

POLICY NAME: Accessible Customer Service Standard

POLICY NUMBER: HR 01 - 03

SECTION: Human Resources

This policy is delivered in accordance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and Regulation 429/07 Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, and is applicable to all policies, procedures and processes of CVC. This policy establishes that all goods and services provided by CVC shall be provided to persons with disabilities and all other customers in accordance with the following key principles:

Independence - Services for persons with disabilities shall support their independence free from the influence of others while respecting their individual rights to personal privacy and safety.

Dignity - Services for persons with disabilities are provided in a respectful manner, by treating all clients and customers as valued and deserving of effective and full service.

Integration - Services offered shall allow persons with disabilities to fully benefit from services in the same or similar way and in the same place as other customers. Alternate measures may be used when integration does not serve the needs of all people with disabilities.

Equality of Opportunity - Persons with disabilities shall have the same opportunity to benefit from goods or services as other clients and customers and shall not need to make significantly more effort to access or obtain services.

DEFINITIONS

Assistive Devices - Any auxiliary aid such as communication aids, cognition aids, personal mobility aids and medical aids (i.e. canes, crutches, wheelchairs, or hearing aids).

Disabilities - Same as the definition of disability found in the Ontario Human Rights Code.

Persons with Disabilities - Individuals that are afflicted with a disability as defined under the Ontario Human Rights Code.

Service Animals - Any animal individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of a person with a disability. A service animal as defined under the Act:

"Any animal where 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 nurse or other government issued certification confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability."

Support Persons - Any person hired or chosen by a person with a disability, to accompany him or her in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care, medical care or with access to goods or services.

INTENT

CVC is committed to excellence in serving all customers including people with disabilities and we will carry out our functions and responsibilities in the following areas:

1. Assistive Devices

CVC shall permit persons with disabilities to use their own assistive devices to obtain, use or benefit from the goods and services offered through CVC. In the event that a person with a disability is unable to access CVC's goods or services, the CVC will accommodate the customer by providing any other assistive measure available on an as needed basis.

2. Communication

CVC staff will communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability.

CVC will train staff who communicate with customers on how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities.

3. Service Animals

Service animals such as but not limited to Seizure Response dogs, Guide dogs, Hearing dogs and other certified service animals will be permitted on all CVC properties and meeting rooms which are open to the public. Service animals are not permitted where disallowed by law.

Where a service animal is excluded by law from the premises, the reason why the animal is excluded shall be explained to the person with disabilities. CVC will also take all steps possible to ensure that the goods and services are provided to the person with a disability by providing other arrangements, such as:

- Provide them with a support person;
- Change the meeting location or format, where technology permits;
- Change meeting date and/or time;
- Serve the person in another location where the dog is permitted.

When a service animal is unruly or disruptive (jumping on people, biting, or other harmful behaviour) an employee may ask the persons with disability to remove the animal from the area or refuse access to goods or services. In this event, other reasonable arrangements to provide goods or services shall be explored with the assistance of the person with disability.

4. Support Persons

Support persons will be permitted on all CVC properties and meeting rooms which are open to the public.

Fees will not be charged for support persons for admission to CVC's Conservation Areas.

Where confidentiality is a concern, CVC may request the support person to sign a confidentiality agreement.

The customer or client shall determine whether a support person is necessary however, CVC may require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person when the health and safety of the person with a disability and of others on the premises are at risk. The following criteria will be used when consulting with the customer:

- When there is a significant risk to the health and safety of the persons with a disability or others (the mere possibility of risk is insufficient);
- When the risk is greater than the risk associated with other customers;
- When the risk cannot be eliminated or reduced by other means;
- When the assessment of the risk is based on consideration of the duration of the risk, the nature and severity of the potential harm, the likelihood that the potential harm will occur, and the imminence of the potential harm; and
- When the assessment of the risk is based on the individual's actual characteristics, not merely on generalizations, misperceptions, ignorance or fears about a disability.

5. Disruption Notices

In the event of a temporary service disruption that may prohibit a person with a disability from accessing CVC goods and services or facilities, CVC will post a disruption notice in one (1) week advance or otherwise make it known of the disruption through the following methods:

- Message on our phone;
- Service counter;
- Website;
- Notice on Old Derry Road entrance door; and
- Facility where disruption has occurred.

In the event of an unplanned service disruption, CVC will post a service disruption notice as soon as possible through the same methods as stated above and persons with disabilities will be accommodated by the use of the following means to deliver the goods and services such as:

- Provide the goods and services at an alternate location, date or time;
- If appropriate or required, deliver the goods and service to the individuals place of residence; or;
- Any other assistive measures available and deemed appropriate to deliver the goods and services.

All service disruption notices will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available.

*Sample template notices are related to this Policy titled '*Planned Service Disruption*' and '*Unplanned Service Disruption*' are available on MyCVC.

6. Training

All CVC staff, agents, board members and volunteers will be trained on the various aspects associated with providing customer service to people with disabilities.

All training shall include:

- An overview of the purposes of the AODA requirements of the customer service standard and an overview of CVC's Accessible Customer Service policy;
- Instructions on how to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disabilities;
- Instructions on how to interact with persons with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a guide dog, other service animal or the assistance of a support person;
- Instructions on how to use equipment or devices available at CVC;
- Instructions on what to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing CVC's goods or services.

Training will be mandatory for all new employees and employees will also be trained on an ongoing basis when changes are made to these policies, practices and procedures.

7. Feedback Process

CVC will welcome feedback from all customers and clients on the provisions of goods and services available to people with disabilities. Feedback may be provided in any manner convenient to the individual including in person, by telephone, electronically by diskette or email, in writing or via text message. CVC has also developed a feedback form that is available to all clients and customers to gain feedback on the provisions of our goods and services and can be found on our website or in all CVC locations. All feedback will be kept in strict confidence and used to improve our customer service.

*Sample template forms that are related to this Policy are titled as '*Customer Feedback Form*' and '*Customer Feedback Form – For People with Disabilities*' and are available on MyCVC.

8. Notice of Availability of Documents

CVC's Accessible Customer Service policy and all other documentation deemed to be important in the delivery of goods and services will be made available to customers and clients upon request in a format that takes into consideration their disability.

A copy of this policy will be made available on the CVC website.

9. Modifications to Policies

CVC is committed to developing customer service policies that respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. Therefore, no changes will be made to this policy before considering the impact on people with disabilities.

Any policy of CVC that does not respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities will be modified or removed.

10. Questions about this policy

This policy exists to achieve service excellence to customers with disabilities. If anyone has a question about the policy, or if the purpose of a policy is not understood, an explanation should be provided by, or referred to Human Resources.

REFERENCES

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, Ontario Regulation 429/07

Sample Notice Templates

Sample Customer Feedback Form Templates