



Customer Service Accessibility

Standard Policy & Training Booklet

Service Animals Welcome



INDEX

LAURIER GROUP ACCESSIBLE CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARD POLICY

PAGE #'S

Laurier Group Policy Statement	3
Types of disabilities & Assistive devices	
People with Vision Loss	4
People who are Deaf, deafened, oral deaf or hard of hearing	4
People with Physical Disabilities	5
People with Learning Disabilities	5
People with Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities	5
People with Mental Health Disabilities	6
People with Speech or Language Impairment	6
General Tips on Talking to customers with Disabilities over the Phone	6
Service Animals	7
Support Persons	8
Policies, Practices and Procedures	9/10

Training and Orientation-

Summarizes Training Requirements under the Customer Service Standard AODA:

Unit 1 & 2-Purpose of Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2005- AODA	10/11/12/13
Unit 3- How to Interact and Communicate with People with Various Disabilities	13/14/15/16/17
Unit 4-How to Interact with People with Various Disabilities Using a Assistive Device	18/19
Unit 5-How to use Equipment/Assistive Devices	19
Unit 6-How to Interact with People with Disabilities using a Service Animal	20
Unit 7-How to Interact with People accompanied by a Support Person	21
Unit 8-What to do if a Person with Disabilities cannot access our Goods or Services	21/22
Unit 9-Policies , Practices and Procedures	22
Unit 10-Disruptions in Service	22
Unit 11-Feedback Process	22
Unit 12-Documentation	23
Awareness Quiz	24/25
Test Your Knowledge	25
Answers to Awareness Quiz	26/27
Answers to Test Your Knowledge	27



LAURIER GROUP ACCESSIBLE CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARD POLICY STATEMENT

Laurier Group is committed to adhering to the highest standards of business conduct. These unwavering expectations provide the foundation for our commitment to our customers, suppliers, trades people, employees and the communities that we build in.

Laurier Group respects and values all individuals for their diverse backgrounds, experience, styles, practices and philosophies including people with disabilities.

Laurier Group makes every effort to maintain the highest level of professionalism, integrity and honesty in all our relationships. Laurier Group mandates to all its personnel dealing with the public, specifically persons with disabilities that our goods and services are communicated with equal opportunity, respect, dignity, independence, and integration.

Laurier Group will ensure that our staff is trained and familiar with the various assistive devices used by customers with disabilities while accessing our goods or services, as well as how to best serve our customers who may have disabilities.

Training will be provided on regular intervals and/or as required under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2005. (AODA)

LAURIER GROUP

ACCESSIBLE CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARD POLICY

Providing Goods and Services to People with Disabilities

Laurier Group is committed to excellence in serving all of our customers equally including people with disabilities.

TYPES OF DISABILITIES & ASSISTIVE DEVICES THAT MAY BE USED:

Laurier Group will ensure that our staff is trained and familiar with various assistive devices used by customers with disabilities while accessing our goods or services as well as how to serve our customers best who may have disabilities.

An assistive device is a tool, technology or other mechanism that enables a person with a disability to do everyday tasks and activities such as moving, communicating or lifting.

Do not touch your customer or an assistive device or service animal without asking permission.

The following are examples you may come across when serving your customers with disabilities:

People who have vision loss:

Few people with vision loss are totally blind. Many have limited vision such as tunnel vision, (loss of peripheral or side vision) or a lack of central vision (cannot see straight ahead). Some people can see the outline of objects while others can see the direction of light. Sometimes it may be difficult to tell if a person has vision loss.

Example of devices that may be used:

- Digital audio player – enables people to listen to books, directions, art shows, etc.
- Magnifier – makes print and images larger and easier to read
- Portable global positioning systems (GPS) – helps orient people to get to specific destinations
- White cane – helps people find their way around obstacles
- Braille- is a code system for reading information
- Service Animal or Support Person

People who are Deaf, deafened, oral deaf or hard of hearing;

People who are profoundly deaf may identify themselves as culturally Deaf or oral deaf. Indicated by a capital “D,” the term is used to describe a person who has severe to profound hearing loss (little or no hearing).

Oral deaf is a term describing a person who was born deaf or became deaf before learning to speak, but is taught to speak and may not typically use American Sign Language.

Deafened describes a person who has lost their hearing slowly or suddenly in adulthood and may use speech with visual cues, such as captioning or computerized note taking, speech reading, or sign language.

Hard of Hearing describes a person who uses their residual hearing and speech to communicate.

Deaf Blind describes a person who neither sees nor hears to some degree. Many who are deaf blind will be accompanied by an intervener a professional who will help them.

Example of devices that may be used:

- FM transmitter system /Hearing Aid or other amplification devices – boosts sound closest to the listener while reducing background noise
- Teletypewriter (TTY) – helps people who are unable to speak or hear to communicate by phone. Typed messages on the TTY keyboard are sent using telephone lines to someone who has a TTY, or to an operator (Bell Relay Service) who passes the message to someone who doesn’t have a TTY.
- Braille/Large Print/Communication Boards-Magnification equipment/Pen and Paper
- Service Animal or Support Person.

TYPES OF DISABILITIES & ASSISTIVE DEVICES THAT MAY BE USED CONT'D:

People who have physical disabilities-there are many types and degrees of disabilities;

People who have arthritis, heart or lung conditions or amputations may also have difficulty with moving, standing or sitting. It may be difficult to identify a person with a physical disability.

Example of devices that may be used;

- Mobility device - wheelchair, scooter, walker, cane, crutches – helps people who have difficulty walking
- Personal oxygen tank – helps people breathe
- Automatic door opener
- Service Animal or Support Person

People who have learning disabilities;

A learning disability describes a range of information processing disorders that affect how a person acquires, organizes, expresses, retains, understands or uses verbal or non-verbal information.

Examples; dyslexia are problems in reading and related language-based learning; dyscalculia are problems in mathematics and dysgraphia are problems in writing and fine motor skills. It is important to know that having a learning disability does not mean a person is incapable of learning. Rather, it means they learn in a different way.

Learning disabilities can be subtle, such as difficulty reading or can interfere with your customer's ability to receive, express or process information. You may not know that a person has a learning disability unless you are told.

Example of devices that may be used:

- Electronic notebook or laptop computer – used to take notes and to communicate
- Personal data managers – stores, organizes and retrieves personal information
- Mini pocket recorders – records information for future playback
- Calculator

People who have intellectual/developmental disabilities:

People with intellectual or developmental disabilities may have difficulty doing things most of us take for granted. These disabilities can mildly or profoundly limit the person's ability to learn, communicate, socialize and take care of their everyday needs. You may not know that someone has this type of disability unless you are told.

As much as possible, treat your customers with an intellectual or developmental disability like anyone else. They may understand more than you think, and they will appreciate that you treat them with respect.

Example of devices that may be used:

- Communication boards - a Bliss board – used to pass on a message by pointing to symbols, words or Pictures
- Speech generating devices – used to pass on a message using a device that “speaks” when a symbol, word or picture is pressed.
- Service Animal or Support Person

TYPES OF DISABILITIES & ASSISTIVE DEVICES THAT MAY BE USED CONT'D:

People who have mental health disabilities:

Mental health disabilities are not as visible as other types of disabilities. You may not know that your customer has a mental health disability unless you're informed of it.

Examples of mental health disabilities; include schizophrenia, depression, phobias, as well as bipolar, anxiety and mood disorders.

A person with a mental health disability may have difficulty with one, several or none of these:

- Inability to think clearly and/or poor concentration and/or difficulty remembering
- Hallucinations- hearing voices, seeing or feeling things that aren't there
- Depression or acute mood swings (e.g., from happy to depressed with no apparent reason for the change)
- Apparent lack of motivation.

If someone is experiencing difficulty controlling his or her symptoms, or is in a crisis, you may want to help out. Be calm and professional and ask your customer how you can best help.

Example of devices that may be used:

- Service animal or Support Person

People who have speech or language impairment:

Some people have problems communicating because of their disability. Cerebral palsy, hearing loss or other conditions may make it difficult to pronounce words or may cause slurring or stuttering. They also may prevent the person from expressing themselves or prevent them from understanding written or spoken language. Some people who have severe difficulties may use communication boards or other assistive devices.

Example of devices that may be used;

- Communication board –a Bliss Board-used to pass on a message by pointing to symbols, words or Pictures
- Paper and pen
- Speech generating device used to pass on a message using a device that “speaks” when a symbol, word or picture is pressed
- Support person.

General Tips on talking to customers with disabilities in person or over the phone:

- Don't assume that because a person has one disability, they also have another.
- Ask your customer to repeat the information if you don't understand.
- Ask questions that can be answered “yes” or “no” if possible.
- Allow enough time to communicate with your customer as they may speak more slowly.
- Don't interrupt or finish your customer's sentences. Wait for them to finish
- Speak naturally, clearly and directly.
- Don't worry about how the person's voice sounds. Concentrate on what they are saying.
- If a telephone customer is using an interpreter or a Relay Service, speak naturally to the customer, not to the interpreter.

If you encounter a situation where, after numerous attempts, you and your customer cannot communicate with each other due to the customer's disability, consider making alternate arrangement.

SERVICE ANIMALS:

Laurier Group welcomes people with disabilities and their service animals. Service animals are allowed on the parts of our premises that are open to the public.

The standard doesn't require that service animals be formally trained, but most service animals in Ontario are trained at organizations in Canada or in the United States. Service animals are used in many countries around the world and so visitors to Ontario may also use service animals.

Different Types of Service Animals:

In some instances service animals can be canine, cat, pot belly pig, small ponies or miniature horses are used but are not as common, and guinea pigs, in the United States, they also allow Capuchin Monkeys.

Therapy Animals- These animals aid those with hindered physical abilities due to stroke or arthritis; helping them attempt physical movement.

Example; Special Skills Animal may carry objects, turn handles, push buttons, alert owner to on coming seizures etc.,

Emotional Support Animals- These animals provide assistance to those that are emotionally challenged. Often these animals provide comfort bringing happiness and balancing moods.

Example; Psychiatric Service Dog: Retrieves and prompts person to take medicine, activates medical alert, leads person out of crowds. Some animals provide a calming effect such as hamsters etc.

Service/Assistance Animals- These animals help those with the inability to do day to day functions due to their disabilities.

Example: Mobility Dog; May pull wheelchairs; provide balance support, open doors etc.

Tips on interacting with a customer who uses a service animal:

- Remember that a service animal is not a pet. It is a working animal.
- Avoid touching or addressing service animals – they are working and have to pay attention at all times.
- Not all service animals wear special collars or harnesses. If you're not sure if the animal is a pet or a service animal, ask your customer.
- Remember your customer is responsible for the care and supervision of their service animal. You are not expected to provide care or food for the animal; however, you could provide water for the animal if your customer requests it.

Under the standard, an animal is a service animal if it is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to his/her disability, has a letter from a physician/nurse verifying that the animal is required, relating to his/her disability.

If it is not obvious that the animal is a service animal, you are not required to allow the animal on your premises if the person does not have a letter from a physician or nurse, or an identification card from the Ministry of the Attorney General, for more information:

http://www.attorneygeneral.jus.gov.on.ca/english/about/commitment_to_accessibility.asp

SUPPORT PERSONS:

Laurier Group welcomes customers with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person and will be allowed to use their support person while accessing our organization's goods or services on the parts of the premises open to the public.

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

- Personal care needs may include, but are not limited to, assistance with eating or using the washroom.
- Medical needs may include, but are not limited to, monitoring someone's health conditions, providing injections and providing support when someone has moderate to severe seizures.
- To assist or interpret communications, high stress situations, note taking, etc.

The support person can be a paid personal support worker, volunteer, a friend or a family member. He or she does not necessarily need to have special training or qualifications.

A customer with a disability might not introduce their support person. If you are not sure which person is the customer, take your lead from the person using or requesting your goods or services or simply ask.

Once you have determined who your customer is, speak directly to them, not to their support person.

Choose the right word:

Words can influence and reinforce the public's perception of people with disabilities. They can create a positive view of people with disabilities, or a negative view.

Here are some tips that can help make your communication and interaction with people with all types of disabilities more successful:

- Use "disability" or "disabled," not "handicap" or "handicapped."
- Don't use terms such as "retarded," "dumb," "psycho," "moron" or "crippled." These words are very demeaning and disrespectful to people with disabilities.
- Remember to put people first. It is proper to say "person with a disability," rather than "disabled person."

If you are not sure about a disability, it's better to wait until the individual describes their situation to you rather than make your own assumptions. Many types of disabilities have similar characteristics and your assumptions may be wrong.

POLICIES, PRACTICES AND PROCEDURES:

Laurier Group will provide training to employees and others who deal with the public or other third parties on our behalf in the following:

Dignity – service will be provided in a way that allows the person with a disability to maintain self-respect and the respect of other people. People with disabilities will not be treated as an afterthought or forced to accept lesser service, quality or convenience.

Independence – service will be provided allowing a person with a disability to do things on their own without unnecessary help, or interference from others.

Integration – service will be 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 the person to access goods or services.

Equal opportunity – people with disabilities have an opportunity equal to that given to others to access our goods or services.

POLICIES ON THE USE OF ASSISTIVE DEVICES:

Laurier Group will make every effort to communicate effectively with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability.

- Many customers with disabilities will have their own personal assistive devices, don't touch or handle an assistive device without permission.

If you have permission to move a person in a wheelchair remember to:

- Wait for and follow the person's instructions.
- Confirm that your customer is ready to move.
- Describe what you are going to do before you do it.
- Try to avoid uneven ground and objects.
- Don't leave the person in an awkward, dangerous or undignified position such as facing a wall or in the path of opening doors.
- Don't move items or equipment, such as canes and walkers, out of your customer's reach.
- Respect your customer's personal space. Don't lean over him/her or on his or an assistive device.
- Let your customer know about accessible features in the immediate environment (e.g., automatic doors, accessible washrooms, ramps etc.).

Disruptions in Service:

In the event of a planned or unexpected disruption to services or facilities for customers with disabilities such as automatic door openers, elevators, ramps and plumbing etc., we will

- Laurier Group will notify customers affected promptly, as well as a clearly post a notice that will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated length of time, and a description of alternative access to facilities or services, if available.
- The notice will be placed on the door to the facility, at the receptionist desk, main entrance to building & our company's website page.

POLICIES, PRACTICES AND PROCEDURES CONT'D

Feedback Process: Laurier Group welcomes feedback from all our customers. It is the intent of all persons representing Laurier Group to provide information or communications to all our customers in a format that would assist them in their decision making process.

Should a person with disabilities require additional information in a format allowing them to understand/decide on our goods or services offered please contact us:

Via our web site; www.laurierhomes.com or Email; reneeseon@laurierhomes.com or

By Phone: 905-738-2009 ext. 233 / Fax: 905-738-0411 /

Mail: 150 Connie Crescent, Unit 4, Concord, Ontario, L4K 19L

All customer inquiries/complaints will be responded to within 2 business days and if it is not possible to resolve the issue/inquiry during that time, the acknowledgement will outline what steps are being taken and whether there will be a further response.

TRAINING & ORIENTATION

Training will be provided on regular intervals and/or as required under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2005. (AODA)

This list summarizes the training requirements under the Customer Service Standard.

Unit 1- Purposes of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005:

AODA Section 1

What is the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act?

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) is a law in Ontario that allows the government to develop specific standards of accessibility and to enforce them.

Recognizing the history of discrimination against persons with disabilities in Ontario, the purpose of this Act is to benefit all Ontarians by:

- a) developing, implementing and enforcing accessibility standards in order to achieve accessibility for Ontarians with disabilities with respect to goods, services, facilities, accommodation, employment, buildings, structures and premises on or before January 1, 2025; and
- b) providing for the involvement of persons with disabilities, the Government of Ontario and of representatives of industries and various sectors of the economy in the development of accessibility standards.

The standards require that people or organizations identified in the standard, to identify, remove and prevent barriers for people with disabilities in key areas of daily living.

Barriers keep people with disabilities from fully participating in activities that most of us take for granted. The customer service standard is the first standard to come into effect under the AODA.

The next four standards – Information and Communications, Employment, Transportation, Design of Public Spaces – have been combined under one regulation, the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation.

This regulation is now law and the requirements currently in regulation are being phased in between now and 2021. Accessibility improvements to buildings will be addressed through the Ontario Building Code.

Who are people with disabilities?

When we think of disabilities, we tend to think of people who use wheelchairs and who have physical disabilities that are visible and obvious. But disabilities can also be invisible. We cannot always tell who has a disability.

TRAINING & ORIENTATION CONT'D

The AODA uses the same definition of “disability” as the Ontario Human Rights Code.

Excerpt from the Ontario Human Rights Code on disability:

What is disability?

“Disability” covers a broad range and degree of conditions, some visible and some not visible. A disability may have been present from birth, caused by an accident, or developed over time.

There are physical, mental and learning disabilities, mental disorders, hearing or vision disabilities, epilepsy, drug and alcohol dependencies, environmental sensitivities, and other conditions.

The Code protects people from discrimination because of past, present and perceived disabilities.

For example; the Code protects a person who faces discrimination because they are a recovered alcoholic. So is a person whose condition does not limit their workplace abilities, but who is believed to be at greater risk of being able to do less in the future.

See <http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/disability-and-human-rights-brochure> for more information.

Unit 1- Purposes of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 cont'd:

AODA Section 2

In this Act, “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 coordination, 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.

For more information about the Ontario Human Rights Code, visit: www.ohrc.on.ca and click on “The Code” under the Resources Section of the website.

What are barriers?

When you think about accessibility, it is important to be aware of both visible and invisible barriers.

A barrier is anything that keeps someone with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of their disability.

Attitude is perhaps the most difficult barrier to overcome because it's hard to change the way people think or behave. Some people don't know how to communicate with those who have visible or invisible disabilities;

Example; assuming someone with a speech problem has intellectual limitations and speaking to them in a manner that would be used with a child; or forming ideas about the person because of stereotypes or a lack of understanding.

Some people may feel that they could offend the individual with a disability by offering help, or they ignore or avoid people with disabilities altogether.

Remember, attitude is a major barrier that's within our power to change.

AODA Section 2 cont'd

Architectural or structural barriers may result from design elements of a building such as stairs, doorways, the width of hallways and even a room layout etc.

For more information on the new requirements, please visit the Ontario Building Code website at www.ontario.ca/buildingcode.

Information and communication barriers can make it difficult for people to receive or convey information. Example; a person who is Deaf cannot communicate via standard telephone.

Things like small print size, low colour contrast between text and background, confusing design of printed materials and the use of language that isn't clear or easy to understand can all cause difficulty.

Technology, or lack of it, can prevent people from accessing information. Everyday tools like computers, telephones and other aids can all present barriers if they are not set up or designed with accessibility in mind.

Systemic barriers can result from an organization's policies, practices and procedures if they restrict people with disabilities, often unintentionally. Example; Clothing stored with a "no refund" policy and no way for someone in a scooter to enter the change room.

Unit 2-Review of the requirements of the Customer Service Standard:

What is the customer service standard?

Ontario's accessible Customer Service Standard is now the law. It came into force on January 1, 2008.

People, businesses and other organizations that provide goods or services to the public or to other businesses or organizations in Ontario ("providers") have legal obligations under the Standard.

The Standard is aimed at making customer service operations accessible to people with disabilities.

The Customer Service Standard is the first of Five Standards that will help lead the way to an accessible Ontario by 2025.

Other accessibility Standards cover; Transportation, Information, Communications, Design of Public Spaces and Employment.

Who has to comply with the customer service standard?

The Standard applies to all people or organizations, both public and private, that:

- Provide goods or services either directly to the public or to other businesses or organizations, and
- Have one or more employees in Ontario.

Providers in the following sectors are affected:

- Private
- Non-profit, and
- Public, including provincial and municipal governments, universities, colleges, hospitals, school boards and public transportation organizations.

Unit 2-Review of the requirements of the Customer Service Standard Cont'd:

What do all providers have to do to comply?

The following is a summary of requirements. There are more details of the requirements in the Guide to the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07.

Providers must:

- Establish policies, practices and procedures on providing goods or services to people with disabilities.
- Make reasonable efforts to ensure that policies, practices and procedures are consistent with the principles of independence, dignity, integration and equality of opportunity.
- Have a policy dealing with people's use of their own assistive devices to access goods or services or any other measures the organization offers to enable an individual access the goods or services.
- Communicate with a person with a disability in a manner that takes into account their disability.
- Let people with disabilities bring their service animals onto the parts of the premises open to the public or other third parties, except where the animal is otherwise excluded by law from the premises.
- Let people with disabilities be accompanied by their support persons while on the parts of the provider's premises open to the public or other third parties.
- If a provider charges admission, let people know ahead of time what, if any, admission will be charged for a support person.
- Provide notice when facilities or services that people with disabilities usually use to access goods or services are temporarily disrupted.
- Train anyone who interacts with the public or other third parties on the provider's behalf on topics outlined in the customer service standard.
- Train anyone who is involved in developing the provider's Customer Service Policies, Practices and Procedures on topics outlined in the customer service standard.
- Establish a process for receiving and responding to feedback about the way the organization provides goods or services to people with disabilities, including the actions to be taken if a complaint is received, and make information about the process readily available to the public.

What additional requirements apply to some providers?

Designated public sector organizations and other providers with 20 or more employees must:

- Document in writing all their policies, practices and procedures for providing accessible customer service to people with disabilities
- Let customers know that the documents are available upon request
- Upon request, provide the documented information to a person with a disability in a format that takes into account their disability.

Unit 3- How to interact and communicate with people who have various types of disabilities:

Words can influence and reinforce the public's perception of people with disabilities. They can create a positive view of people with disabilities, or a negative view.

Here are some tips that can help make your communication and interaction with people with all types of disabilities more successful:

- Use "disability" or "disabled," not "handicap" or "handicapped."
- Don't use terms such as "retarded," "dumb," "psycho," "moron" or "crippled." These words are very demeaning and disrespectful to people with disabilities.
- Remember to put people first. It is proper to say "person with a disability," rather than "disabled person."
- If you are not sure about a disability, it's better to wait until the individual describes their situation to you rather than make your own assumptions. Many types of disabilities have similar characteristics and your assumptions may be wrong.

For more information, visit www.ontario.ca/accession

Unit 3- How to interact and communicate with people who have various types of disabilities **cont'd:**

General tips on providing service to customers with disabilities:

- If you're not sure what to do, ask your customer, "May I help you?" Your customers with disabilities know if they need help and how you can provide it.
- Speak directly to the person with a disability, not to his or her support person or companion.
- Avoid stereotypes and make no assumptions about what type of disability or disabilities the person has. Some disabilities are not visible and customers are not required to give you information about any disabilities they may have.
- Take the time to get to know your customer's needs and focus on meeting those needs just as you would with any other customer.
- Be patient. People with some kinds of disabilities may take a little longer to understand and respond. A good start is to listen carefully.
- Make an effort to learn about appropriate language and terminology to use when referring to people with disabilities.
- If you cannot understand what your customer is saying, politely ask them to repeat themselves.
- Don't touch or speak to service animals – they are working and have to pay attention at all times
- Don't touch assistive devices, including wheelchairs, without permission.
- Consider offering interactive devices (such as self-serve checkouts, direct payment devices) that can be used by people with various types of disabilities or offering alternate services.
- Consider including people with disabilities in the testing or evaluation of your communication services.

Tips on how to interact and communicate with customers who have vision loss:

Vision loss can restrict your customers' abilities to read signs, locate landmarks or see hazards. Some of these customers may use a guide dog or white cane, but others may not. Sometimes it may be difficult to tell if a person has vision loss.

- Ask first if your customer wishes to be guided. If the answer is "yes," offer your arm. Ask which arm is better. Walk at a normal pace. The person will walk about a step behind. Announce handrails, doors (to the right/left, push/pull to open, etc.) and describe the surrounding areas such as what is in an aisle.
- If you are guiding towards stairs: Let the customer know if they have to walk up or down. Approach the stairs head on, not at an angle and come to a full stop in front of the stairs. Lead or guide your customer to the rail side to allow them to take hold of it. Let them find the first step and then start to climb or descend the stairs, Try to be one step ahead and announce the last step.

If you are going through a narrow doorway or a passage, go first, after explaining the circumstances and describing the area.

- Upon entering a room, offer to describe the dimensions and the location of people and furniture.
- If the person wishes to sit, offer to guide him/her and place his/her hand on the back of the chair.
- Keep the person informed when others approach or leave.
- If you must leave the individual alone, do not leave them standing in the middle of the room, with nothing to hold onto. If they are not seated, guide them to a door, wall, or piece of furniture to stand next to. This will help the person to stay spatially oriented.
- Before opening the door for a customer with vision loss, ask if they want you to open it. Indicate whether the door opens to the right or left and whether the door will be pushed or pulled. They may be using the door's location as a reference point.

Unit 3- How to interact and communicate with people who have various types of disabilities cont'd:

General Tips for communicating with customers who have vision loss:

- Don't assume the individual can't see you.
- Don't touch your customer without asking permission. Offer your elbow to guide the person. If he or she accepts, walk slowly, but wait for permission before doing so. Lead – don't pull.
- Identify landmarks or other details to orient your customer to the environment around him /her.
- Don't touch or speak to service animals – they are working and have to pay attention at all times.
- If you need to leave your customer, let him or her know you are leaving and will be back.
- Identify yourself when you approach your customer and speak directly to him or her, even if he/she is accompanied by a companion.
There is generally no need to raise your voice because the person does not necessarily have hearing loss. Say your name even if you know the person well as many voices sound similar.
- Be clear and precise when giving directions, e.g., two steps behind you, a metre to your left, etc. Don't use "over there" or point in the direction.
- If you're uncertain about how to provide directions, ask the person how to do so.
- Do not be afraid or embarrassed to use words such as "see", "read" and "look." People with vision loss also use these words.
- When providing printed information, offer to read or summarize it.
- Offer to describe information. For example; verbally describe the site plan and where fencing maybe, mail boxes, sidewalks etc.

General Tips on how to interact and communicate with customers who are Deaf, oral deaf, deafened or hard of hearing or deaf blind:

- Attract the customer's attention before speaking; the best way is by a gentle touch on the shoulder or with a gentle wave of your hand.
- Ask how you can help. Don't shout.
- Move to a well-lit area, if available, where your customer can see your face.
- If necessary, ask if another method of communicating would be easier, for example, using a pen and paper. Be patient if you are using a pen and paper to communicate. American Sign Language may be your customer's first language. It has its own grammatical rules and sentence structure.
- Look at and speak directly to your customer, not the interpreter or support person.
- Don't put your hands in front of your face when speaking. Some people read lips.
- Don't assume that the customer knows sign language or reads lips.
- Be clear and precise when giving directions, and repeat or rephrase if necessary. Confirm that your customer understands you.
- If the person uses a hearing aid, reduce background noise or move to a quieter area, if possible, so the person can hear or concentrate better.
- Don't assume what a person can or cannot do. Some people who are deaf blind have some sight or hearing, while others have neither.
- A customer who is deaf blind is likely to explain to you how to communicate with him or her or give you an assistance card or a note explaining how to communicate with him or her.
- Identify yourself to the intervener/support person when you approach your customer who is deaf blind, but then speak directly to your customer as you normally would, not to the intervener/support person.
- Don't touch or address service animals – they are working and have to pay attention at all times.
- Don't suddenly touch a person who is deaf blind or touch them without permission.

Unit 3- How to interact and communicate with people who have various types of disabilities **cont'd:**

General Tips on how to interact and communicate with customers who have physical disabilities:

There are many types and degrees of physical disabilities, and not all require a wheelchair. People who have arthritis, heart or lung conditions or amputations may also have difficulty with moving, standing or sitting. It may be difficult to identify a person with a physical disability.

- Speak naturally and directly to your customer, not to his or her companion or support person.
- If you need to have a lengthy conversation with someone in a wheelchair or scooter, consider sitting so that you can make eye contact.
- Ask before you help. People with physical disabilities often have their own ways of doing things
- Respect your customer's personal space. Do not lean over him or her or on his or her assistive device.
- Don't move items or equipment, such as canes and walkers out of the person's reach.
- Don't touch assistive devices without permission. If you have permission to move a person in a wheelchair, remember to: Wait for and follow the person's instructions and confirm that your customer is ready to move. Describe what you're going to do before you do it
- Avoid uneven ground and objects
- Don't leave the person in an awkward, dangerous or undignified position such as facing a wall or in the path of opening doors.
- Let your customer know about accessible features in the immediate area (i.e., automatic doors, accessible washrooms, elevators, ramps, etc.).

General Tips on how to interact and communicate with customers who have mental health disabilities:

Mental health disabilities are not as visible as many other types of disabilities. You may not know that your customer has a mental health disability unless you're informed of it.

- Treat a person with a mental health disability with the same respect and consideration you have for everyone else.
- Be patient.
- Be confident and reassuring. Listen carefully and work with your customer to try to meet their needs.
- If someone appears to be in a crisis, ask him or her to tell you the best way to help.

General Tips on how to interact and communicate with customers who have intellectual / developmental disabilities:

People with intellectual or developmental disabilities may have difficulty doing many things, these disabilities can mildly or profoundly limit the person's ability to learn, communicate, socialize and take care of their everyday needs.

- Don't assume what a person can or cannot do.
- Use plain language and speak in short sentences.
- To confirm if your customer understands what you have said, consider asking the person to repeat the message back to you in his or her own words.
- If you cannot understand what is being said, simply ask again.
- Provide one piece of information at a time.
- Be supportive and patient.
- Speak directly to your customer, not to their companion or support person.

Unit 3- How to interact and communicate with people who have various types of disabilities **cont'd:**

General Tips on how to interact and communicate with customers who have learning disabilities:

The term “learning disability” describes a range of information processing disorders that can affect how a person acquires, organizes, expresses, retains, understands or uses verbal or non-verbal information.

- When you know someone with a learning disability needs help, ask how you can help.
- Speak naturally, clearly, and directly to your customer.
- Allow extra time if necessary - people may take a little longer to understand and respond.
- Remember to communicate in a way that takes into account the customer’s disability.
- Be patient and be willing to explain something again, if needed.

General Tips on how to interact and communicate with customers who have speech or language impairments:

Some people have problems communicating because of their disability. They also may prevent the person from expressing themselves or prevent them from understanding written or spoken language.

- Don’t assume that because a person has one disability, they also have another.
For example, if a customer has difficulty speaking, it doesn’t mean they have an intellectual or developmental disability as well.
- Ask your customer to repeat the information if you don’t understand.
- Ask questions that can be answered “yes” or “no” if possible.
- Try to allow enough time to communicate with your customer as they may speak more slowly.
- Don’t interrupt or finish your customer’s sentences. Wait for them to finish.

General Tips on at-home service and personal delivery to customers with disabilities:

- Confirm the details of your arrival time in advance. Don’t arrive unexpectedly.
- Be patient. You may need to wait a few moments for your customer to open the door.
- Introduce yourself clearly. Some customers may not be able to read identification cards and may want you to use a password. Check before you visit.
- Keep your customer informed of what you’re doing.
- If you need to move some of your customer's possessions, make sure that you leave the house exactly as it was when you arrived.
Example, someone with vision loss will expect that their furniture is in the same place and could trip if you’ve moved the sofa.
- If you cannot complete the job, clearly explain what will happen next. Make another appointment, and leave contact information in case there are problems or questions arise.

General Tips on talking to customers with disabilities over the phone:

- Speak naturally, clearly and directly.
- Don’t worry about how the person’s voice sounds. Concentrate on what they are saying.
- Don’t interrupt or finish your customer’s sentences. Give your customer time to explain or respond.
- If you don’t understand, simply ask again, or repeat or rephrase what you heard and ask if you have understood correctly.
- If a telephone customer is using an interpreter or a Relay Service, speak naturally to the customer, not to the interpreter.
- If you encounter a situation where, after numerous attempts, you and your customer cannot communicate with each other due to the customer’s disability, consider making alternate arrangements.

Unit 4-Instruction on interacting with people with various types of disabilities who use assistive devices:

An assistive device is a tool, technology or other mechanism that enables a person with a disability to do everyday tasks and activities such as moving, communicating or lifting. It helps the person to maintain their independence at home, at work and in the community.

Many will be personal assistive devices, meaning they are owned and brought along by the individual, while others may be provided by your organization. The following are examples of some devices you may come across when serving your customers with disabilities:

People who have vision loss:

- Digital audio player - enables people to listen to books, directions, art shows, etc.
- Magnifier - makes print and images larger and easier to read
- Portable global positioning systems (GPS) - helps orient people to get to specific destinations
- White cane - helps people find their way around obstacles
- Braille-a code system for reading information

People who are Deaf, deafened, oral deaf, hard of hearing

- FM transmitter system or other amplification devices - boosts sound closest to the listener while reducing background noise
- Hearing aid - makes sound louder and clearer
- Teletypewriter (TTY) - helps people who are unable to speak or hear to communicate by phone. The person types their messages on the TTY keyboard and messages are sent using telephone lines to someone who has a TTY, or to an operator (Bell Relay Service) who passes the message to someone who doesn't have a TTY.
- Pen and Paper
- Service Animal or Support Person

People who have physical disabilities:

- Mobility device (e.g., a wheelchair, scooter, walker, cane, crutches) - helps people who have difficulty walking
- Personal oxygen tank - helps people breathe
- Automatic door opener
- Service Animal or Support Person

People who have learning disabilities:

- Electronic notebook or laptop computer - used to take notes and to communicate
- Personal data managers - stores, organizes and retrieves personal information
- Mini pocket recorders - records information for future playback
- Calculator

People who have intellectual/developmental disabilities:

- Communication boards (e.g., a Bliss board) - used to pass on a message by pointing to symbols, words or pictures
- Speech generating devices - used to pass on a message using a device that "speaks" when a symbol, word or picture is pressed.
- Service Animal or Support Person

Unit 4-Instruction on interacting with people with various types of disabilities who use assistive devices cont'd:

How do I interact with a customer who uses an assistive device?

- Many customers with disabilities will have their own personal assistive devices, such as wheelchairs, scooters or walkers. Don't touch or handle an assistive device without permission.
- If you have permission to move a person in a wheelchair remember to: Wait for and follow the person's instructions.
- Confirm that your customer is ready to move.
- Describe what you are going to do before you do it.
- Try to avoid uneven ground and objects.
- Don't leave the person in an awkward, dangerous or undignified position such as facing a wall or in the path of opening doors
- Don't move items or equipment, such as canes and walkers, out of your customer's reach
- Respect your customer's personal space. Don't lean over him or her or on his or her assistive device.
- Let your customer know about accessible features in the immediate environment (e.g., automatic doors, accessible washrooms, etc.).

Unit 5-Instruction on how to use equipment or assistive devices available on your premises, or that you otherwise provides, that may help you in the provision of goods or services to people with disabilities:

Assistive devices that may be provided by your business or organization

- Accessible interactive kiosks
- Adjustable desk/workstation - changes the height or tilt of a writing surface
- Automatic door opener
- Elevator
- Lift - raises or lowers people who use mobility devices
- Mobility devices such as a manual wheelchair, a motorized scooter or shopping cart
- Teletypewriter (TTY).

Training on equipment or assistive devices:

Your organization is required to ensure people designated in the standard receive training on how to use equipment or assistive devices that your organization offers to customers with disabilities.

The assistive devices your organization provides likely come with instruction manuals.

The following information may be helpful to staff who need to use a TTY and Bell Relay Service to communicate with customers.

Communicating using a TTY and Bell Relay Service

A teletypewriter (TTY) is a device that allows users to send typed messages across phone lines.

This device generally has a keyboard and display that lets the user send and receive typed messages over telephone lines. Many people who are Deaf, oral deaf, deafened, hard of hearing or deaf blind will use TTYs to call other individuals.

People who are deaf blind may use an additional large print or braille display to read the typed messages. A stand-alone TTY must communicate with another TTY.

TTY users can directly call other TTY numbers or they can call a Relay Service. The Bell Relay Service number is 1-800-855-0511. The Relay Service operator will receive the messages on a TTY and relay the messages, by standard phone, to a person who does not have a TTY. A standard phone user can also place a call through the Relay Service operator to a TTY user.

Unit 6-Instruction about how to interact with people with disabilities who have a guide dog or other service animal:

Think of a service animal as an animal with a job to do for a person with a disability. Examples include guide dogs and animals trained to alert an individual to an oncoming seizure and lead them to safety.

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 refers to the definition of “guide dog” under the Blind Persons’ Rights Act, which states that: a guide dog is a dog that has been trained as a guide for a blind person at one of the facilities listed in Ontario Regulation 58 under the Blind Persons’ Rights Act.

The Ministry of the Attorney General may issue identification cards to identify a person who is blind and his or her guide dog.

The customer service standard requires you to let people with disabilities use their service animals on the parts of your premises open to the public or to third parties unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law from the premises.

The following lists some types of service animals, key tasks they perform and those who use service animals:

- A. Autism assistance or service dog-Users: People with autism or other developmental/intellectual disabilities
 - Keeps a child from running into danger and provides assistance when sensory stimulus is heightened. Dog is attached to the child’s waist by a belt and a leash held by an adult
- B. Guide dog, dog guide or seeing eye dog-Users: People with vision loss
 - Follows directions of owner, alerts owner to changes in elevation (e.g., curbs, stairs) and obstacles
- C. Hearing ear, hearing, sound alert or hearing alert dog, cat or animal-Users: People who are Deaf, oral deaf, deafened or hard of hearing
 - Alerts owner to sounds often by a nudge or pawing and leads him/her to the source of the sound.
 - May use a special signal to alert owner to fire alarm
- D. Psychiatric service dog-Users: People with mental health disabilities
 - Retrieves and prompts the person to take medicine, retrieves or activates medical alert, leads person out of crowds, etc.
- E. Service or mobility dog or animal, special skills dog or animal-Users: People with physical disabilities (Small ponies or miniature horses are used but are not as common)
 - May pull wheelchairs, carry objects, pull items, and turn handles or push buttons such as door openers. Larger dogs may provide balance support.
- F. Seizure, seizure alert, seizure assist or seizure response dog or animal-Users: People who have epilepsy or other seizure disorders
 - Steers owner from danger during a seizure, activates medical alert
 - Can alert owner to an oncoming seizure

How do I serve a customer if their animal is not allowed because of another law?

Where an animal is excluded by law from your premises, consider explaining why the animal is excluded. Explore or discuss with your customer another way of providing goods or services.

Example:

- Bring goods or services to the person in a part of your premises where the animal is not restricted
- Offer a safe location where the service animal can wait, if the person is able to be separated from the animal while obtaining the service, and offer assistance to the person with a disability while he or she is separated from the service animal.

Unit 7-Instruction on how to interact with people with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person when you are providing service to them:

Customers with disabilities must be allowed to use their support persons while accessing your organization's goods or services on the parts of the premises open to the public or third parties.

If your organization charges for admission, you are required to have a policy regarding what amount, if any, is charged for support persons. Advance notification of a fee, if any, is required.

The following list contains some examples of functions performed by a support person:

- A. Person who is deaf blind:
 - To guide, to provide transportation and adaptive communications such as tactile or adapted American Sign Language, large print notes, print on palm or two-handed manual signing.
- B. Person who is Deaf, deafened, oral deaf:
 - To provide sign language or oral interpretation services-to translate conversation, not to participate in it.
- C. Person with a learning disability:
 - To help with complex communication or note-taking.
- D. Person with an intellectual/developmental disability:
 - To help with travel, daily activities, prompting medication, complex tasks or to keep them from dangerous situations.
- E. Person with physical disability:
 - To provide services related to travelling, personal care such as toileting or eating, monitoring medical conditions.
- F. Person with seizure disorder:
 - To assist in the event of a seizure, to protect the individual from falls etc.
- G. Person with speech impairment who uses an augmentative or alternative communication system such as a symbol board, or electronic communication system:
 - To relay or interpret a person's communications
- H. Person with vision loss:
 - To read or to guide

Unit 8-Instruction on what to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing your goods or services:

What to do if a customer with a disability is having difficulty accessing goods or services:

All customers have their own specific needs or preferences. Being positive, flexible and open to suggestions will help to create a good customer experience. A good starting point is to ask your customer how you can help them access your goods or services.

Often, good customer service for people with disabilities can be achieved through simple and effective solutions to challenges.

For example:

- Your customer is in a wheelchair /walker and cannot enter the premises where you work because of a step at the door; you could offer to serve them at the door or help them enter.
- Your customer is hearing challenged and does not have a sign language interpreter with him/her, ask in writing, if using a pen and paper to communicate would be a good way to serve him/her.

Unit 8-Instruction on what to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing your goods or services cont'd:

- Your customer cannot access some of the products where you work because they are displayed too high to reach from a scooter/wheelchair. Offer to bring the products to them so they will be able to feel, see, touch the goods and maintain independence.
- The brochure where you work cannot be read by your customer who has low vision. Offer to read it out to him/her.
- If your business does not have automatic door openers, be prepared to open the door sufficiently to allow access to the premises.

Remember your customers are your best source for information about their needs. Ask them what you can do to help them; they will appreciate your attention and consideration for their needs.

Unit 9-Policies, Practices and Procedures:

Under the customer service standard, your organization must provide ongoing training on changes to the policies, practices and procedures on serving people with disabilities.

Organizations usually have some form of customer service policies, practices and procedures on serving customers with disabilities. Some of these are formal, documented practices. Others are unwritten and informal (i.e., “the way we do things around here”).

Under the customer service standard, providers must:

- Establish policies, practices and procedures for providing goods or services to people with disabilities. These policies, practices and procedures are in addition to those specifically identified in other sections of the standard.
- Use reasonable efforts to ensure the policies, practices and procedures on how you will provide your goods or services to people with disabilities are consistent with the principles in the customer service standard. These principles are dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity.
- Establish a policy that deals with the use of assistive devices by people with disabilities to access your goods and services or the availability, if any, of other measures which enable them to do so.

The standard requires organizations to have a policy about the use of a customer’s personal assistive device, or the availability of any other measures that enable a person with a disability to access your goods or services. Your organization may offer assistive measures that enable people with disabilities to use your services (e.g., assistive devices, services or alternate service methods).

Unit 10: Disruptions in service:

What the customer service standard says about giving notice on disruptions in service.

- Provide notice to the public when there is a temporary disruption to your facilities or services that are usually used by people with disabilities to access your goods or services. This applies whether a temporary disruption is planned or unexpected.
- In the notice, include information about the reason for the disruption, its expected duration and a description of alternate facilities or services, if available.
- Place the notice in an obvious location on your premises, such as on your website, if you have one, or post it by another method that is reasonable under

Unit 11: Feedback Process

- Establish and implement a process for receiving and responding to feedback about the way you provide goods or services to people with disabilities.
- Ensure your feedback process allows people to provide feedback in person, by telephone, in writing, by email, on disk or by another method.
- Ensure your feedback process specifies the actions you or your staff will take if a complaint is received.
- Make information about the feedback process readily available to the public.

Unit 12: Documentation:

Note: Requirements on documentation apply to designated public sector organizations and any other provider of goods or services with 20 or more employees.

What the customer service standard says about documentation.

Your organization must prepare the following documents and make them available upon request:

- Documents describing policies, practices and procedures on providing goods or services to people with disabilities, including the use of personal assistive devices to access the organization's goods or services or the availability, if any, of other measures which enable them to do so.
- Documents describing policies, practices and procedures with respect to the entry of service animals and support persons to those areas of the premises where goods or services are provided that are open to the public or other third parties, including:
 - a) When the provider may exclude service animals by law, if applicable
 - b) Alternative measures available if an animal is excluded by law
 - c) If admission is charged, what amount will be charged for support persons
 - d) If, and under what circumstances it may be necessary to require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person to protect the health or safety of the person with a disability or the health or safety of others on the premises.
- A document that sets out the steps that will be taken when there is a temporary planned or unexpected disruption to facilities or services that people with disabilities usually use to access your goods or services including:
 - a) The circumstances when a notice will be provided about a temporary disruption and where it will be posted
 - b) Information that will be included in the notice of a temporary disruption
 - c) What alternative facilities or services, if any, are available during the temporary disruption to continue to provide service to people with disabilities?
- A document describing your training policy on providing goods or services to people with disabilities, including a summary of the contents of training and the details of when that training will be provided.
- A document describing your process for receiving and responding to feedback on the manner in which goods or services are provided to people with disabilities, including what actions will be taken on any complaints received.

Under the standard, customers must be informed that these documents are available upon request. Notice may be given by posting the information in an obvious place on premises owned or operated by the provider, by posting it on the provider's website, if any, or by another method that is reasonable in the circumstances.

Availability of documents and their format:

If your organization is required by the standard to give a document to a person with a disability, you must provide the document, or the information contained in the document, in a format that takes into account their disability.

Some people with disabilities, such as those with learning disabilities or vision loss, may use materials in CD-ROM or braille respectively. Other formats to consider are large print, e-mail, DVD or electronic text on a disk.

Under the standard, a provider and a person with a disability may agree upon the format to be used for the document or information. So, consider discussing with the customer the alternate format that they can use.

For example; if the customer asks for large print, be clear about what "large print" means to them. For some, it may be an 18 point font size in a font style like Arial, and others may need larger print.