



Corporate Policy

Policy: C-GG-21 Accessible Customer Service
Main Contact: Clerks
Last Revision: April 14, 2021

Purpose

Scope

Definitions and Examples

Responsibilities

Procedures/Steps

Records Management and Privacy

Change History

Purpose

To meet the requirements of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) and to meet the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Ontario Regulation 429/07 which came into force on January 1, 2008, and must be complied with by January 1, 2010.

Scope

It is the policy of the Corporation of the Township of Muskoka Lakes that persons with disabilities achieve accessibility to the provision of goods and services provided by the Municipality that are consistent with the following core principles of independence, dignity, integration, and equal opportunity as set out in the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 regulations.

Definitions and Examples

1. **Assistive Devices**

As defined in the Guide to the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, is a technical aide, communication device, or medical aid modified or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional abilities of people with disabilities. Examples include, but are not limited to walkers, canes, wheelchairs, hearing aids or oxygen tanks.

2. **Barrier**

As defined in the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 is anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of his or her disability, including a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, an information or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy or practice.

3. **Disability**

As defined in the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act and the Human Rights Code is:

- any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defects or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree or paralysis, amputation, lack of physical co-ordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impairment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device,
- a condition of mental impairment or developmental disability,
- a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,
- a mental disorder, or
- an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997.



Corporate Policy

4. Guide Dog

As defined in Ontario Regulation 429/07 and section 1 of the Blind Person Rights Act is a dog trained as a guide for a blind person and having qualifications prescribed by the regulations under the Blind Persons Rights Act.

5. Municipality

The Corporation of the Township of Muskoka Lakes.

6. Service Animal

As defined in Ontario Regulation 429/07 is a service animal for a person with a disability,

- if it is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to his or her disability; or
- if the person provides a letter from a physician or note confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability.

7. Support Person

As defined in Ontario Regulation 429/07 in relation to a person with a disability, another person who accompanies him or her in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs, or with access to goods or services.

Responsibilities

Providing Goods and Services to People with Disabilities

The Corporation of the Township of Muskoka Lakes is committed to excellence in serving all people with disabilities, and will carry out municipal functions and responsibilities in the following areas:

- Goods and services shall be provided in a manner that respects dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.
- The provision of goods or services to persons with disabilities and others must be integrated unless an alternate measure is necessary, whether temporarily or on a permanent basis, to enable a person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the goods or services.
- Persons with disabilities must be given an opportunity equal to that given to others to obtain, use and benefit from the goods or services.

Procedures/Steps

1. **Communicating With Persons with Disabilities**

When communicating with a person with a disability, the Municipality shall do so in a manner that takes into account the person's disability.

2. **Use of Assistive Devices**

- a. If a person with a disability requires assistive devices to access goods or services of the Township of Muskoka Lakes, they are permitted to use such device, unless otherwise prohibited due to health and safety or privacy issues.
- b. If a person with a disability is unable to access municipal services through the use of their own personal assistive device, the Township will work with the individual to assess service delivery and potential service options to meet the needs of the individual. In this situation, the Township shall identify alternative services, and how a person with a disability can access the services, either temporarily or on a permanent basis.
- c. It is the responsibility of the person with a disability to ensure that his or her assistive device is operated in a safe and controlled manner at all times.

3. **Use of Service Animals**

- a. If a person with a disability is accompanied by a guide dog or other service animal, the Township of Muskoka Lakes shall ensure that the person is permitted to enter the premises with the animal, and to keep the animal with him or her unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law.
- b. If a service animal is otherwise excluded by law from Township premises, the Township shall ensure that other measures are available to enable the person with a disability to obtain, use, or benefit from the goods or services provided by the Township.

4. **Use of Support Persons**

- a. If a person with a disability is accompanied by a support person, the Township of Muskoka Lakes shall ensure that both persons are permitted to enter the premises together and that the person with a disability is not prevented from having access to the support person while on the premises.

- b. The Township of Muskoka Lakes may require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person when on the premises, but only if a support person is necessary to protect the health and safety of the person with a disability or the health and safety of others on the premises.
- c. If an amount is payable by a person for admission to the premises or in connection with a person's presence at the premises, the Township of Muskoka Lakes shall ensure that notice is given in advance about the amount, if any, payable in respect of the support person.

5. Notice of Temporary Disruptions

- a. If in order to obtain, use or benefit from Township of Muskoka Lakes' goods or services, persons with disabilities usually use particular facilities or services of the Township, and if there is a temporary disruption in those facilities or services in whole or in part, the Township shall give notice of the disruption to the public.
- b. The Department directly affected by or responsible for the facility, technology or method that is disrupted must communicate the disruption by posting a Notice of Disruption. The Department will determine if other means of communication are required such as posting information on the Township website and/or social media platforms. Departments must also ensure that employees are aware of the service disruption as well as what alternative methods are available to deliver the good or service to the public.
- c. Notice of the disruption must include information about the type of disruption, reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration, a description of alternative facilities or services, if any, that are available and contact information for the applicable department.
- d. Notice shall be given on the approved *Notice of Temporary Disruption* form by posting the information at a conspicuous place at the location of the disruption, at all public entrances and service counters in applicable premises owned or operated by the Township of Muskoka Lakes, by posting it on the Township website, or by such other method as is reasonable in the circumstances.

* ***A sample Notice of Temporary Disruption form is attached as Appendix "A" to this policy.***

6. Training

- a. The Township of Muskoka Lakes shall ensure that the following persons receive training regarding the provisions of its goods or services to persons with disabilities:
 1. Every person who participates in developing the Township of Muskoka Lakes' policies, practices, and procedures governing the provision of goods or services to members of the public or other third parties.
- b. The training shall include a review of the purposes of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, and the requirements of the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service (Ontario Regulation 429/07), and instruction regarding the following matters:
 1. How to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disabilities.
 2. How to interact with persons with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a guide dog or other service animal or the assistance of a support person.
 3. How to use equipment or devices available on the Township of Muskoka Lakes' premises or otherwise provided by the Township of Muskoka Lakes that may help with the provision of goods or services to a person with a disability.
 4. What to do if a person with a particular type of disability is having difficulty accessing the Township of Muskoka Lakes' goods or services.
 5. The Township of Muskoka Lakes' customer service policies, practices, and procedures governing the provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities.
 6. The training will be provided to each person as soon as practicable after he or she is assigned their applicable duties.
 7. Training will be provided on an ongoing basis in connection with changes to the policies, practices, and procedures governing the provision of goods or services to persons with disabilities.
 8. The Township will keep records of the training provided, including dates on which the training is provided, and the number of persons trained. The names of the individuals trained will be recorded for training administration purposes.

9. How to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disabilities.
10. How to interact with persons with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a guide dog or other service animal or the assistance of a support person.
11. How to use equipment or devices available on the Township of Muskoka Lakes' premises or otherwise provided by the Township of Muskoka Lakes that may help with the provision of goods or services to a person with a disability.
12. What to do if a person with a particular type of disability is having difficulty accessing the Township of Muskoka Lakes' goods or services.
13. The Township of Muskoka Lakes' customer service policies, practices, and procedures governing the provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities.
14. The training will be provided to each person as soon as practicable after he or she is assigned their applicable duties.
15. Training will be provided on an ongoing basis in connection with changes to the policies, practices, and procedures governing the provision of goods or services to persons with disabilities.
16. The Township will keep records of the training provided, including dates on which the training is provided, and the number of persons trained. The names of the individuals trained will be recorded for training administration purposes.
17. The training content may vary depending on who is receiving the training, the nature of services provided, and depending on the individual Departmental requirements. The format of the training program that has been developed by staff may include:
 - a Three-Hour Session
 - a One Hour Session
 - an eLearning Session with Questionnaire
 - People First Accessible Customer Service Training Manual



Corporate Policy

18. The training for staff that have more direct customer service responsibilities will be more focused on person-to-person interaction, than the training provided to staff that have less contact with customers. In collaboration with Senior Management, the Trainer will determine the particular content and delivery of the training. A training package outlining the purpose and responsibilities of Township staff will also be included in the orientation material for new employees entitled "Township of Muskoka Lakes Accessible Customer Service Best Practices and Procedures."

* ***The Township of Muskoka Lakes Accessible Customer Service Best Practices and Procedures is attached as Appendix "D" to this policy.***

19. The persons in the following areas shall be included in the training. Changes to the Corporate Structure, Committee Appointments and Elected Officials, shall form part of this policy.

Elected Officials

Mayor and Members of Council

Committees

Committee of Adjustment
Fence Viewers Committee
Property Standards Committee
Standing Committees
Advisory Committees
Other Committees

Municipal Departments

CAO
Clerk's Office
Development Services
Emergency Services



Corporate Policy

Parks and Recreation
Planning
Public Works
Treasury

Other

Muskoka Lakes Public Library
Community Centre Hall Boards
Volunteers

20. The Township shall include, in all its contracted service Agreements, a clause that requires the contractor to meet the requirements under this legislation.
- * ***A sample clause for Contracted Services is attached as Appendix "B"***

7. Customer Feedback Process

- a. The Township of Muskoka Lakes shall establish a process for receiving and responding to feedback regarding the manner in which it provides goods or services to persons with disabilities, and shall make the information about the process readily available to the public.
- b. The feedback process must permit persons to provide their feedback in person, by telephone, in writing, or by delivering an electronic text by email or on diskette or otherwise. In addition, the Customer Feedback process will be promoted on the Township website.
- c. The feedback process must specify the actions that the Township of Muskoka Lakes is required to take if a complaint is received regarding the provision of goods and services to people with disabilities.
- * ***A sample Customer Feedback form is attached as Appendix "C" to this policy.***

8. Notice of Availability of Documents

- a. The Township of Muskoka Lakes shall notify persons to whom it provides goods or services that the documents required by this Regulation are available upon request, subject to the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act ("MIFIPPA").



Corporate Policy

- b. The notice may be given by posting the information at a conspicuous place on premises owned or operated by the Township of Muskoka Lakes, by posting it on the Township of Muskoka Lakes website, or by such other method as is reasonable in the circumstances.
- c. When providing a document to persons with a disability, the Township will provide the document or the information contained in the document.

9. Format of Documents

- a. If the Township of Muskoka Lakes is required by this Regulation to give a copy of a document to a person with a disability, it shall give the person the document, or the information contained in the document, in a format that takes into account the person's disability.

The Township of Muskoka Lakes and the person with a disability may agree upon the format to be used for the document or information.

Records Management and Privacy

All records relating to any issue pursuant to this policy shall be maintained in accordance with the Municipality's record retention schedule. Throughout all processes outlined in this policy, all Members of Council and municipal employees shall adhere to all applicable legislation regarding privacy in accordance with the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA). Individuals should be aware that certain circumstances may identify them during an investigation.

LEGAL REFERENCES: Human Rights Code, Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001, Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, Ontario Regulation 429/07 Accessibility Standards For Customer Service, Blind Persons' Rights Act, R.S.O. 1990, C B.7

Change History

Policy Number & Name	Effective Date	Significant Changes	By-law/Resolution No.
C-GG-21 Accessible Customer Service	December 15, 2009		C-6-14/04/21 Confirming By-law 2009-167
C-GG-21 Accessible Customer Service	April 14, 2021	Procedures/Steps Section 5	C-15-15/12/09 Confirming By-law 2021-059