

CUSTOMER SERVICE – ACCESSIBILITY FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Purpose and Scope

The accessibility for Ontarians with Disability Act 2005 (AODA) is Provincial Legislation with the purpose of developing, implementing and enforcing accessibility standards in order to achieve accessibility for persons with disabilities with respect to goods, services, facilities, accommodation, employment, buildings, structures and premises on or before January 1, 2025.

Ontario Regulation 429/07 entitled “Accessibility Standards for Customer Service” came into force January 1, 2008, and applies to all employees as of January 1, 2012. This regulation establishes accessibility standards specific to customer service for public sector organization and other persons or organizations that provide goods and services to members of the public or third parties.

This policy is in accordance with the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Ontario Regulation 429/07 and addresses the following topics:

- The provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities.
- The use of assistive devices by persons with disabilities.
- The use of support persons by persons with disabilities.
- The use of service animals by persons with disabilities.
- Notice of temporary disruptions in services and facilities.
- Staff Training
- Feedback regarding the provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities.
- Notice of availability and format of documents and meetings.

This policy applies to all Ontario Truss & Wall (OTW) employees, management and owners.

1. Our Mission

OTW’s mission is to provide first rate service to all of our customers including those persons with disabilities. It is our goal to make customers with disabilities feel as comfortable and welcome in choosing OTW as their truss and floor supplier as any other customer. We want their experience to be memorable, positive and repetitive without any misgivings or negativity.

2. Our commitment

In fulfilling our mission, OTW strives at all times to provide its goods and services in a way that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities. We are committed to giving people with disabilities the same opportunity to access our Services and allowing them to benefit from the same services, in same place and in a similar way as other individuals.

3. Assistive Devices

We are committed to serving people with disabilities who use assistive devices to obtain, use of benefit from our goods or services. We will ensure that our staff is trained and familiar with various assistive devices that may be used by individuals with disabilities while accessing the services we provide.

We will also ensure that our staff know how to use the following assistive devices available on our premises for disabled individuals accessing our facilities:

- Entrance ramp
- Automatic door opener
- Relay phone service.

4. Use of Service Animals and Support Persons

We are pleased to welcome people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal on the parts of our premises that are open to the public and other third parties. We will also ensure that all staff are properly trained in how to interact with disabled people who are accompanied by a service animal.

We also welcome people with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person. At no time will a person with disabilities accompanied by a support person be prevented from having access to their support person while on our premises. As well no fees will be charged for having a support person accompanying them on our premises.

5. Notice of Temporary Disruption

OTW will provide individuals with a notice in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in the facilities or services used by people with disabilities, i.e. automatic door opener or access to the ramp entrance or relay phone service. This notice will include the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration and a description of the alternative facilities or services available.

6. Training of Staff

OTW will provide training to all employees including production workers who normally do not interact with the public or customers. The positions of staff that must receive training include the following personnel:

Office Staff – accountant, designers and production supervisor.

Delivery Personnel – drivers and yard workers

Production Personnel – includes all full time, part time and casual workers. Maintenance personnel are included in this group.

Training will be facilitated by using Service Ontario's on line training services. Training must be completed by office and delivery staff within the first three (3) months after this policy is distributed to the workplace incumbents. New office staff and delivery employees will conduct this training within 3 months following their hiring. Training for office staff and delivery personnel will take place at their desks or at vacant/available work stations using the interactive training sessions available through the Service Ontario website.

Training will include the following:

- Purposes of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disability Act 2005 and the requirements for the Customer Service Standard.
- How to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities.
- How to interact with people with disabilities who use assistive devices or require the assistance of a service animal or support person.
- How to use OTW's relay service and automatic door opener or other practices that may help people with disabilities.
- OTW's policies, practices and procedures relating to the customer service standard.

All staff will be trained on Provincial Ministry policies, practices and procedures that affect the way services are provided to people with disabilities as provided by Service Ontario's Access Forward training module and accessible at this website:

<http://www.accessforward.ca/front/customerService/>

7. Feedback Process

The ultimate goal of OTW is to meet and surpass the expectations of those people with disabilities that our employees are serving or providing goods and services to. Comments on our services regarding how well those expectations are met are welcome and appreciated.

Feedback regarding the way OTW provides services to people with disabilities can be made by email, or through feedback cards in our suggestion box or by speaking with a company manager or office staff. Individuals can expect to hear back from management within 3 – 7 business days. Included at the end of this policy package is a feedback form designed for online submission, [it can accessed by clicking this feedback form link.](#)

8. Modifications to this or other Policies

We are committed to developing disability service policies that respect or promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. Therefore, no changes will be made to this policy before considering the impact on people with disabilities. Any policy of OTW that does not respect or promote the dignity and the independence of people with disabilities will be modified or removed.

9. Questions about this Policy

This policy exists to achieve service excellence to individuals with disabilities. If anyone has a question about this policy or if the purpose of the policy is not understood, an explanation can be provided, or referred to by the Officer in Charge of Accessibility policies, Vice President of Finance, Secretary, Treasurer, Juanita Hart, HB Com, CPA/CGA.

Appendix A sets out guidelines to consider in meeting accessibility standards

Appendix B sets out “Mandatory” requirements under the Act and ‘Good Practice’ considerations beyond the Act’s requirements

Appendix A – Barriers and Solutions

Possible Barriers	Possible Solutions
Vision Loss	
Staff are unaware of the need to describe services when a person cannot read a sign, posted or presented material.	Make it standard practice to describe the goods and services offered if they are unable to view them due to vision loss.
Deaf, Deafened, Oral Deaf or Hard of Hearing	
Staff unsure if telephone services are available for persons with hearing disabilities	Procedures are in place for staff to contact Relay services (1-800-855-0511) for customers who are deaf or hard of hearing. Simply call this number and follow the directions on the laminated card placed in each office or by a desk with a telephone.
Staff are not aware of the need to speak slowly or paraphrase why it is said to individuals when the individual has not understood the message.	Establish the practice of paraphrasing and repeating communications more clearly upon request or use note taking and pass written communication to the customer with disabilities.
Speaking to individuals with hands covering the mouth which does not allow for lip reading.	Establish the practice of speaking clearly and making sure nothing is covering the speakers mouth when communicating with someone who might be lip reading.
Loud music and poor acoustics, make hearing difficult for people using hearing aids.	Keep external sound or stereo music at moderate low levels. If acoustics cannot be rectified, use note taking as a backup or when necessary.
Intellectual/Developmental Disability	
Use of complex or technical language in providing services	Establish the practice of using plain language and avoid technical language when communicating.
Ignoring individuals who are more reserved or afraid to ask for help	Establish the practice of building in extra time to deal with those who need it and adjust the availability of other staff to help out as needed.
Providing complicated documents without explanation or opportunity to discuss or ask questions.	Establish the practice of discussing and explaining any documentation provided.
Employees who are not capable in offering flexible communication strategies or adequate time in providing services.	Make it standard practice to break up lengthy conversations into series of shorter ones. This may assist individuals who need additional time to process certain types of information.
Mental Health Disability	
Negative stereotypes about people with mental health disabilities resulting in disrespectful or impatient treatment.	Add a training component to the regular training that staff receives on meeting the needs of people with mental health disabilities.
	Again make it standard practice to break up lengthy conversations into a series of shorter ones. This may assist individuals in not feeling overwhelmed with information. This may prevent anxiety in individuals.

Physical Disability	
Failure of staff to offer assistance when some services require particular agility and or motor skills.	Develop a policy that requires staff to assist individuals when requested.
Failure of staff to set aside convenient seating(close to rest room or exits)	Establish the practice of setting aside convenient seating for people with physical disabilities.(such as conference room)
Speech Impairment	
Verbal speech is the only form of communication used to communicate with individuals.	Develop a policy that requires staff to have pen and paper on hand and communicate with note writing when requested to do so or is appropriate.

Annex B – Mandatory and Good Practice (Non Mandatory) Requirements

A. Staff Training	
Mandatory Requirements	Good Practice (Non Mandatory)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure obligated staff are trained • Ensure training addresses regulatory requirements and OTW service requirements • Include emergency evacuation training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider additional training that can benefit accessibility such as using alternative devices. • Prioritize training- customer servers first (office, delivery and yard staff) first in late fall or winter 2016/17, remaining production employees Winter 2017, new employees 3 months upon hiring • Online Training available through the following link, http://www.accessforward.ca/front/customerService/ • This link will be used for all OTW training purposes. • Consider refresher training every 4 years
B. Assistive Devices	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permit assistive devices on the premises • Do not interfere with assistive devices without permission of owner/user 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain upkeep, good condition of company assistive devices (automatic door opener, ramp clearance) • Train staff of backups of assistive devices, if any
C. Service Animals	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permit service animals on premises • Do not interact with service animals without permission of owner/handler • Accept training certificate as proof of service animals • Manager to find suitable work solution in event of allergies, phobias, etc • If necessary offer alternate arrangements (use of conference room) if animal is prohibited by law(snake or other animal that frightens staff or other customers) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide water to service animal when requested by owner. • Show owner outdoor area suitable for animal's needs.
D. Support Persons	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permit support persons on premises • Waive any fees if required 	N/A

<p>for support persons (fees are not usually charged for any customer visits on our premises so this is not an issue)</p>	
<p>E. Communications</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take person’s disability into account • Staff to be prepared to communicate with pen and paper, versus speaking aloud. • Staff to be prepared to use different modes of communication when telephones not suitable (relay service or email) • Provide alternate formats on request 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use appropriate language,e.g “persons with disabilities” versus “disabled persons” • Plan meeting to allow for accessibility • Invoices, statements to be provided in alternate formats upon request. • Staff to be trained in relay service when voice communication is not suitable. (blue laminated cards available at each office work/phone station)
<p>F. Feedback/Response Mechanism</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback/response mechanism must be in place • Feedback channels must allow for different modes of input • Action must be taken on feedback received 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OTW has Accessibility Plan posted at our main reception counter outlining channels for feedback, i.e. email, letters, notes for suggestion box • Suggestion box at main reception counter, to be checked regularly by Office/admin staff • A feedback form is provided at the end of this form and can accessed by clicking this link to the feedback form • Responses to be made within 3 – 7 days
<p>G. Service Disruption Requirements</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide notice of planned or unexpected service disruptions • Explain reason for disruption, the duration or any alternate facilities or services available • Post notice in a conspicuous place • Name person responsible for posting notices and identifying alternatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make reasonable effort to provide timely notices • Notice to include statement of regret and date of Notice posting
<p>H. Documents</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documents required under AODA customer service are 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documents to be displayed at the main reception counter and close to our accessible entrance

<p>cited as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Accessible Service Plan - Service Disruption notices - Feedback notices - Training records - 	
J. Location of Customer Service Policy	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide notice that documents are available outlining accessible service policies • Provide notice in a appropriate, conspicuous place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A notice of OTW’s customer service policy is placed on our reception counter at the main entrance. • A copy of our customer service policy for persons with disabilities will be posted on our website, www.ontariotruss.com, along with a feedback form.

Completion of Accessibility Customer Service Policy, Feedback form follows on next page

ACCESSIBILITY FEEDBACK FORM

FIRST NAME

LAST NAME

DATE

SUBJECT

Suggestion/Comments: