

For Information

DATE: April 14, 2010

REPORT TITLE: **IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ACCESSIBLE CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARD UNDER THE ACCESSIBILITY FOR ONTARIANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (AODA)**

FROM: Norma Trim, Chief Financial Officer and Commissioner of Corporate Services

OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this report is to inform Regional Council that the Region of Peel has submitted its compliance report to the Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services indicating that the Region of Peel complies with the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07 under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)*.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- The Accessibility Standards for Customer Service compliance deadline was January 1, 2010.
- The standard requires that a compliance report be submitted annually to the Province and the Region of Peel has submitted its first compliance report as required under Regulation 429/07
- The Region of Peel has completed the necessary tasks required to be compliant with the standard.

DISCUSSION**1. Background**

The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)* was enacted by the Government of Ontario in June 2005. The AODA requires the development of accessibility standards in the five key areas of customer service, transportation, information and communication, built environment and employment.

a) Accessibility Standards for Customer Service

The Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Regulation 429/07 came into effect on January 1, 2010. The Region of Peel has completed the following tasks to ensure compliance with the standard:

April 14, 2010

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ACCESSIBLE CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARD UNDER THE ACCESSIBILITY FOR ONTARIANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (AODA)

i) Accessible Customer Service Policy

The Region established Corporate Policy G00-18 titled "Accessible Customer Service" (see Appendix I) which outlines what staff must do in order to make services available to persons with disabilities.

The policy is consistent with the core principles set out in the Regulation of independence, dignity, integration and equality of opportunity in serving customers with disabilities. In addition, the policy addresses:

- The use of assistive devices by persons with disabilities to access goods or services and Regional facilities;
- Permitting persons with disabilities to be accompanied by a service animal in regional facilities and meeting rooms which are open to the public. Where a service animal is not permitted by law, the policy provides for alternatives in order to meet the needs of the customer;
- Allowing customers who are accompanied by a support person to access regional facilities and meeting rooms which are open to the public;
- Providing notice of service disruptions that would limit a person with a disability from gaining access to regional facilities, goods or services. The notice must include the reason for the service disruption, estimated duration and alternatives available to accommodate the customer;
- Establishing a process where feedback may be provided by a person with a disability in the manner deemed most convenient to them, such as in person, by telephone, in writing, or by delivering an electronic text by email or on diskette or otherwise; and
- Providing notice of availability of documents deemed to be a key in the delivery of goods and service will be made available upon request in a format that takes into account the person's disability to any person to whom it provides goods or services.

ii) Training

Employees and agents of the corporation providing direct service to the public are provided with training in the various aspects of accessible customer service delivery. The Region provided three options in order to complete the training. These options include eLearning, classroom training and an easy to read booklet designed for self-study for employees, contractors, volunteers or agents who do not have immediate access to a computer.

All training, regardless of format, covers the following:

- An overview of the purposes of the AODA and an awareness of the Regional policy;
- Instruction on how to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disabilities;

April 14, 2010

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ACCESSIBLE CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARD UNDER THE ACCESSIBILITY FOR ONTARIANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (AODA)

- Instruction on interacting with persons with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person;
- Instruction on the use of equipment or devices available, such as wheelchairs and teletypewriter (TTY); and
- Instruction on what to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing our services.

Information regarding the Region of Peel Accessibility Planning program, including Accessible Customer Service training resources, is available on the Region's website, peelregion.ca by selecting Accessibility from the Programs and Services menu.

CONCLUSION


The Region of Peel is committed to providing customer service in a manner accessible to all residents and incorporating the core principles of independence, dignity, integration and equality of opportunity in serving customers with disabilities.

The AODA requires that a compliance report be submitted annually to the Province and the Region has submitted its report for 2010. Peel's approach to achieving compliance is similar to other municipalities in Ontario and is based on direction received from the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario.




Norma Trim
Chief Financial Officer
and Commissioner of Corporate Services

Approved for Submission:



D. Szwarc, Chief Administrative Officer



For further information regarding this report, please contact Jeff Payne at extension 4075 or via email at jeff.payne@peelregion.ca

Authored By: Kris Dubuque

c. Legislative Services

TAB: GENERAL GOVERNMENT
SECTION: GENERAL
SUBJECT: ACCESSIBLE CUSTOMER SERVICE

A. PURPOSE

This policy establishes that goods and services provided by the Region of Peel shall be provided to persons with disabilities and all customers in accordance with the following key principles:

Dignity: Service is provided in a respectful manner consistent with the needs of the individual.

Independence: Services for persons with disabilities shall support their independence while respecting their right to safety and personal privacy.

Equity/Equality of Outcome: Service outcome is the same for persons with disabilities as for persons without disabilities.

Integrated: Services allow people with disabilities to fully benefit from the same services, in the same place and in the same or similar way as other customers.

In addition to the above key principles as provided for in the Customer Service Standard, Peel will be:

Sensitive: Service is provided in a manner that is respectful to an individual's needs.

Responsive: Service is delivered in a timely manner, considering the nature of the service and the accommodation required. For example, if needed, alternate formats will be provided by a specific deadline.

B. SCOPE

The subject 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 the Regional Corporation.

C. POLICY

1. Assistive Devices

Persons with disabilities shall be permitted to obtain, use or benefit from goods or services through the use of their own assistive devices.

TAB: GENERAL GOVERNMENT
SECTION: GENERAL
SUBJECT: ACCESSIBLE CUSTOMER SERVICE

In the event a person with a disability is hindered from accessing goods or services and after consulting with the customer, the Region of Peel will accommodate the customer by using any other assistive measures available such as but not limited to providing temporary access to other assistive devices or a Support Person.

2. Service animals

Service animals, such as but not limited to Guide dogs, Hearing dogs, Seizure Response dogs, other certified service animals shall be permitted entry to all Regional facilities and meeting rooms which are open to the public. A service animal is defined as:

“Any animal where it is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to his or her disability and 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.”

Service animals are not permitted:

- Where food preparation is being undertaken; or
- as otherwise disallowed by law.

Where a Service Animal is to be denied access to a facility or meeting room, other accommodations may be afforded, such as:

- alternate meeting format, such as teleconference/videoconference, where technology permits;
- deliver the goods or service at an alternate time or location;
- any other assistive measures available to deliver a good or service to ensure equality of outcome.

Owners of Service Animals may receive information from staff as to the location of fresh water for the service animal and where service animals may be walked to relieve themselves.

TAB: GENERAL GOVERNMENT
SECTION: GENERAL
SUBJECT: ACCESSIBLE CUSTOMER SERVICE

3. Support Persons

Support Persons shall be permitted entry to all Regional facilities and meeting rooms which are open to the public, except:

- when there are fees applied against participants by a third party; **and**
- the Support Person was not pre-registered; **and**
- no vacancy exists.

If admission to an event is permitted and fees are payable to a third party, the Support Person is permitted to attend the event at their own cost.

If admission to an event is permitted and fees are payable to the Region of Peel, the Support Person is permitted to attend at no cost.

Where a Support Person is necessary to protect the health or safety of the person with a disability or the health or safety of others on the premises, the person with a disability shall be accompanied by a Support Person when on the premises.

The customer shall determine whether a Support Person is necessary, however where an employee believes that a Support Person should be in attendance to protect the health and safety of the customer or others, the following criteria shall be used in consulting with the customer:

1. when there is a significant risk to the health and safety of the person with a disability or others (the mere possibility of risk is insufficient);
2. when the risk is greater than the risk associated with other customers;
3. when the risk cannot be eliminated or reduced by other means;
4. 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
5. 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.

TAB: GENERAL GOVERNMENT
SECTION: GENERAL
SUBJECT: ACCESSIBLE CUSTOMER SERVICE

4. Notice of Service Disruptions

In the event of a temporary service disruption occurs that would limit a person with a disability from gaining access to regional facilities, goods or service, the Region will post notice or otherwise make the disruption known to customers in the following methods/places:

- Web site; and
- Customer Contact Centre (CCC); and
- Notice on entrance doors; and
- with Delivery Agents.

If an unexpected disruption occurs, persons with disabilities will be accommodated by the use of other means possible to deliver the goods and service, such as:

- the goods and service delivery agent may provide the goods or service directly to the person with a disability at an alternate place and time, as deemed appropriate; or
- If appropriate or required, deliver the goods and service to the person's place of residence; or
- Any other assistive measures available and deemed appropriate to deliver goods and services.

All notices of disruption shall include:

- the name of the event/service;
- the normal service location being impacted;
- alternate service locations;
- alternate service methods;
- hours of service availability;
- contact information; and
- any other information deemed appropriate to deliver a good or service.

As a guide, sample notices are attached to this policy as Appendix A and B.

TAB: GENERAL GOVERNMENT
SECTION: GENERAL
SUBJECT: ACCESSIBLE CUSTOMER SERVICE

5. Training

All employees and agents of the Regional Corporation providing direct service to persons with a disability shall be trained in the various aspects of accessible customer service delivery.

All training, regardless of format, shall have regard for:

- An overview of the purposes of the AODA and an awareness of the subject Regional policy;
- Instruction on how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities;
- Instruction on interacting with people with disabilities who use assistive devices or require the assistance of a guide dog, other service animal or a support person;
- Instruction on the use of equipment or devices available, such as wheelchairs and TTY;
- Instruction on what to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing your services.

Training shall be mandatory for all new employees upon their initial orientation. In addition all employees should receive additional training every 5 years thereafter.

6. Feedback process

Feedback may be provided by a person with a disability in the manner deemed most convenient to them, such as in person, by telephone, in writing, or by delivering an electronic text by email or on diskette or otherwise.

Feedback may be provided directly to the service provider or:

Regional Clerk
10 Peel Centre Drive
Brampton, ON
L6T 4B9
Phone: 905-791-7800, Ext 4545
Fax: 905-791-1693
Email: Regionalclerk@peelregion.ca

TAB: GENERAL GOVERNMENT
SECTION: GENERAL
SUBJECT: ACCESSIBLE CUSTOMER SERVICE

All feedback will be kept in strict confidence and used to improve customer service. In addition, the author of the feedback will be provided a response in the format in which the feedback was received outlining actions deemed appropriate, if any.

7. Notice of Availability of Documents

This policy and any other document deemed to be a key in the delivery of goods and service will be made available upon request in a format that takes into account the person's disability to any person to whom it provides goods or services.

Notwithstanding the above, this policy will be made available on the Region of Peel's website, and made available to any person to whom it provides goods or services by any other method or format as is reasonable in the circumstances.

APPROVAL SOURCE: CAO Directive C09-01

ORIGINAL DATE: January 1, 2009

LAST REVIEW: February 24, 2009

LAST UPDATE: January 1, 2009

RESP. DEPT.: Corporate Services, Clerk's – Regulatory Compliance

TAB: GENERAL GOVERNMENT
SECTION: GENERAL
SUBJECT: ACCESSIBLE CUSTOMER SERVICE

Appendix A

SAMPLE TEXT

Notice of Planned Service Disruption

There will be a scheduled service disruption at Address impacting the delivery of goods and services for customers from hour and date.

The goods and services unavailable during this service disruption are:

1. Service/Event name Floor
2. Service/Event name Floor
3. Service/Event name Floor
4. Service/Event name Floor
5. Service/Event name Floor

The services listed above can be accessed at the following time, date, location, or method:

1. Service/Event name Location, date, time
2. Service/Event name Location, date, time
3. Service/Event name Location, date, time
4. Service/Event name Location, date, time
5. Service/Event name Location, date, time

We apologize for any inconvenience this disruption has caused. Should you require additional information on the delivery of this service, please call 905 791-7800, dial "0", or speak to a customer service agent located at any reception centre.

TAB: GENERAL GOVERNMENT
SECTION: GENERAL
SUBJECT: ACCESSIBLE CUSTOMER SERVICE

Appendix B

SAMPLE TEXT

Notice of Unplanned Service Disruption

Due to unforeseen circumstances, there is a service disruption at Address impacting the delivery of goods and services for customers from hour and date .

The goods and services unavailable during this service disruption are:

1. Service name
2. Service name
3. Service name
4. Service name
5. Service name

The services listed above can be accessed at the following time, date, location, or method:

1. Service/Event name Location, date, time
2. Service/Event name Location, date, time
3. Service/Event name Location, date, time
4. Service/Event name Location, date, time
5. Service/Event name Location, date, time

We apologize for any inconvenience this disruption has caused. Should you require additional information on the delivery of this service, please call 905 791-7800, dial "0", or speak to a customer service agent located at any reception centre.