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Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act

Customer Service Standard

Policies and Procedures

Compliance – January 1, 2012

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Introduction

Building on a foundation of commitment to accessibility The Municipal Infrastructure Group Ltd. continues to work with customers, staff, and the community to identify, prevent and remove barriers to participation to ensure compliance with the Customer Service Standard.

Definition of Disability

“Disability” means,

- (a) 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,
- (b) a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability,
- (c) a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,
- (d) a mental disorder, or
- (e) an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997*; (“handicap”).

Ontario Human Rights Commission/Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005.

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) became law on June 13, 2005. Under this landmark legislation, the government of Ontario is developing mandatory accessibility standards that identify, remove and prevent barriers for people with disabilities in key areas of daily living. The standards apply to private and public sector organizations across Ontario. The goal is for the province to be accessible by 2025.

The five key areas of focus are:

- Customer Service;
- Information and Communication;
- Employment;
- Transportation;
- Built Environment.

The Customer Service Standard is the first standard developed to become a regulation and came into force on January 1, 2008. Compliance is required by January 1, 2012. The standard addresses business practices to provide better customer service to people with disabilities.

Information and Communication, Employment and Transportation have been combined into one Integrated Standard, which was enacted in July, 2011.

The Built Environment public comments are being integrated into the Ontario Building Code, so only one piece of legislation will provide the standard.

The Customer Service Standard (AODA)

Every business and organization operating in Ontario that provides goods and services to the public or other organizations and has at least one employee in Ontario has **to comply by January 1st, 2012**. To meet the requirements of the Customer Service Standard, organizations must:

1. Establish policies and procedures on providing goods or services to customers with disabilities.
2. Provide training on how to serve customers with disabilities to staff, volunteers, contractors, and anyone else who interacts with the public or other third parties on your behalf, and those involved in developing customer service policies, practices and procedures.
3. Establish a process for receiving feedback on how you provide service to customers with disabilities and how you will respond to feedback and take action on any complaints. Make information about the feedback process readily available to the public.
4. Communicate with a customer with a disability in a manner that takes into account his or her disability.
5. Let customers with disabilities bring their service animals onto any part of your premises open to the public, except where the animal is otherwise excluded by law.
6. Let customers with disabilities bring their support person with them when accessing goods or services on parts of your premises open to the public.
7. Let the public know when facilities or services that people with disabilities usually use to access your goods or services are temporarily unavailable.
8. Document all policies, practices and procedures to providing accessible customer service and notify the public that these documents are available upon request.

Effective January, 2012, organizations with 20 or more employees will have to begin to file online accessibility reports annually with the Government of Ontario, regarding their compliance with the standard.

Accessible Customer Service at The Municipal Infrastructure Group Ltd.

The Municipal Infrastructure Group Ltd. has had a long standing commitment to accessibility for customers with disabilities. The AODA Customer Service Standard now mandates a requirement to meet the needs of persons with disabilities with clearly defined policies and procedures by January 1, 2012.

To ensure compliance with the Customer Service Standard, the Municipal Infrastructure Group Ltd. has:

- *Initiated an implementation committee;*
- *Reviewed existing policies and procedures and identified gaps;*
- *Revised and developed new policies and procedures;*
- *Recommended long term priorities that continue to enhance the experience for customers with disabilities.*

Please note that our building is managed by a property management firm and The Municipal Infrastructure Group Ltd. is not responsible for automatic door openers, ramps and other access requirements. Under the present building code, access buttons are not required on washroom doors.

Customer Service Standard – The Municipal Infrastructure Group Ltd. Policies and Procedures

In preparing for the compliance requirements, The Municipal Infrastructure Group Ltd. has made reasonable efforts to ensure that its policies and procedures are consistent with the following principles, as defined by the Customer Service Standard, AODA:

- All services at The Municipal Infrastructure Ltd. will be provided in a manner that respects the dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity of people with disabilities.
 - Dignity: service is provided in a way that allows the person with a disability to maintain self-respect and the respect of other people.
 - Independence: when a person with a disability is allowed to do things on their own, without unnecessary help or interference from others.

Integration and Equal Opportunity: service is provided in a way that allows the person with a disability to benefit from the same services, in the same place, and in the same or similar way as other customers, unless an alternate measure is necessary to enable a person with disability to access goods or services. They should not have to make significantly more effort to access or obtain service. They should also not have to accept inconvenience or lesser quality. Sometimes this may mean that The Municipal Infrastructure Group Ltd. has to treat individuals slightly differently so that they can benefit fully from the services.

Assistive Devices

Policy:

The Municipal Infrastructure Group Ltd. is committed to serving people with disabilities, and ensuring that those who use assistive devices will benefit from enjoying a fulfilling experience.

Procedures:

- *The Municipal Infrastructure Group Ltd. does not offer assisted devices; however we welcome customers using assistive devices and are committed to serving people with disabilities ensuring that those who use assistive devices receive full customer service.*

Communicating with a Customer with a Disability

Policy:

The Municipal Infrastructure Group Ltd. policies and procedures take a person's disability into account when communicating with the individual. Two-way communications is a process of providing, sending, receiving and understanding information. To communicate in an effective way, The Municipal Infrastructure Group Ltd. considers how the disability affects the way that the person expresses, receives or processes communications. Where possible, The Municipal Infrastructure Group Ltd. asks the customer directly the best way to communicate with him/her.

Procedures:

The Municipal Infrastructure Group Ltd. uses a variety of ways, wherever possible, to make communications more accessible by:

- Considering the needs of people with disabilities during the planning stage of services and communication development.
- Offering information in alternate formats:
 - Hand-write or type information back and forth;
 - Printed hand-outs of commonly used information;
 - Large print programs;
 - E-mail as an alternate channel to provide accessible communication

Service Animals

Policy:

The Municipal Infrastructure Group Ltd. is committed to welcoming customers with disabilities who are accompanied by a trained, accredited service animal. A service animal may accompany a customer or any third party with a disability to all parts of our premises that are open to the public. Service animals may be used for, but not limited to, the following disabilities: vision loss, physical disability, hearing loss, autism, epilepsy etc. Although service animals are most commonly dogs, other service animals could include, but are not limited to, ferrets, monkeys etc. The Municipal Infrastructure Group Ltd. ensures that all employees, volunteers and others dealing with the public are properly trained in how to interact with people with disabilities, who are accompanied by a service animal.

Procedures:

To be considered a service animal under this standard, it must either be readily apparent that the animal is being used because of a person's disability or the person with a disability may be asked to provide a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that it is required because of his or her disability. The Municipal Infrastructure Group Ltd. does enforce a general By-law that does not permit pets on the premises, including The Municipal Infrastructure Group Ltd. property surrounding the building. Service animals are not pets - they are working animals. They are used by people with disabilities to overcome barriers much like assistive devices such as a white cane or a wheelchair.

Guide dogs or other service animals, including service animals in training, are allowed to accompany people with disabilities on The Municipal Infrastructure Group Ltd. premises open to the public.

If the service animal is causing a disturbance for other customers, the customer and accompanying service dog may be required to leave the area or The Municipal Infrastructure Group Ltd. premises.

The owner is responsible to "stoop and scoop".

The Municipal Infrastructure Group Ltd. anticipates there will be special situations and is prepared to make every effort to accommodate the circumstances on an individual basis, as they arise, keeping safety to all customers and service animals in mind.

Customers can contact the front desk for more information.

Support Persons

Policy:

The Municipal Infrastructure Group Ltd. is committed to welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person. Any person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person is allowed to enter The Municipal Infrastructure Group Ltd. premises with his or her support person. At no time will a person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person be prevented from having access to his or her support person while on The Municipal Infrastructure Group Ltd. premises.

A support person is an individual hired or chosen by a person with a disability to provide services or assistance with communication, mobility, personal care, medical needs or with access to goods or services.

Procedures:

Customers are informed of this through The Municipal Infrastructure Group Ltd. communication to the public.

Temporary Disruption of Service

Policy:

The Municipal Infrastructure Group Ltd. is aware that temporary disruptions of services (daily functions – elevators, physical operations) and programs may occur due to reasons that may or may not be within The Municipal Infrastructure Group Ltd.'s control or knowledge. The Municipal Infrastructure Group Ltd. makes a reasonable effort to provide advance notice of the disruption to the public, including information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration and a description of alternative facilities or services, if any, that may be available.

Procedures:

The notice is made available for broadcasting news and updates through the following networks, as appropriate.

- Web site
- Intranet for staff and volunteers;
- Temporary signage;

In the event of an unexpected disruption, advance notice is not possible. In such cases, The Municipal Infrastructure Group Ltd. provides notice, as soon as possible, through its communication networks.

Process to Receive and Respond to Feedback

Policy:

The Municipal Infrastructure Group Ltd. has a process in place for receiving and responding to feedback about how goods and services are provided to customers with disabilities.

Procedures:

Customers with disabilities can offer their feedback in the following ways:

- On-line at www.tmig.ca;
- E-mail and telephone, (re-directed, as required, to the appropriate response employee);
- In writing where correspondence is re-directed to the appropriate response employee;
- In person to staff/ management.

The customer is requested to provide their name and contact information (phone, e-mail).

Once feedback is received, the following actions are taken to respond:

- The feedback is directed to the appropriate person for action.
- The feedback is assessed for appropriate action. (Note: the customer service standard does not require a response to be provided for all feedback).
- Customers who provide feedback can expect an answer within 48 hours (two business days – time to be determined).

The feedback process is readily available to the public through:

- A notice on the web site;
- A document describing the feedback process, available on request in different formats;
- Other communication networks, as appropriate.

Customer Service Training

Policy:

The Municipal Infrastructure Group Ltd. provides training to all employees and volunteers and all those who are involved in the development and approvals of customer service policies and procedures on providing goods and services to customers with disabilities. The Municipal Infrastructure Group Ltd. ensures that third party and others, who deal with the public, have the required AODA training.

Procedures:

Individuals in the following positions are trained by The Municipal Infrastructure Group Ltd.:

- Board of Directors;
- Senior Staff;
- Front Line Staff;

After January, 2012, new staff will also receive training. This training will be provided as soon as practicable or as soon as it can be done in the circumstances, after an employee commence their duties.

A variety of methods and time frames are used including formal and informal training sessions, presentations, train the trainer, Ministry of Community and Social Services web sites, e-training, printed material, handouts, fact sheets, and videos, dependent on need, job descriptions and functions. Training is also included as part of a larger training program, such as basic orientation, training on effective communication or general customer service.

The training content, required by the Customer Service Standard, includes the following:

- The history of the legislation and the purposes of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and the requirements of 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 an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or a support person.
- What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing The Municipal Infrastructure Group Ltd.'s goods and services.
- The Municipal Infrastructure Group Ltd.'s policies and procedures relating to the customer service standard.
- On-going training in connection with any changes to The Municipal Infrastructure Group Ltd. policies and procedures governing the provision of goods and services to people with disabilities is provided.

Posting of Documents

Policy:

Notices are posted, informing the public that the documents required by the Customer Service Standard are available upon request and will be provided in a format that takes a person's disability into account.

Procedures:

Documents are available through the following networks, as appropriate.

- Web site
- Intranet for staff
- Twitter;

Additional Company Name's Policies and Procedures to Enhance the Customer Experience

In addition to compliance with the Customer Service Standard –AODA, The Municipal Infrastructure Group Ltd. has several additional policies and procedures to enhance the experience for customers with disabilities. These include:

- *Front of the Line Access for Customers with Disabilities.*
- *Sit down service:*
 - *If required, staff will leave the desk and come around to assist the customer with a disability.*
- *Scooters are allowed – no size restrictions*

APPENDIX 1

2010 Customer Service Accessibility Report
Customer Service Standard

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act
Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services

The following are the questions for the accessibility report on the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service.

Each question includes a reference to the corresponding section of the standard.

1. a) Does your organization have policies, practices and procedures on providing goods or services to people with disabilities? [s. 3(1)]	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
1. b) Does your organization use reasonable efforts to ensure that these policies are consistent with the principles of independence, dignity, integration and equality of opportunity? [s.3(2)]	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
2. Do your company's policies address the use of assistive devices by people with disabilities to access your company's goods or services, or any available alternative measures that enable them to do so? [s. 3(3)]	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
3. Do your company's policies, practices and procedures require your organization to take a person's disability into account when communicating with the person? [s. 3(4)]	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
4. Do members of the public or other third parties have access to premises that your organization owns or operates? [s. 4(1)] If no, then skip to question 7 below.	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
5. a) Does your organization permit people with disabilities to keep their service animals with them on the parts of your premises that are open to the public or other third parties, except where the animal is excluded by law, and is this included in your policies, practices and procedures? [s. 4(2) & (7)]	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
5. b) If a service animal is excluded by law from your premises, does your organization ensure that alternate measures are available to enable the person to access your goods or services (s.4.(3)]	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
6. Does your organization permit people with disabilities to enter the parts of your premises that are open to the public or other third parties with their support person, and provide notice of any fee charged for the support person, and is this included in your policies, practices and procedures? [s. 4(4) (6) & (7)]	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
7. Does your organization post a notice at a conspicuous place on your premises, on your website, or by another reasonable method, of any temporary disruption in facilities or services that people with disabilities usually use to access your company's goods or services, including the	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

reason, duration and any alternatives available? [s. 5(1) (2) & (3)]		
8. Has your organization established and documented a process to receive and respond to feedback on how its goods or services are provided to people with disabilities, including actions that your organization will take when a complaint is received? [s. 7(1), (3) & (4)]	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
9. Does your organization make information about its feedback process readily available to the public, including how feedback may be provided (e.g. in person, by telephone, in writing, by email, on diskette or otherwise)? [s. 7(1) & (2)]	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
10. Does your organization ensure that the following people receive training about providing your goods or services to people with disabilities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ every person who deals with the public or other third parties on behalf of your organization, and ▪ every person who participates in developing your company's policies, practices and procedures on providing goods or services? [s. 6(1)] 	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
11. Does this training include your company's current policies, practices and procedures required under the Customer Service Standard and all the topics listed in section 6(2) of the standard? [s. 6(2) & (4)]	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
12. Does your organization have a written training policy that includes a summary of the contents of the training (per question 11 above) and details of when the training is to be provided, and does your organization keep records of the dates that training was provided and how many people were trained? [s. 6(5) & (6)]	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
13. Does your organization post a notice at a conspicuous place on your premises, on your website, or by another reasonable method, that the documents required by the Customer Service Standard are available upon request, and do you provide those documents in a format that takes a person's disability into account? [s. 8(1) & (2) & 9(1)]	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>