



ACCESSIBILITY CUSTOMER SERVICE POLICY

BACKGROUND

The Ontario Government plans to make the province fully accessible by 2025. It has introduced a phased-in approach to the implementation of requirements through regulations under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005.

According to the 2005 Act, The Onyx Group of Companies and other not for profit and private sector organizations were required to meet the following standards by different dates:

1. The Accessible Customer Service Standards, effective January 1, 2012 under the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Regulation. (Amalgamated into the Integrated Accessible Standards Regulation (IASR) in 2016).
2. The Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR), effective January 2013.
 - The Accessible Employment Standards
 - The Accessible Information and Communication Standards
 - The Accessible Transportation Standards*
 - The Accessible Design of Public Spaces Standards
 - General requirements on training, accessibility plans and policies and self-serve kiosks
3. The Accessible Built Environment Standards.

**Standards do not apply to The Onyx Group of Companies*



1.0 GENERAL

1.1 STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT:

The Onyx Group of Companies is committed to treating all people in a way that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence. We believe in integration and equal opportunity.

We are committed to meeting the needs of people with disabilities in a timely manner, and will do so by preventing and removing barriers to accessibility and meeting accessibility requirements under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005.

1.2 SCOPE:

This Policy shall apply to every person who deals with members of the public or other third parties on behalf of The Onyx Group of Companies, whether the person does so as an employee, member of the Board, volunteer, student or otherwise.

1.3 DEFINITIONS:

Accessible means customer service is provided in a manner that is capable of being easily understood or appreciated; easy to get at; capable of being reached, or entered; obtainable.

Assistive Device means any device or mechanism that assists a person with a disability in accessing, and benefiting from the services provided. Assistive devices may include, but are not limited to; American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation, wheelchair, walker, cane, assistive listening device, visual alarms, or assistive software programs.

Disability: For the purposes of this policy 'disability' is defined according to the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2005 as:

- (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;

Guide Dog means a dog trained as a guide for a blind person and having the qualifications prescribed by the Blind Persons' Rights Act R.S.O. 1990, c. B.7, s. 1 (1).

Service Animal is an animal that provides assistance for a person with a disability. It may be readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to his/her disability; or a person may

be asked to provide a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability.

2.0 CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARD POLICY

2.1 PURPOSE/OBJECTIVE:

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Ensure that our policies, practices and procedures for the provision of its services are consistent with the principles outlined in the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service and to effectively provide services to people with disabilities.
- Strive always to provide services in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities.
- Ensure that people with disabilities have the same opportunity to access and benefit from our services in the same place and in a similar way as others and the removal of any barriers that may impede full accessibility for people with disabilities.

2.2 POLICY:

COMMUNICATION:

We are committed to communicating with people with disabilities in ways that consider their disability. We are committed to providing accessible decisions, reasons for decision, correspondence, and documents about our mandate, processes and procedures. When communicating with a person with a disability, The Onyx Group of Companies will communicate in a manner that takes into account the person's disability.

ASSISTIVE DEVICES:

The Onyx Group of Companies recognizes that some individuals with disabilities use assistive devices in order to access our services. Our facility will permit these individuals to use their assistive devices to obtain, use or benefit from our services.

SERVICE ANIMALS:

The Onyx Group of Companies recognizes that some individuals with disabilities may require the use of guide dogs or other service animals, in order to access services. Persons with disabilities who are accompanied by a guide dog or other service animal will be permitted to enter the parts of our premises that are common areas and to keep the animal with them, unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law from the premises.

If the animal is legally excluded from some parts of the premises, The Onyx Group of Companies will provide alternative measures to enable the person to obtain, use or benefit from our services.



If a service animal is not readily identifiable, the customer may be asked to provide a letter from a physician or nurse verifying that it is a service animal.

SUPPORT PERSONS:

The Onyx Group of Companies further recognizes that some individuals with disabilities rely on support persons for assistance while accessing services. A person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person will be allowed to enter the organizations' premises together with the support person and will not be prevented from having access to the support person while on our premises.

When there is, a fee associated with a support person attending an event or service provided by The Onyx Group of Companies, the fee, if any will be communicated in advance.

NOTICE OF TEMPORARY DISRUPTION:

The Onyx Group of Companies will provide customers with notice in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in the facilities or services usually used by people with disabilities. This notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available. The notice will normally be posted on the premises, where appropriate in the circumstances.

STAFF TRAINING:

The Onyx Group of Companies will provide training to applicable staff about the provision of services to persons with disabilities and all those who are involved in the development and approvals of customer service policies, practices and procedures.

Applicable staff will be trained on policies, practices and procedures that affect the way services are provided to people with disabilities. Staff will also be trained on an ongoing basis when changes are made to these policies, practices and procedures.

Training will include the following:

- 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 organization's services.
- The Onyx Group of Companies' policies, practices and procedures relating to the customer service standard.

Human Resources will keep records of the training provided including the dates on which the training is provided and the number of persons trained.

FEEDBACK PROCESS:

The ultimate goal of The Onyx Group of Companies is to meet and surpass customer expectations while serving persons with disabilities. Comments on our services regarding how well those expectations are being met are welcome and appreciated.



Feedback regarding the way The Onyx Group of Companies provides goods and services to people with disabilities can be made by email, verbally, or in writing (suggestion box).

Complaints will be addressed according to our complaint policy already established in our company's common policies.

4.0 FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information on this accessibility policy and plan, please contact:

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