permitted to obtain, use or benefit from goods or services through the use of their own assistive devices. Exceptions may occur in situations where the City has determined that the assistive device may pose a risk to the health and safety of another individual. It should be noted that it is the responsibility of the person with a disability to ensure that his or her assistive device is operated in a safe and controlled manner at all times.

Assistive devices may include but are not limited to:

- Communication Aids
- Cognition Aids
- Personal Mobility Aids
- Medical Aids

c) Service Animals

Service animals, such as but not limited to Guide dogs, Hearing dogs, Seizure Response dogs, other certified service animals shall be permitted entry to all municipal facilities and meeting rooms which are open to the public. Service animals are required to be leashed or otherwise properly controlled so that the animal does not run at large.

Service animals are not permitted:

- Where food preparation is being undertaken; or
- as otherwise disallowed by law.

Where a Service Animal is to be denied access to a facility or meeting room, other accommodations may be afforded, such as:

- alternate meeting format, such as teleconference/videoconference, where technology permits;
- deliver the goods or service at an alternate time or location;
- any other assistive measures available to deliver a good or service to ensure

The person with a service animal that is unruly or disruptive (e.g. barking) may be asked to remove the animal from the municipal facility.

d) Support Persons

Where 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, the person with a disability shall be accompanied by a Support Person when on the premises.

Support Persons shall be permitted entry to all municipal facilities and meeting rooms which are open to the public, except:

- when there are fees applied against participants by a third party; **and**
- the Support Person was not pre-registered; **and**
- no vacancy exists.

If admission to an event is permitted and fees are payable to a third party, the Support Person is permitted to attend the event at their own cost. Where admission fees are charged, the municipality or the service provider will provide notice ahead of time on what admission, if any, would be charged for a support person of a person with a disability.

**If admission to an event is permitted and fees are payable to the municipality, the Support Person is permitted to attend at no cost.**

e) Notice of temporary disruptions in services and facilities

The municipality is aware that the operation of its services and facilities is important to the public, however, temporary disruptions in services/facilities may occur. The municipality will make reasonable effort to provide notice of the disruption, including information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration and a description of alternative facilities/services, if any that may be available. The city will make reasonable effort to provide prior notice where possible.

To inform the public of temporary disruptions, the City will provide notice by posting information in visible places such as facility entrance doors, on the municipal website ([www.city.stratford.on.ca](http://www.city.stratford.on.ca)) and by any other method that may be reasonable under the circumstances as soon as possible.

All notices shall include;

- name of the event/service
- normal service being impacted

- alternative service locations/methods
- contact information
- anticipated duration

If an unexpected disruption occurs, persons with disabilities will be accommodated by the use of other means possible to delivery the goods and service such as:

- alternative locations/time
- if appropriate/required, delivery the goods/service to the person's place of residence
- any other measure deemed appropriate

f) Staff Training

All employees and agents of the municipality providing direct service to persons with a disability shall be trained in the various aspects of accessible customer service delivery.

All training, regardless of format, shall have regard for:

- An overview of the purposes of the AODA and an awareness of the corresponding corporate policy;
- Instruction on how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities;
- Instruction on interacting with people with disabilities who use assistive devices or require the assistance of a guide dog, other service animal or a support person;
- Instruction on the use of equipment or devices available, such as wheelchairs and TTY;
- Instruction on what to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing municipal services.

Timeline for Training: Training will be provided as soon as practicable upon an individual being assigned the applicable duties as well as on an ongoing basis as change occur to the City's policies, procedures and practices governing the provision of goods or services to persons with disabilities. The municipality will maintain records of the training, including the date, type of training and names of individuals trained.

g) Customer Feedback

The municipality is committed to providing high quality goods and services to all members of the public it serves. Feedback from the public is welcomed as it may identify areas that require change and encourage continuous service improvements.

Feedback from a member of the public about the delivery of goods and services to persons with disabilities may be given in a manner most convenient to them such as via telephone, in person, in writing, in electronic format, TTY or through other methods.

All feedback will be kept in strict confidence and used to improve customer service. In addition, the author of the feedback will be provided with a response in the format in which the feedback was received outlining actions deemed appropriate, if any.

h) Notice of Availability of Documents

This policy and any other document deemed to be a key in the delivery of goods and service will be made available upon request in a format that takes into account the person's disability to any person to whom it provides goods or services.

Notwithstanding the above, this policy will be made available on the City's website, and made available to any person to whom it provides goods or services by any other method or format as is reasonable in the circumstances.

*Note: This policy is delivered in accordance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, and Regulation 429/07 Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, and is applicable to all policies, procedures and processes for the City.*

## **A.2.2 Transit Stop Announcement Policy**

Adopted: July 16, 2009

Amended:

Reaffirmed:

Related Documents: *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2005*

Council Policy  Administrative Policy

### **PURPOSE**

The Ontario Human Rights Commission (the “Commission”) has long been concerned about the significant barriers that persons with disabilities face when attempting to access transportation services. The Commission has heard from the community about a range of persistent barriers, and has addressed transit accessibility issues through a number of initiatives, publications and human rights complaints. The Commission’s concerns, in particular identify announcing all stops as an important inclusive design feature that provides access for persons with visual impairments.

The following are instructions on when and how calling of bus stops must occur within the Stratford Transit Department. Operator stop calling is a temporary solution and we are investigating an automated system.

### **OPERATOR’S INSTRUCTIONS**

1. Operators must call out each bus stop on the route they are traveling to the best of their ability.
  - Attach stop calling guide to clip in bus.
  - Do not adjust, hold or read from guide while driving.
  - If you need to adjust guide or when reading, pull over at a bus stop in a safe location.

2. Use the guide when pulled over at a bus stop or safe location, secure the bus if required, read the next two to three bus stops that you will be servicing. These will clearly identify the name of each stop to ensure consistency between operators.
  
3. When approaching the bus stop call it out in a clear understandable voice.
  - **Example of how to call the stop:** *The next stop is Ontario and Front, Ontario and Front next stop.*
  - Use all aspects of voice: volume, speed, pitch, intonation, phonemes, word stress, and sentence stress.
  - You can sound calm and professional if you use your voice properly.
  
4. If the bus that you are driving has a PA system you are to use it to make the announcement. The microphone should be close to you with the switch in the on position whenever possible.

### **A.2.3 Training in Accessible Standards for Customer Service**

Adopted: December, 2009

Amended:

Reaffirmed:

Related Documents:

Council Policy  Administrative Policy

#### **BACKGROUND**

Ontario passed the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (OADA) in 2005, becoming the first jurisdiction in Canada to commit to breaking down barriers through mandatory standards. The OADA allows the government to develop specific standards of accessibility that are designed to help make Ontario more accessible.

This policy is drafted in accordance with the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service and addresses the provisions for training of staff and agents of the municipality on how to provide quality goods and services to a person with a disability.

#### **DEFINITIONS**

Agents of the Municipality: For the purpose of this policy, any third party individual, vendor, contractor, volunteer or student who interacts directly with members of the public on behalf of the municipality in providing goods and services to a person with a disability.

Assistive Device: A device used to assist persons with disabilities in carrying out activities or in accessing the services of persons or organizations covered by the Customer Service Standard.

Disability: Shall mean the same as the definition of a disability found in the Ontario Human Rights Code.

#### **POLICY**

- a) General provisions for training

All employees and agents of the municipality providing direct service to persons with a disability shall be trained in the various aspects of accessible customer service delivery. All training, regardless of format, shall have regard for:

- An overview of the purposes of the AODA and an awareness of the corresponding corporate policy;
- Instruction on how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities;
- Instruction on interacting with people with disabilities who use assistive devices or require the assistance of a guide dog, other service animal or a support person;
- Instruction on the use of equipment or devices available, such as wheelchairs and TTY;
- Instruction on what to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing municipal services.

b) Procedures for staff training

Training for staff shall be delivered in the form of a corporate policy overview, review of an instructional video, and the completion of a corresponding policy and procedures questionnaire. Staff will be required to sign in at the beginning of the training session, and will be required to submit the completed questionnaire at the end of the training session. Copies of the corporate policy and a service delivery guide will be provided to each staff member to take away. Where a City-owned assistive device has been purchased and placed in a municipal facility for public use, it shall remain the responsibility of the individual department in possession of the device to adequately train staff on the specific use and correct operation of the assistive device.

c) Timelines for staff training

Training for staff will be provided as soon as practicable, and on an ongoing basis as change occurs to the City's policies, procedures and practices governing the provision of goods or services to persons with disabilities. Training for new employees shall be included as part of the City's new employee orientation, as administered and delivered by the Human Resources Department.

d) Record keeping

The municipality, through the Human Resources Department, will maintain records of the staff training, including the names of individuals trained, the date of the training, the type of training received, and receipt of the completed staff questionnaires.

e) Training for agents of the municipality

Agents of the municipality providing direct service to persons with a disability shall ensure that their employees are adequately trained in the various aspects of accessible customer service delivery. To support this effort, the municipality will provide access to the following training materials and documents on the city's website:

- the corresponding corporate policy on accessible customer service delivery
- the instructional video
- the policy and procedures questionnaire
- the service delivery guide

Prior to contact delivery, agents of the municipality shall certify in writing that they and their employees have met, at minimum, the general provisions for training as outlined above.