



Town of Parry Sound  
Customer Service Manual

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## **Council's Commitment to Customer Service**

### **Statement:**

The Town of Parry Sound is committed to providing quality goods and services to all persons regardless of their ability.

Goods and services will be delivered in a way that preserves the dignity and independence of all persons regardless of their ability.

The provisions of goods and services will be integrated unless an alternate measure is necessary, whether temporary or on a permanent basis, to enable a person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the goods or services.

All persons regardless of their abilities will have equal opportunity, within reason, to access and benefit from the goods and services provided by the municipality.

Council recognizes that municipal staff are internal customers and their customer service needs are addressed in the Human Resource Policy Manual.

Further, to demonstrate this commitment, the municipality will incorporate accessibility criteria and features when procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities, except where it is not practicable to do so. If it is determined that it is not practicable to incorporate accessibility criteria and features a written explanation will be provided.

### **Application:**

The policies in this manual shall apply to every person who deals with members of the public or other third parties on behalf of the Town of Parry Sound, whether the person does so as an employee, agent, volunteer or otherwise.

## **Purpose:**

The Customer Service Manual is to be used as a reference on the Town's Customer Service Policies. It was developed to provide consistent policy and training pertaining to the delivery of quality customer service and also, to fulfill the requirements set out in the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 - Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Regulation 429/07 and the following supporting documents.

## **Supporting Documents:**

- Customer Service Guidelines
- Training Guidelines
- Telephone Service Guidelines
- Accessible Meetings or Events
- Communications Guidelines
- Alternate Format Guidelines
- Assistive Devices Guidelines
- Support Person Guidelines
- Service Animal Guidelines
- Disruption of Service Guidelines
- Continual Improvement - Customer Service Training Guidelines
- Forms
- Best Practices
- Resources

## **Documentation:**

Copies of this documentation will be made available upon request by any persons and in a format that takes into account the person's disability. A copy will be made available on the municipal website and a hard copy at each department.

**Exclusion:**

The Customer Service Manual shall not apply during any period where the Mayor or designate has declared a “State of Emergency” as defined under the Emergency Management Act.

Please be advised that all publicly available emergency and public safety information will be provided in an accessible format or with appropriate communication supports, on request.

**Contact Person:**

AODA Coordinator is responsible to assist staff, third parties or the public with the interpretation of and advice relating to the policies herein.

Further, will be responsible for the annual review process to update and educate all parties on said changes.

**Contact information:**

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**References:**

Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disability Act, 2005



Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Reg. 429/07

Accessibility Directorate of Ontario, Ministry of Community and Social Services -

- Compliance Manual - Accessibility Standards for Customer Service,
- Reg 429/07
- Guide to the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Reg 429/07

AMCTO: Ontario's Municipal Accessibility Toolkit

- Workshop Materials Winter 2008

## **Accessible Customer Service - Section A**

- Customer Service Feedback Guidelines
- Communications Guidelines - (Alternate formats and assistive device policy)
- Telephone Service Guidelines
- Accessible Meetings or Events Guidelines
- Disruption of Service Guidelines
- Service Animal Guidelines
- Support Person Guidelines
- Customer Service Training Guidelines

## **Customer Service Policy**

### **Our Customer Feedback Policy**

The reason, the purpose of existence of the Corporation of the Town of Parry Sound is to provide services to its residents and ratepayers. Mayor and Council decide what those services are and the level of service that will be provided. Our goal is to continuously improve the delivery of those services. We cannot know if those services are being delivered effectively and according to Council's policies without procedures and the ability to measure.

Feedback from the public gives the Town of Parry Sound opportunities to learn and improve. We value feedback about our services and recognize the right of our residents and ratepayers to make a complaint, compliment or suggestion about our services. We are committed to using customer feedback to improve our services and focus on the needs of our customers.

Parry Sound customers will be treated keeping in mind the five (5) principles of Accessible Customer Services: independence, integration, dignity, equality of opportunity and respect.

## **Who are our Customers?**

Our definition of a customer is: “If you contact us for any reason, or you are affected by anything we do, you are one of our customers regardless of your abilities.” Each Town department has identified a specific list of customers served by that particular department in its Business Plan which is updated annually.

## **Our Key Aims**

We will:

- Encourage easy access and will take into account a person ability – customers can give feedback online, in writing, in person, by fax, by email or by phone
- Record and analyze all complaints, compliments and suggestions
- Use plain language in all communications
- Set and monitor targets for responding to feedback
- Contact the customer, where we cannot resolve a complaint straight away, giving them a named contact person, phone number, e-mail address and a target date for a response
- Keep customers informed when we cannot send them a response within our target time
- Inform customers about their right to escalate a complaint when dissatisfied with our response

- Review each piece of feedback carefully to establish what lessons we can learn and if we can improve our services as a result

### **How do we publicize the customer feedback policy?**

We will publicize our customer feedback policy by making information available:

- In our service information leaflets and publications
- In all of our customer reception areas and local service points, such as the library, Town Office, Stockey Centre, Operations Centre, the BOCC
- On all municipal websites.
- In an alternate format upon request, according to the Communication Guidelines.

### **How do we promote equality of access?**

We are committed to making sure that everyone has equal access to the customer feedback scheme. To achieve this we will:

- make sure that those with disabilities are able to understand and work within the policy
- provide access to advocacy services
- promote the customer feedback policy so that all sections of the community understand it and are confident to use it
- to treat people with respect and be open to ideas about how we can make access easier
- provide service, information taking into account the person's disability
- provide opportunity for citizens to use their assistive devices
- when responding to feedback shall ensure that the processes are accessible to persons with disabilities by providing or arranging for accessible formats and communications supports, upon request.

## **Who can advise customers on how to give feedback about our services?**

A customer can get advice from any employee, the Mayor or member's of Council.

## **Who can advise employees on the process of the customer feedback policy?**

Any employee can get advice from any member of the Cross Departmental Advisory Committee or of the Staff Management Committee.

## **How do we receive feedback?**

Feedback can be received by telephone, e-mail, in person or in writing. The feedback process, upon request, will be made available to people with disabilities in accessible formats or with appropriate communication supports.

- We aim to deal with all feedback at the point of service delivery.

## **What is a compliment?**

- A compliment is when a customer gives us feedback about how we exceeded expectations in delivering a service or how an employee has gone the “extra mile” to serve them.
- We will record details and acknowledge receipt within 3 working days.
- The Director will write to the manager and/or individual employee to thank them for providing an excellent service to the customer.

## **What is a suggestion?**

A suggestion is when a customer comments in writing on how we can improve our delivery of a service.

## How we will deal with a suggestion?

We will:

- Record details and acknowledge receipt within 3 working days.
- Send a response to the customer within 10 working days that either explains how we will implement the suggestion; investigate it further or why we are unable to implement the suggestion.
- Keep the customer informed about any delays.

## What is a complaint?

“Any expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, about our services, employees or policies”

A complaint could include one or more of the following problems:

- We **delay** in providing a core service outside of Town policy
- We **fail or refuse to provide** a core service
- We provide a **poor quality** core service or make a mistake
- We provide an **inappropriate** service
- We **remove** or **withdraw** a core service
- We charge an inappropriate cost for a core service
- An **employee’s** behavior causes upset
- A **policy** unreasonably disadvantages a customer
- We unfairly **discriminate** against a customer
- A customer is unable to access a core service

## Stage 1: Local Resolution

The employee receiving the initial complaint will:

- Try to resolve the problem straight away
- Record details of the complaint

If we cannot resolve the complaint straight away, we will:

- Contact the customer within 3 working days to inform them who is dealing with the complaint and give them a deadline for our response
- Respond to the customer within 10 working days. If we have made a mistake, make sure we take action to put things right
- Keep the customer informed about any delays
- Inform the customer about their right to complain to the next stage if they are dissatisfied with our response

## **Stage 2: Service Investigation**

The CAO or a Director, who was not involved at the local resolution stage, will arrange a review of a complaint when:

- a customer complains when they are dissatisfied with our local resolution response
- We unreasonably fail to reply at the local resolution stage
- A senior manager requests a special investigation

The Director or CAO will:

- record details and acknowledge the complaint within 3 working days
- Respond to the customer within 20 working days
- If we have made a mistake, make sure we take action to put things right
- Keep the customer informed about any delays
- Inform the customer about their right to complain to the Mayor and/or Council if they are dissatisfied with our response
- will recognize that on occasion, customers will bypass the processes outlined in this policy by going directly to the Mayor and/or Councillor(s)

## **Stage 3: Corporate Review**

The Mayor and/or Council with or through the CAO will arrange a corporate review of the complaint, independent of the Director, when:

- A customer complains when they are dissatisfied with a service investigation

- We unreasonably fail to carry out a service investigation
- The CAO or a Director requests an independent review

The person carrying out the Corporate Review in Stage 3 will:

- Record details and acknowledge the complaint with 3 working days
- Respond to the customer within 20 days
- If we make a mistake, make sure we take action to put things right
- Keep the customer informed about any delays

Inform the customer about their right to complain to the Local Government Ombudsman if they are dissatisfied with our response

### **What action can we take to put things right when things go wrong?**

If we make a mistake, we will apologize and try to take some practical action to put things right. We may ask the customer to suggest what they would like us to do. We will always try to put the customer back to the position that he or she would have been in but for our mistake. We will also try to ensure that the same mistake does not happen again.

We may decide that one or more of the following can be done to put things right:

- Provide or change a service to the customer
- Provide an explanation or information to the customer
- Review customer literature (leaflets, website, poster and so on)
- Review a policy or procedure
- Arrange training or guidance for employees
- Employee action (such as standards setting or change of key worker)
- Give a refund in appropriate circumstances
- Remove barrier from accessing core services

## **How do we deal with customers who remain dissatisfied after we have fully responded to their complaint?**

We will advise any customer who has completed all stages of our customer feedback policy to contact the Local Government Ombudsman.

If the customer complains again about the same issue, the CAO may write to them informing them that we will not respond to future correspondence about the complaint unless the customer provides new evidence or makes a complaint about a different issue.

## **How do we deal with feedback about our contractors or partner agencies?**

We require any organization providing services on our behalf to comply with this scheme. We will develop protocols with partner agencies to make sure that feedback about a partnership organization's services is managed effectively.

We require our contractors to:

- Record and respond to customer feedback at the Local Resolution stage;
- Feedback must take into account a person's disability. When responding to feedback they shall ensure that the processes are accessible to persons with disabilities by providing or arranging for accessible formats and communications supports, upon request
- Provide us with information when requested; and
- assist us with complaint investigations where necessary.

## **How do we deal with feedback received from elected representatives?**

We will use this Customer Feedback Policy to deal with feedback received from the Mayor or Councillor when made on behalf of a constituent.



## **How do we learn from feedback?**

Each piece of feedback from the public will be reviewed carefully to establish what we can learn and if we can improve our services. Department managers and staff should make operational improvements based on this feedback wherever possible. Learning from customer feedback must be included on the agenda for Staff Management Committee (SMC) meetings.

We will monitor trends and performance in our handling of customer feedback by producing regular reports for local and senior managers. We will produce at a minimum, an annual report on the operation of our customer feedback policy for Mayor & Council, staff and our customers.

We will use performance indicators to track the performance of the scheme in each department. Through SMC, we will regularly review:

- Type of feedback received (complaints, compliments, suggestions)
- Methods used to contact us (by phone, in writing, email and so on)
- Feedback from Mayor & Councillors
- Time taken to acknowledge and respond to customer feedback
- Responses completed in or outside of target time and outstanding responses
- Suggestion types and outcomes
- Complaint types and outcomes
- Complaint remedies
- Action taken to improve services (complaints and suggestions)
- Customer satisfaction with the process and outcome
- Quality of complaint responses
- Customer profiles (age, gender, ethnicity, locality and disability)

## **What complaints are excluded from our policy?**

We recognize that some complaints will be handled using other processes, including:

- A complaint that is being dealt with or was previously dealt with by legal proceedings

- An employee's complaint about personnel matters including pay, pensions, disciplinary and grievance issues
- A complaint about a service where we have no responsibility, such as a DSSAB service
- A complaint about a decision where a statutory appeal body or tribunal has been established to examine the case, such as planning applications
- A claim for damages that should be handled as an insurance claim
- A complaint about contract-related issues where an arbitration procedure already exists.
- A complaint pertaining to Mayor and Council not subject to the Council Code of Conduct. Mayor and Council are subject to the Council Code of Conduct. Any complaints pertaining to a breach of this Code are dealt with by contacting the Integrity Commissioner.

## **Accessible Customer Service Training Policy**

The Corporation of the Town of Parry Sound shall ensure that the following persons receive training about the provisions of its goods and / or services to persons with disabilities.

- Every person who deals with members of the public or other third parties on behalf of the municipality, whether the person does so as an employee, agent, volunteer or otherwise.
- Every person who participates in developing policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of goods or services to members of the public or other third parties.

The training will include legislative training and municipal policies created under said legislation:

- Accessibility for Ontarians with Disability Act, 2005,
- Ontario Regulation 429/07, Accessibility Standards for Customer Service
- Ontario regulation 191/11, Integrated Accessibility Standards.

- Human Rights Code as it pertains to persons with disabilities,

And, Accessible Customer Service training will include:

How to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disability.

- 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.
- How to use equipment or devices available at the municipality's premises or otherwise provided by the municipality that may help with the provision of goods or services to a person with a disability.
- What to do if a person with a particular type of disability is having difficulty accessing the municipality's goods or service.

The training will be provided to each person as soon as practicable after he or she commences employment.

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 person with disabilities.

The municipality will keep records of the training provided, detailing the dates on which the training was provided and the number of individuals to whom it was provided.

The municipality will prepare a document describing its training policy and the document will include a summary of the contents of the training and details when the training will be provided.

## **Accessibility Regulations for Contracted Services/ Third Party Providers**

In accordance with the AODA and municipal training policy, contracted and third party service providers who deal with members of the public; or participate in the developing of the service providers' policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of

goods and services to members of the public, shall receive training for providing goods and / or services to persons with disabilities.

Training shall include

- Legislative and municipal policies training
  - a) Accessibility for Ontarians with Disability Act, 2005,
  - b) Ontario Regulation 429/07, Accessibility Standards for Customer Service
  - c) Ontario regulation 191/11, Integrated Accessibility Standards.
  - d) Human Rights Code as it pertains to persons with disabilities,
- Accessible Customer Service training will include:
  - a) How to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disability.
  - b) How to interact with persons with disabilities who use assistive devices or require the assistance of a guide animal, or a support person:
  - c) How to use equipment that is available on the premises that may help in the provision of goods and services;
  - d) What to do if a person with a particular type of disability is having difficulty accessing the provider's goods or services, and
  - e) Information on the policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of goods and services to people with disabilities.

An executed declaration is required prior to commencement of work, that the contracted or third party provider has, or will, train their employees.

The following links will assist with the above training:

- AODA information and Accessible Customer Service information-  
[www.mcass.gov.on.ca/en/mcass/programs/accessibility/](http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/en/mcass/programs/accessibility/)
- Customer Service training –  
<http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/mcass/serve-ability/splash.html>
- Integrated Accessibility Standard –  
[www.accessforward.ca/](http://www.accessforward.ca/)

- Ontario Human Rights Training  
<http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/disability-and-human-rights>

## Communications

Council recognizes that everyone has the right to access public information. If a person cannot access a public document because of a disability, they are being denied their right to access. **The Town is committed to communicate with a person with a disability in a way that takes the person's disability into account, meaning that person's particular communication needs and circumstances are considered.**

The following are methods to achieve effective and accessible communications:

- making the original communication more accessible through the website
- changing the usual method of communication, i.e., providing accessible
- formats and communications supports
- using assistive devices or communication supports

### **Making the original communication more accessible:**

**Web-sites: includes the Town Municipal website, Bobby Orr Hockey Hall of Fame, Parry Sound Library, Stockey Centre**

The Town will ensure that the municipal websites are accessible to people with disabilities by conforming to international standards for website accessibility- World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0; unless, it is not practicable to do so. The Town websites will meet the requirements of WCAG 2.0 AA by 2021 and any new websites will meet the WCAG 2.0 A standard by 2014.

Further, the Town will ensure the web content is accessible. Web content may include any information that may be found on a web page or web application, including text, images, forms and sounds. Web content, including documents such as Word and PDFs, posted after January 1, 2012 will need to be accessible as per the regulation.

Web content will be created in accordance to the Accessible Municipal Publications Policy and the website will be maintained in accordance to the Website Policy.

## **Changing the usual method of communication:**

### **Alternate format and communication supports**

If a person is unable to access public information, printed and electronic materials may be available in another method by request only. The best way to determine a person's communication preferences is to find out from the person directly - ask.

Alternatives to standard print are often referred to as "accessible formats", and methods to assist communication are referred to as "communication supports".

Requests should be honored in the most practical manner depending on the media chosen, the size and complexity of the document, the quality and source of the documents, the feasibility of the request (including the cost) and the number of documents to be converted. The request will be handled in a timely manner. Any cost incurred will be no greater than the regular cost charged to other persons.

Staff shall consult with the person making the request in determining the suitability of an accessible format or communication support. Staff should make every attempt to respond to the request in the most practical manner and to the satisfaction of the requestor. If it is determined that the format requested is not feasible or is unconvertible, then other alternative methods of providing the information should be explored that will still meet the needs of the requestor. If the Town determines they are unable to convert the information or communications into an accessible format, they will explain to the person why they are unable to do so and provide a summary of the content.

In accordance to the AODA, IASR Standard, information or communications are unconvertible if,

- it is not technically feasible to convert the information or communications; or
- the technology to convert the information or communications is not readily available.

This policy only applies to information and communications that the Town controls directly or indirectly through contractual relationships. The requirement does not apply to information one organization may be sharing on behalf of another organization.

Municipal Publications provided to the public will be produced in accordance with the Accessible Municipal Publications Policy. Materials printed in-house and publications produced on behalf of the municipality should contain a note indicating “**Alternate formats can be made available upon request**” and include relevant contact information.

There will be signage posted at all municipal facilities to notify the public of the availability of accessible formats and communication supports.

Staff will be trained on the development of accessible materials and how best to communicate with persons with a disability.

### **Using assistive devices or services:**

**A person with a disability may use an assistive device to obtain, use or benefit from the municipalities goods and services.** Examples of personal assistive devices: wheelchairs, scooters, walker, amplification devices that boost sound for listeners who are hard-of-hearing without reducing background noise, hearing aids, oxygen tanks, electronic notebooks or laptop computers, personal data managers, communication boards used to communicate using symbols, words or pictures, speech-generating devices that “speak” when a symbol, word or picture is pressed.

To support a person who uses an assistive device, front line staff will be trained and familiar with various assistive devices that a customer may use to access goods or services.

Further, staff will be trained to use assistive devices available on premises; such: as elevator, lift, Relay Services, amplifiers, etc.

### **Responsibilities:**

- Accessibility Coordinator:
  - Collecting information about requests
  - Monitoring compliance on an annual basis

- Collecting and monitoring situations where requests for accessible formats and communication supports have not been provided and determine ways to make information more convertible in the future.
- Directors:
  - Creating and maintaining service free from discrimination towards persons with disabilities.
  - Budgeting for the costs associated with accessible formats and communication supports for their department
- Managers and Supervisors:
  - Creating and maintaining services free from discrimination toward persons with disabilities
  - Ensuring employees are aware of this procedure and are logging requests that are received by their department
  - Tracking cost associated with requests
  - Ensuring employees are providing be requestors with the requested accessible format and communication support
  - Ensuring that staff provide requesters with an explanation as to why information or communication are unconvertible
- IT Department:
  - Ensuring the municipal websites meet requirements of this policy by completing audits and notifying the Accessibility Coordinator of any accessibility errors.

## **Accessible Municipal Publications Policy**

### **Purpose**

This policy provides guidelines on how to develop and deliver accessible municipal materials.

The municipality is committed to produce municipal public documents in such a way that conversion to another format can be accommodated easily and quickly.



All municipal documents produced for the website or documents to be release to the public will be produced using Word Accessibility features and converted to an Accessible PDF. The Word Source document will contain all the original text plus text that describes any non-text content such as pictures, graphs and multi-media if applicable. The Source Document is used as the master document from which all other formats can be produced.

The following procedure to be implemented to create the Source document:

## **Part 1 – Fundamentals**

### **Clear Print Accessibility Guidelines – CNIB**

- Font – Arial and minimum point (font) size is 12
- Use upper and lower case characters – not ALL CAPS.(screen readers read CAPS as an acronym
- Do not use italics
- When emphasizing a word or passage, use a bold Arial font
- The space between lines of text should be at least 25 to 30 percent of the point size.
- When using filled boxes use bold lettering
- Black and white is the most readable printed material - preferred
- Using colour – Do not use colours as your only means of communication. If using colour follow these key points
  - Use high contrast colours for text and background; example: yellow attacks your eye best to use; red is hard to read unless it is a deep red
  - Avoid colour text – displays, browsers, and Braille reader displays sometimes unable to access information.
  - Reduce distractions by not using watermarks or complicated background designs.

### **Clear Writing Principles –**

- Use “Plain Language” technique. “Plain Language” applies writing and design guidelines that help people read, understand and use written information. Keeping your text as clear and as easy to read as possible is not only beneficial for persons

with a disability it improves comprehension for all readers and will make adaptation to other formats easier. Please refer to resources on Plain Language and A Plain Language Audit Tool at [www.plainlanguagenetwork.org](http://www.plainlanguagenetwork.org)

- Plain Language training is required for all staff who produce municipal public documents The following are tips for the writer:
- Focus on the Reader – know your audience, what do they need to know, how will they use the information, how many types of readers.
- Organize the text - decide what information is most important to include and structure it in such a way that the document is logically presented and easily understood. Put the most important ideas first- both in the document and in each paragraph. Divide your text into main points and secondary points.
- Language or vocabulary -
  - Use simple, familiar words and phrases
  - Action in your verbs
  - Avoid any unnecessary words
  - Avoid jargon, acronyms and abbreviation
  - Write to express, not impress
  - Write as you talk
- Sentences: keep short and concise. Make your point clearly. Use the active voice.

## **Part 2 – Structure**

To create source documents that can be converted to alternate formats or accessed by various communication supports all municipal documents will be created using Word “Styles”. Please refer to the Step by Step Guide on how to create structure in Word.

Styles: is a tool to help create an Accessible Word document.

Training on the use of “Styles” will be required for all employees that create public document on behalf of the municipality. The training will be completed in house.

“Styles” will be used instead of formatting buttons (bold, italics, centering etc) and to create

- Headers
- Paragraphs
- Bulleted/Numbered Lists

All staff will use the Accessibility Base Template that has the accessible Styles predefined when creating documents for the public. Staff will be provided training and the Accessibility Base Template.

**Images in a document: Must provide alternative text for pictures and images** by using tags. Tags describe the picture so reader can hear the same image that is seen.

- It provides context or meaning. – keep it brief and avoid repetition
- Not all graphics require an explanation. Graphics used for visual appeal do not require accompanying text. Many photographs, also used for visual appeal and which may not have particular relevance, can be given very short descriptions.
- Make clear what visual element a text explanation is for, and when the explanation begins and ends.
- In explaining complicated visuals, first identify the format, such as “chart” then provide the title and purpose followed by the meaning of the data.

**Links:** Link paths that are extremely long should be shortened or described by using the Insert on the ribbon bar. The communication support will read every character in the link path; therefore it is good practice to create a hyperlink. There are times where having the link path showing is acceptable. Links allow Word to turn web addresses into hyperlinks. Word hyperlinks are automatically converted to PDF hyperlinks. When making links you will find in the Insert section of the ribbon bar. You enter the text that you would like to have appear in the “Text to display” field.

### **Headers and Footers**

- Tag any logos or pictures in the header or footer before converting to PDF.
- Used to display information you want to print on one or more pages (date, page numbers,)

- In a Word document the header and footer information is not available to the screen reader; however, if you convert document to PDF you can enable header and footer to be read.

**Tables:** To create tables do not use the tab key or spacebar. The proper method to create a table is to use Words' table editor. When creating tables consider the following:

- Keep it simple; avoid complex tables
- Provide a table summary which is descriptive
- Clear column headings help provide context and navigation
- Avoid splitting or merging cells
- Screen reader reads in linearized manner.
- Avoid blank spaces

**Columns:** To create columns, do not use the tab key or the spacebar to create space between columns of text. Also avoid using text boxes or placing text in a table. The proper method is to use Word's Column layout feature. A screen reader renders the texts in a column from left to right.

**Title pages:** will be created using the built in Word Styles. A title page makes a document more accessible. It introduces topic, date crated, writer, number of pages. When creating a title page avoid using text boxes.

**Forms:** will be created in Word then converted to PDF using Adobe Acrobat Form Wizard. Tips for creating Forms:

- Screen readers pick up on fillable parts only.
- Use a table to create the fillable boxes rather than tabs.
- Ensure colour is not the only means of communicating information
- Ensure the security of your document will allow people using screen readers to access your form.

**Table of Contents:** is a navigation tool and will be created in Word Styles to create structure in the document. All long documents will have a table of contents. The table of content will be created using the municipal pre-defined accessible based template. Staff

will limit the use of leaders meaning the rows of dots, dashes or other character that lead your eye from one text element to another.

### **Part 3 – Records Management**

#### **Where**

All municipal public documents will be saved in a central area on the computer; example; Town Office W/; and in accordance with the Records Management System. To assist you with the saving/categorizing the documents please refer to the Records Management Manual. Said Manual is located in the central area on the computer; example, Town office located at W:/A10recordsmanagement.

#### **How**

- All documents will be saved using the “Word Options” button.
- All documents will be saved using the name of the document and by adding .ad2013

### **Part 4 – Converting to PDF**

All source documents that are posted to the website and sent electronically to the public will be converted to an Accessible PDF. Please refer to the manual which details procedure for converting to an accessible PDF.

The Director will designate a staff person to be responsible for the conversion and will budget for the software annually if or when required.

### **Part 5 Testing documents**

All documents will be tested/checked. Using Adobe Reader you have the option to complete a Quick Check. The Check will give you errors and recommendations for changes.

### **Part 6 – Repairs**

Repairs are to be made in the source document.

Directors will designate individuals who can complete repairs and provide the tools to complete same.

Request for alternate formats or concerns reading a municipal document will be made to the Accessibility Coordinator. The Accessibility Coordinator will forward the information to the appropriate staff to make repairs.

## **Part 7 – Compliance**

The Director of each Department or their designate will ensure compliance with this policy. Discipline for not complying with the policy will be accordance with the Human Resource Policy – Employee Discipline C5.1 and also could result in Provincial administrative penalties to the corporation.

The Director or designate will complete quarterly reviews of all documents and information posted on the municipal website.

Any document that is not in an accessible format will be removed from the website and the appropriate staff will correct the accessibility errors.

The Accessibility Coordinator or designate will complete an annual audit of the municipal websites and provide the Directors an audit report.

## **Public Spaces Design and Self Service Kiosks**

Council recognizes that all persons have the right to access public spaces; such as, but not limited to: public spaces; including: trails/beach access routes; outdoor public eating areas; play spaces; accessible parking; exterior paths of travel including sidewalks; accessible pedestrian signals; service counters; fixed queuing lines and waiting areas. Council is committed to providing equal access to public spaces.

When constructing new public spaces the municipality will:

- Consult with people with disabilities and the accessibility committee
- Adhere to the technical requirements pursuant to the AODA, Built Environment – Design of Public Spaces Standard.

- <http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/>

The municipality will make sure accessibility-related equipment and features are maintained. Further, will include in the municipalities' multi-year Accessibility plan:

- preventative and emergency maintenance procedures for the accessible parts of the Town public spaces.
- procedures for handling temporary disruptions in service when an accessible part of the Town's public spaces stops working.

Further, the municipality when designing, procuring or acquiring self-service kiosks will have regard to accessibility features which will allow people with disabilities to use independently and securely. "Have regard" means that the municipality will consider what accessibility features they can build into their kiosks to best meet the needs of the municipality's customers. The Town will strive to include accessibility features where possible and consider the accessibility needs, preferences and abilities of the widest range of users.

Examples of accessibility features to consider are:

- Technical considerations:
  - colour contrast on the display screen
  - extra time for people to complete tasks and
  - voice-activated equipment
- Structural considerations
  - height and stability of the kiosk
  - headset jacks with volume control, and
  - specialized keypads or keyboards

"kiosk" means an interactive electronic terminal, including a point-of-sale device, intended for public use that allows users to access one or more services or products or both. O. Reg. 191/11, s. 6 (5).

## Telephone Service Standard

The Town of Parry Sound is committed to providing fully accessible telephone service to our customers regardless of their abilities. Staff will be trained to communicate with customers over the telephone in clear and plain language and to speak clearly and slowly.

The municipality will offer to communicate with customers by Telephone Relay Service if telephone communication is not suitable to their communication needs or is not available.

All staff should strive to meet the following level of service:

- All citizens have the option of a live response during core business hours (8:30-4:30)

Staff who use voice mail should provide the caller with the option of leaving a message or pressing '0' and speaking with a person in the work area. The individual's name and extension number should be part of the greeting.

- All voice mailboxes are to be updated when an individual is out of the office.

This is a best practice and lets callers know if an individual is out of the office and when they can expect a return call. If an individual expects to be out of the office for one or more business days, his or her voice greeting should reflect that they are out of the office and it should also advise the caller of the anticipated return date as well as identify whom to contact in his or her absence.

- When there is no one designated to answer as a back-up, phones should be forwarded to voice mail when away from the workstation, including during non-business hours.

By forwarding telephone messages to voice mail the caller will go directly to voice mail without having to wait through a number of rings.

- Calls from customers should be returned within three business days with, at minimum, an acknowledgment of the call.



## **Public Accessible Meetings or Events**

To provide equal access, within reason, to public meetings or public events efforts will be made to ensure that venues are accessible to people with disabilities. The key to accessibility is advanced planning. If a municipal site cannot be found to accommodate people with disabilities another venue will be investigated. If an accessible location is not available alternative means of participating will be utilized such as teleconference or videotaping.

The following guidelines and the attached Best Practice are to assist in planning an accessible meeting or event.

When planning a meeting or event two components should be considered:

- physical access to the meeting space
- access to the contents and proceedings

### **Physical access to the meeting area**

There are several aspects to the physical environment that should be considered to ensure the meeting area is accessible.

#### **Choosing a location**

Items to consider when choosing a location include the following:

- Parking
- Entrances
- Washrooms
- Meeting rooms
- Doors
- White noise (background noise that may interfere with hearing)
- Visual fire alarms (for use by persons who are deaf, deafened or hard of hearing)
- Telephone access
- Customer service areas
- Recent renovations/current construction

- Availability of auditory equipment
- Sensitivity training of staff
- Relieving area/water bowls for service dogs

### **Exterior Access**

Items to consider when assessing exterior access include:

- Signage
- Parking
- Sidewalks/Path of Travel
- Accessible Transit

### **Interior Access**

Items to consider when assessing interior access include:

- Entrances and lobbies
- Elevators
- Accessible washrooms
- Hallways and corridors
- Meeting and conference rooms
- Making refreshment and dietary arrangements

### **Reception; waiting areas and queuing lines**

Items to consider when assessing reception areas and queuing

- Low counter areas
- Wide queuing guide areas
- There will be no less than one accessible seating space available

### **Access to the contents and proceedings**

When planning your event it is important to remember to ensure the content of your event is also accessible.

- the accessibility features of the venue, and requests for accessibility accommodation will be indicated on meeting or event notices along with contact information.
- promotional materials or notices will include a note that asks participants to request any additional requirements they may have in order to participate in the meeting or conference.
- Printed materials will also be made available in alternate formats in accordance to municipal policy, upon request.
- the agendas and minutes of all meetings will be available in alternate format in accordance to the municipal policy, upon request

For more information on accessible meetings and events

<http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/en/mcass/programs/accessibility>

## **Disruption of Service**

Recognizing that from time to time there are expected and unexpected service disruptions, such as: maintenance, renovations and repairs to facilities and entrances; sidewalk closures, technology that is unavailable, it is important to provide reasonable notice to inform customers of the disruption of service. Notification is especially important to persons with a disability because they often go to a lot of trouble to access goods and services.

**The Town will provide Public Notice for all planned or unexpected temporary disruptions to facilities, systems and services that are used to access the municipalities goods or services as outlined below.**

**If the temporary disruption is expected or planned, Public Notice must be provided a reasonable time in advance. If the temporary disruption is unexpected, Public Notice must be provided as soon as possible. In the event that all services are disrupted, such as power outage, Public Notice is not required unless the disruption significantly impacts on persons with a disability.**

**The Public Notice must include: the reason for the disruption, anticipated duration and a description of a suitable alternative.**

It will be communicated to the public in the manner as outline in the Town of Parry Sound, Provision of Notice Policy, dated December 4, 2007.

### **Examples of Public Notice for temporary disruption:**

Public Notice for a minor temporary disruptions, i.e., repairs to washrooms, maintenance on elevator, lift maintenance, ramp closures, technology unavailable (website, interact, computers).

Posting of a sign at all entrances at a height that will allow a person using a wheelchair to read or in a conspicuous place. Depending on circumstances and duration, notice may be provided on the municipal website.

Public Notice for major temporary disruptions, i.e, transit delays, sidewalk closure, parks or beach closure, road closures, fire hydrant flushing, temporary power outage, etc. The Public Notice will be communicated on the municipal website, a posting sign at the municipal entrances, and either radio or newspaper, best practice. Written or verbal notification may be required by staff to be initiated to inform persons impacted by the service interruption. Emergency Services will be contacted regarding all road closures or any disruption which will affect their operations.

Sample of Notice in Appendix - Section C

## **Town of Parry Sound Notice Policy**

Revised: December 10th, 2011

Policy Name: "Provision of Notice "

### **Purpose**

The Municipal Act, 2001, as amended, Section 238(2.1) requires that the procedural by-law provide for public Notice of meetings.

The Municipal Act, 2001, as amended by Bill 130, Section 270(1) para.4 requires that the municipality adopt and maintain a Policy with respect to "the circumstances in which

the municipality shall provide Notice to the public and if Notice is to be provided, the form, manner and times Notice shall be given”.

The requirements to give reasonable Notice to the public shall be deemed to be fulfilled upon completion of the actions dictated in this Policy.

Notwithstanding the Notice requirements dictated in this Policy, where the giving of Notice to the public is required by legislation, Council may provide additional Notice, reduce or amend such requirements upon passage of a resolution at a duly called meeting of Council, provided the motion dictates an alternate method of giving Notice deemed to be in a form and manner adequate to the circumstances. Where the giving of Notice to the public is not required by legislation, Council may waive the Notice requirements dictated in the Policy by passage of a resolution at a duly called meeting of Council.

## **Objectives**

The objectives of this policy are to:

- Ensure that legislated requirements for providing Notice are followed (.ie: as legislated through the Municipal Act and Planning Act).
- Encourage the use of the best communication tool(s) to provide Notice to generate the most efficient and effective communication to reach a broader audience.
- Encourage staff to look at new methods of improving the Provision of Notice to realize cost savings, where appropriate.
- Ensure traditional communication methods/tools are not necessarily replaced, but rather that they are augmented by new technology, as appropriate.

## **Application**

Elected Officials and all Staff of the Town of Parry Sound

## **Policy Statement**

In recognition of the emphasis placed on transparency and accountability measures within the *Municipal Act*, the Town of Parry Sound believes citizens should be made aware of the business of the municipality. In order to facilitate citizen awareness the Town will provide Notice based on the following:

- development of a class system that identifies the circumstances of when Notice will be provided;
- establishment of Notice formats and Notice methods that provide consistent, accessible and readable information;
- development of minimum Notice time periods.

## **Operating Principle**

The Notice provisions are based on the following principles:

- citizens should be able to be aware what, when and where the business of the municipality is being discussed;
- citizens should be able to discern when the business being discussed is likely to have an impact on them; adequate time should be provided to citizens so they can make submissions.

The following principles apply to the Notice:

- be provided as soon as possible;
- be distributed to a broad audience;
- should be given in a variety of manners;
- provide accurate, credible, accessible information in a usable format that is easy to understand while being open, inclusive and respectful;
- in some circumstances, be given directly to the affected individuals.

## **Operating Details**

### **Notice Format**

A common format will be used for giving Notice which ensures consistency and includes the following information:

- date, time, location, contact information, summary for what Notice is being given, how to obtain additional information, and how to register as a delegation to address Council (if appropriate).

A review process through the CAO's Office will be established for Class 3 Notices (outlined below) to ensure conformity and consistency. More than one format for Notices will be amended as required to accommodate various citizen needs ( vary font, size, colour, etc. ).

Individual departments will establish their own standards related to informal Notice and collecting information from the public for matters such as disruption to service, minor road construction/repairs, etc.

### **Emergency Provision**

If a matter or situation arises that, in the opinion of the CAO, in consultation with the Mayor, is considered to be of an urgent or time sensitive nature, or could affect the health and well-being of the residents of the Town of Parry Sound, or if a state of emergency is declared, or is so directed by a Provincial Ministry, the Notice requirements of this policy are waived and best efforts will be made to provide as much Notice as is reasonable under the circumstances.

### **Notice Categories**

#### **General Guidelines:**

- all references to days are calendar days, not business days.
- direct delivery includes hand delivery, facsimile and email.
- Notice can be provided through multiple channels including, Notice on website, *social media applications*, newspapers, radio, television, direct mailing, and location signs.

#### **Class 1 – Standard Council Operating Process (minimum 2 days Notice)**

This class refers to the normal operations of the Town of Parry Sound when Notice is provided of upcoming Council meetings.

The foundation for this class of Notice is the publication of the annual schedule of meetings and updates to the Schedule. The schedule will be available on the Town's website and/or other social media applications, and is distributed in electronic or hard copy upon request. The schedule shows the time and date for each regular Council meeting.

Notice of Council meetings where the business of the municipality is being discussed is provided through the development of agendas. Notice shall be provided a minimum of 2 days in advance of the meeting by:

- posting of the Agenda to the Town's website *and other social media applications as appropriate*;
- direct delivery to affected individuals where they have requested to be notified of an upcoming meeting or the Town is legislatively required to provide Notice.

A hard copy of the agenda for every Council meeting will be available from the Municipal Office located at 52 Seguin Street, Parry Sound, Ontario. Notice requirements do not apply to revised or consolidated agendas.

Notice of all Special Meetings of Council shall be posted on the Town's website and posted on the bulletin board located in the lobby of the Municipal Office. Notice of Special Meetings shall be provided a minimum of 24 hours in advance of the holding of the special meeting ( this Notice requirement excludes emergency meetings ).

### **Class 2 – Defined or Specific Issues (minimum 14 days Notice)**

The issues associated with this class of Notice are more specific and affect a smaller more contained population. These Notice provisions will take into consideration difference between communities of interest, and specific user groups. There are cases where the broad general Notice may still be required but some discretion is necessary. Notice is to be more flexible and directed at affected individuals. As an example the Notice provision will apply to the following but may not be limited to:



- sale of minor parcels of land;
- controlled access by-laws and amendments;
- road renaming, highway closing by-laws;
- consultation on localized road repairs where a Class Environmental assessment is not required;

A minimum of 14 days Notice will be provided utilizing the following methods:

- direct delivery or pre-paid first class mail to affected parties, that may include, but are not limited to, affected land owners/occupants, abutting land owners/occupants, license holders, stakeholders; and
- posting of Notice on Town website, and other social media applications, as appropriate; at the discretion of the Department Head, advertisement in a newspaper that is of sufficiently general circulation in the specific area and other social media applications, as appropriate;

### **Class 3 – Major Issues (minimum 21 days Notice)**

The issues associated with this class have a significant impact on the community. This Notice shall be directed to the broadest audience as the topics may be of interest to the Town as a whole.

Notice provisions will apply to the following:

- consulting with the public on the development of new and amending Council policies under the Municipal Act;
- consulting with the public on the development of new regulatory by-laws and amendments to those regulatory by-laws that affect general population i.e. amendment to pesticide or licencing by-laws;
- amendments to procedural by-law;
- proposed changes to governance structure (e.g. change of municipality name, change in size of Council);
- sale of land containing buildings or the sale of a lot as defined in the Planning Act;

A minimum of 21 days Notice is required utilizing the following methods:

- advertising in a newspaper; and
- posting of Notice on Town website and other social media applications, as appropriate.

#### **Class 4 – Planned Service Disruptions (minimum 24 hours Notice)**

Departments shall provide Notice of planned service interruptions. Notice of the disruption should include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration and a description of any available alternative services. A minimum of 24 hours is required utilizing the following methods:

- direct delivery or pre-paid first class mail to affected parties, that may include, but are not limited to, affected land owners/occupants, abutting land owners/occupants, license holders, stakeholders; or
- posting of the information in a conspicuous place or on the premises as applicable; and
- posting of Notice on Town website and other social media applications, as appropriate.

#### **Class 5 – Communicating Information (no Notice required)**

Where the Town publishes information that may be of interest to the Public, but there is no time frame for action regarding the report, and the time frame for Public Input has expired, there is no requirement to give Notice. Notice may be given of the availability of the document. If Notice is given regarding the document there is no restriction on how this Notice is given.

#### **Class Environmental Assessment Process**

The Class Environmental Assessment process is not included in this Notice Policy. A separate notification and consultation process has been created for Class Environmental Assessments which will affect most major road, water and sewer construction projects.

## **Service Animals**

### **Definitions:**

**Guide Dog** is a dog that has been trained at one of the facilities listed in Ontario Regulation 58 under the Blind Persons' Rights Act to act as a guide dog for people who are blind.

**Service Animal** includes animals used by people with autism, mental health disabilities, those with physical or dexterity disabilities but not limited to same. To be considered a Service Animal under this policy it must be readily apparent that the animal is being used because of a person's disability.

**Readily Apparent** when it is obvious by appearance or by what it is doing. For example, it may be readily apparent that an animal is a service animal if it is wearing a harness, saddle bags, a sign that identifies it as a service animal or has a certificate or identification card from a service training school or an identification card from the Attorney General of Ontario. It may also be readily apparent if a person is using the animal to assist him or her in doing things, such as opening doors or retrieving items.

**Exclusions under law** - as defined in the Health Protection and Promotion Act, R.R.O 1990, Reg 562, ss. 59 & 60 and Food Safety and Quality Act, 2001, O. Reg. 31/05,s 44.

**Council recognizes that guide dogs and service animals are not pets - they are working animals. They are used by people with disabilities to overcome barriers; much like assistive devices such as a white cane or wheelchair.**

**Guide dogs and service animals, that are readily apparent, when accompanied by a person with a disability, are welcomed on all municipal premises where goods and services are open to the public and areas that are not open to the public but to third parties unless the animal is excluded by law.**

**When an animal is excluded by law - such as food preparation areas- the reason why the animal is excluded shall be explained to the person with disability. Other**

**reasonable arrangements to provide goods and service shall be explored with the assistance of the person with disability.**

Some options to consider include:

- bringing goods or service to the person to an area where the animal is not restricted;
- offering 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 offering assistance to the person with a disability while they are separated from the service animal.

For example, a person with vision loss might need someone to guide him or her.

**If it is not readily apparent to an average, informed person that the animal is a service animal, a letter from a doctor or nurse that states the animal is needed because of a disability is required. The letter need only explain that the animal is required because of a disability. The letter does not need to identify the disability, why the animal is needed or how it is used. A copy will be maintained in the municipal records management system in accordance with the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.**

Not every situation will be straight forward. Be prepared to deal with special situations keeping in mind that Guide Dogs and Service Animals must be permitted by law to all public areas unless excluded by law.

**Example:** When you are serving a customer who has a service animal and a customer who has an allergy to animals.

Discuss the situation with both customers and make every effort to meet the needs of both individuals.

**When a service animal is unruly or disruptive (jumping on people, biting, or other harmful behaviour) the person with the disability may be asked to remove the animal from the area or be refused access to goods or service. Other reasonable arrangements to provide goods or service shall be explored with the assistance of the person with disability.**

# Support Person

## Definitions:

**Support Person** - means, in relation to a person with a disability, another person who accompanies him or her in order to help communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs or with access of goods or services. O Reg. 429-07, s.4(8)

A person with a disability may be accompanied by a support person to assist with accessing goods and services. **Any person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person will be allowed to enter, together, all areas that are open to the public and third parties. At no time will a person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person be prevented from having access to his or her support person while on the premises. Support persons will be permitted to stay with the person with a disability unless that person wishes matters to be dealt with privately.**

Privacy laws need to be considered when dealing with a person with a disability that is accompanied by a support person. **Where confidentiality is important because of the content of the information being discussed consent from the person with a disability to allow their support person to be present during discussions is required. Also, depending on the circumstance a confidentiality agreement may be required.**

It may be necessary in certain situations that a person with a disability be required by the municipality to be accompanied by a support person, i.e, swim program, skate program, transit, etc. A support person can only be mandated by the municipality if the 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. Any considerations on protecting health or safety should be based on specific factors and not on assumptions. One cannot assume that because someone has a disability they are not capable of meeting health or safety requirements without assistance.

Considerations when determining whether to mandate a support person:

- 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)
- That risk is greater than the risk associated with other customers
- That risk cannot be eliminated or reduced by other means
- 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
- The assessment of the risk is based on the individuals' actual characteristics, not merely on generalizations, misconceptions, ignorance or fears about a disability.

People with disabilities who use a support person are often unable to attend places or participate in activities without that support person. To participate in activities with a fee, the person with a disability has to pay twice creating a financial burden on that person and may discourage that person from participating. In support of the persons with a disability, Town venues requiring a fee will make concessions in fees when a person with a disability is accompanied by a support person. Fee concessions are to be discussed in private and the determination will be the responsibility of the Director.

The support person must be either the disabled person's employee or a regular member of the support team. The support person may be a member of the family. **All discussions pertaining to fee concession between staff, the person with a disability and the support person will be in private respecting the person with a disability's privacy. No documentation or proof will be requested, the word of the person with a disability will be sufficient. Any conflict or disagreements pertaining to fees will be handled by management.**

**All Town Venues requiring a fee for a support person will provide notice, in advance, of the admission cost for the support persons so the customer with disabilities knows what to expect. A sign will be posted at all ticket booths, on all promotional materials, and on the website.**

## Best Practices – Section B

- Best Practice when producing material or publications
- Why accessibility is good for your Business
- Understanding Barriers to accessibility
- Terminology – choose the right word
- How to welcome customers with disabilities
- Customers with disabilities over the phone
- Delivering to customers with disabilities at home
- What you need to know about customers with mental health disabilities
- What you need to know about customers who are deaf or hard of hearing
- What you need to know about customers with intellectual or developmental disabilities
- What you need to know about customers with physical disabilities
- What you need to know about customers with speech or language impairment
- What you need to know about customers with vision disabilities
- What you need to know about customers who are deaf-blind
- Tips for guiding a customer who has vision loss
- Accessibility Symbols
- Instruction on helping someone with an Assistive Device
- Adaptive Technology Resource
- Resources for Accessible Formats and Communication Supports

### Best Practice:

When producing material or publications consider your audience and apply the following guidelines to assist in making your publications accessible:

- **Contrast** - use high contrast colours for text and background  
(e.g. black or dark blue on white)
- **Type Colour** - printed material is most readable in black and white

- **Point Size** - Keep text larger, preferably between 12 and 18 points.  
Use mix of upper and lower case letters for easier reading.
- **Leading** - leading is the space between line of text and should be at least 25 to 30 per cent of the point size.
- **Font Family and Font Style** - Use standard font with easily-recognizable upper and lower case characters (e.g. Arial and Verdana)
- **Font Heaviness** - Opt for fonts with medium heaviness and avoid light type with thin strokes
- **Letter Spacing** - Choose a monospaced font ( e.g. Arial and Verdana) rather than one that is proportionally spaced (e.g. Times New Roman)
- **Margins and Columns** - Separate text into columns to make it easier to read, use wide binding margins or spiral bindings, flat pages work best for vision aids such as magnifiers.
- **Paper Finish** - Use a matte or non-glossy finish to cut down on glare, avoid watermarks or complicated background designs.
- **Clean Design and Simplicity** - Use distinctive colours, sizes and shapes on the covers of materials to make them easier to tell apart.

(Reference: Canadian National Institute for the Blind, Print Clarity Standards June 2006)

## **Why Accessibility Is Good For Your Business!**

### **Did you know?**

About 1.85 million people in Ontario (that's 15.5% of the population) have a disability.  
47.2% of people over the age of 65 have disabilities.

### **Are you missing potential customers?**

Predictions are that the number of people with disabilities will continue to grow as our population ages. Don't lose this major market group to your competitors!



You want to do business with this growing population of people with disabilities because they:

- live with, work with, and influence the rest of our population – on average, 5 or 6 other people, such as colleagues, family members, business owners and other service providers.
- are loyal customers and consumers – they'll recommend your quality product or service. As business owners and service providers, you have a common goal. You want happy, satisfied customers whose needs are met. You want customers to feel comfortable and welcome to come back time and time again. And, if you do your job well, you can expect these customers to refer their friends, co-workers and family members.

Loyal customers and their families and relatives are the best customers you can have and the ones you want to keep. As our population ages, think about the fact that more of your existing loyal customers and potential new customers will be people with disabilities, their families, their friends and their caregivers.

Smart businesses will recognize the need for accessibility and make sure that consumers who shop, work or do business with them are satisfied. They will ensure that the barriers that may prevent customers from enjoying access to products, services and employment are eliminated and removed.

In the United States, which is implementing standards under the Americans with Disabilities Act, the hospitality industry has increased annual revenue by 12%. People with disabilities also represent a wealth of untapped employment potential.

## **Understanding Barriers to Accessibility**

### **What is a barrier?**

A barrier is anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of his or her disability.

There are many kinds of barriers.

**Architectural** barriers may result from the design of the building, shape of rooms, size of doorways, or width of hallways, for example.

**Physical** barriers refer to objects added to the environment, such as doors, windows, elevators, furniture, bathroom hardware, etc.

**Information or communication** barriers make it difficult for people to receive or send information. For example, a person with a visual disability may not be able to read printed materials, read signs, locate landmarks, or see a hazard. A person with an intellectual disability may not understand information that is not expressed in plain language.

**Attitudinal** barriers refer to persons who do not know how to communicate with people with disabilities, or persons who display discriminatory behaviours.

**Technology** barriers refer to devices such as computers, telephones, inadequate or inappropriate assistive technologies.

**Systemic** barriers can result from an organization’s policies, practices and protocols if they restrict persons with disabilities

## Barriers and Solutions

Possible Barriers	Possible Solutions
<b>Vision Loss</b>	
Staff are not aware of the need to describe goods or services when a person cannot read a sign.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make it standard practice to describe to customers the goods or services offered if they are unable to view them due to vision loss.</li> </ul>
<b>Deaf, deafened, oral deaf, or hard of hearing</b>	
Telephone services not accessible for customers who are Deaf, deafened, oral deaf or hard of hearing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incorporate use of TTY and Relay services in your telephone and services policies.</li> <li>• Ensure staff are trained in, and practice using, TTY and Relay services.</li> </ul>

Staff are not aware of the need to paraphrase or repeat more slowly what is said to customers when the customer has not understood the message.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish the practice of paraphrasing and repeating communications more clearly to customers upon request or using other means such as passing notes back and forth.</li> </ul>
Speaking to customers with hands covering the mouth which does not allow for lip-reading.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish the practice of speaking clearly and making sure that nothing is covering the mouth when communicating with customers who lip-read.</li> </ul>
Loud music and poor acoustics, making hearing difficult for people using hearing aids.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish the practice of having pen and paper available and communicate through note-writing.</li> </ul>
<b>Intellectual/Developmental Disability</b>	
Use of complicated or technical language in customer service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish the practice of using plain language and avoid technical language when communicating.</li> </ul>
Ignoring customers who are more reserved or afraid to ask for help	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish the practice of building in extra time to deal with customers who need it and adjust the availability of other staff to help out as needed.</li> </ul>
<b>Learning Disability</b>	
Providing complicated documents to customers without explanation or opportunity to discuss or ask questions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish the practice of discussing and explaining any documentation provided to customers.</li> </ul>
Employees who are not flexible in offering alternative communication strategies or adequate time in providing service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Make it standard procedure to break up lengthy conversations into a series of shorter ones. This may assist customers who need additional time to process certain types of information.</li> </ul>

<b>Mental Health Disability</b>	
Negative stereotypes about people with mental health disabilities resulting in disrespectful or impatient treatment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Add a training component to the regular training that staff receive on the needs of people with mental health disabilities.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make it a standard procedure to break up lengthy conversations into a series of shorter ones and speak more slowly so that some customers will not feel overwhelmed with the information. This may help to prevent anxiety in some customers.</li> </ul>
<b>Physical Disability</b>	
Failure of staff to offer assistance when some services require particular agility and/or motor skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a policy that requires staff to assist customers in handling or reaching goods when requested.</li> </ul>
Failure of staff to set aside convenient seating (close to rest rooms or exits)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish the practice of setting aside convenient seating for people with physical disabilities.</li> </ul>
<b>Speech Impairment</b>	
Verbal speech is the only form of communication used to interact with customers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a policy that requires staff to have pen and paper on hand and communicate through note-writing when requested to do so</li> </ul>

## **Talk About Disabilities - Choose the Right Words**

Words can influence and reinforce perceptions of people with disabilities. They can create either a positive view of people with disabilities or an indifferent, negative depiction.

Here are some tips that can help make your communication with or about people with disabilities more successful:

- Use “disability” not “handicap.”
- Put people first. “Person with a disability” puts the focus on the person instead of their disability.
- For specific disabilities, say “person with epilepsy” or “person who uses a wheelchair.”
- Avoid statements that make it seem like a person with a disability should be pitied such as “victim of,” “suffers with,” or “stricken with” a particular illness or disability.
- If you’re not familiar with the disability, wait until the individual describes their situation to you, instead of making assumptions. Many types of disabilities have similar characteristics and your assumptions may be wrong.

The following preferred words and phrases will help you choose language that is neither demeaning nor hurtful. People with disabilities prefer these terms.

Instead Of	Please Use
Aged (the), the elderly	Seniors
Autistic	A person with Autism. A person with Autism spectrum Disorder
Birth defect, congenital defect, deformity	A person who has a congenital disability. A person with a disability since birth.
Blind (the), visually impaired (the)	A person with vision loss. A person who is blind. A person with low vision.
Brain damaged	A person with a brain injury. A person with an acquired brain injury.
Confined to a wheelchair, wheelchair bound	A person who uses a wheelchair.
Crazy, insane, lunatic, psycho, mental, mental patient, maniac, neurotic, psychotic, unsound mind, schizophrenic	A person with a mental illness. A person with a mental disorder.

Instead Of	Please Use
	<p>A person with a mood disorder (for example, a person with depression, a person with bipolar disorder).</p> <p>A person with a personality disorder (for example, a person antisocial personality disorder).</p> <p>A person with an anxiety disorder (for example a person with obsessive-compulsive disorder)</p> <p>A person with an eating disorder (for example a person with anorexia nervosa, a person with bulimia)..</p> <p>A person with schizophrenia.</p>
Cripple, crippled, lame, physically challenged	<p>A person with a disability.</p> <p>A person with a physical disability.</p> <p>A person with a spinal cord injury.</p> <p>A person who uses a walker.</p> <p>A person who uses a mobility aid.</p> <p>A person with arthritis.</p>
Deaf (the), hearing impaired (the)	<p>A person who is Deaf (for example, a person with profound hearing loss.).</p> <p>A person who is deafened (for example, a person who has become deaf later in life).</p> <p>A person who is hard of hearing (for example, person with hearing loss).</p> <p>When referring to the deaf community and their culture (whose preferred mode of</p>

Instead Of	Please Use
	communication is sign language) it is acceptable to use "the Deaf."
Deaf and dumb, deaf mute	A person who is deaf.
Deaf-Blind (the)	Person who is deaf blind (for example, a person who has any combination of vision and hearing loss).
Epileptic	Person who has epilepsy.
Fits, spells, attacks	Seizures.
Handicapped (the), invalid, patient, the disabled.	Person with a disability.
Hidden disability, invisible disability	Non-visible disability
Learning disabled, learning disordered, dyslexic	A person with a learning disability or people with learning disabilities
Mentally retarded, idiot, simple, retarded, feeble minded, imbecile	A person with an intellectual disability. A person with a developmental disability.
Midget, Dwarf	A little person. A person of short stature. A person who has a form of dwarfism.
Mongoloid, Mongolism, Downs	Person with Down Syndrome. A person with an intellectual or developmental disability.
Normal	A person without a disability. Person who is not disabled. Specifically, a person who is sighted, a hearing person, a person who is ambulatory.

Instead Of	Please Use
Spastic	Person who has muscle spasms.
Stutterer	A person who stutters.
	A person with a communication disorder.
Victim of/suffers from/ stricken with cerebral palsy, multiple sclerosis, arthritis, etc.	Person who has cerebral palsy. Person who has sclerosis, etc. Person with a disability.
Visually impaired (the)	A person with a visual impairment. A person with low vision. A person with vision loss. A person with a vision disability.

## How to communicate using the Relay Service

Phone the Relay Service number (1-800-855-0511).

- Tell the operator your name, the name of the person you are calling, and the number you wish to reach.
- The operator will make the call for you. You speak to the operator as if you were talking directly to the person you are calling. For example, say : Hi, how are you doing.” Do not say: “Tell him I said hello.”
- Remember to say “Go Ahead: when you finish speaking, so the person on the other end will know it is their turn to speak.
- If you normally speak ver quickly, the operator may ask you to speak mor slowly so your message can be typed while you are speaking. There will be brief silences as the operator types to the TTY user and the user replies.

You can find out more about this service at [www.bell.ca/specialneeds/](http://www.bell.ca/specialneeds/)

## How to Welcome Customers with Disabilities

Did you know that just over 15.5% of Ontarians have a disability? That’s 1 in every 7 Ontarians and as the population ages that number will grow.



People with disabilities travel, shop and do business in your community with their friends and families, just like everyone else. By providing service that welcomes people with disabilities, you can offer better service to everyone. Treating all your customers with individual respect and courtesy is at the heart of excellent customer service.

You can broaden your customer base by welcoming everyone to your store, restaurant or services, including customers with disabilities.

Here are some ways you can provide better service to your customers with disabilities

- Treat people with disabilities with the same respect and consideration you have for everyone else.
- Patience, optimism, and a willingness to find a way to communicate are your best tools.
- Smile, relax, and keep in mind that people with disabilities are just people.
- Don't make assumptions about what type of disability or disabilities a person has.
- Some disabilities are not visible. Take the time to get to know your customers' needs.
- Be patient. People with some kinds of disabilities may take a little longer to understand and respond.
- If you're not sure what to do, ask your customer, "May I help you?"
- If you can't understand what someone is saying, just politely ask again.
- Ask before you offer to help — don't just jump in. Your customers with disabilities know if they need help and how you can provide it.
- Find a good way to communicate. A good start is to listen carefully.
- Look at your customer, but don't stare. Speak directly to a person with a disability, not to their interpreter or someone who is with them.
- Use plain language and speak in short sentences.
- Don't touch or address service animals – they are working and have to pay attention at all times.
- Ask permission before touching a wheelchair or a piece of equipment.

- Every business should have emergency procedures for customers with disabilities. Make sure you know what they are.

## **Customers with Disabilities over the Phone**

Here are some tips on serving customers with disabilities on the phone:

- Speak normally, clearly and directly.
- Don't worry about how their voice sounds. Concentrate on what's being said.
- Be patient, don't interrupt and don't finish your customer's sentences. Give your customer time to explain him/herself.
- Don't try to guess what your customer is saying. If you don't understand, don't pretend. Just ask again.
- If you're not certain what was said, just repeat or rephrase what you've heard.
- If a telephone customer is using an interpreter or a TTY line, just speak normally to the customer, not to the interpreter.
- If your customer has great difficulty communicating, make arrangements to call back when it's convenient to speak with someone else.

## **Delivering to Customers with Disabilities at Home**

Here are some tips on serving customers with disabilities at home:

- Don't arrive unexpectedly, and confirm the details before you arrive.
- 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 identity cards and may instead have a password. Check before you visit.
- Keep your customer up to date on what you're doing.
- If you need to move some of your customer's possessions, make sure that you leave their house exactly as when you arrived. For example, you don't want someone with a vision disability to trip because you moved the sofa.

- If you can't complete the job, clearly explain what will happen next. Make another appointment, and leave a contact number in case there are problems.

## **What You Need to Know About Customers with Mental Health Disabilities**

People with mental health disabilities look like everyone else. You won't know that your customer has a mental health disability unless you're informed of it. And usually it will not affect your customer service at all.

But if someone is experiencing difficulty in controlling their symptoms or is in a crisis, you may need to help out. Be calm and professional and let your customer tell you how you can best help.

Here are some tips on serving customers who have mental health disabilities:

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

## **What you need to know about Customers who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing**

People who have hearing loss may be deaf or hard of hearing. Like other disabilities, hearing loss has a wide variety of degrees. Remember, customers who are deaf or hard of hearing may require assistive devices when communicating.

Here are some tips on serving customers who are deaf or hard of hearing:

- Always ask how you can help. Don't shout.
- Attract the customer's attention before speaking. The best way is a gentle touch on the shoulder or gently waving your hand.

- Make sure you are in a well-lighted area where your customer can see your face.
- Look at and speak directly to your customer. Address your customer, not their interpreter.
- If necessary, ask if another method of communicating would be easier, for example a pen and paper.
- Don't put your hands in front of your face when speaking.
- Be clear and precise when giving directions, and repeat or rephrase if necessary. Make sure you have been understood.
- Don't touch or address service animals – they are working and have to pay attention at all times.
- Any personal (e.g., financial) matters should be discussed in a private room to avoid other people overhearing.
- Be patient. Communication for people who are deaf may be different because their first language may not be English. It may be American Sign Language (ASL).
- If the person uses a hearing aid, try to speak in an area with few competing sounds.

## **What You Need to Know About Customers with Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities**

People with intellectual or developmental disabilities may have difficulty doing many things most of us take for granted. These disabilities can mildly or profoundly limit one's ability to learn. You may not be able to know that someone has this disability unless you are told, or you notice the way people act, ask questions or use body language.

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 you treating them with respect.

Here are some tips on serving customers who have an intellectual or developmental disability:

- Don't assume what a person can or cannot do.
- Use plain language and speak in short sentences.

- Make sure your customer understands what you've said.
- If you can't understand what's being said, don't pretend. Just ask again.
- Provide one piece of information at a time.
- Be supportive and patient.
- Speak directly to your customer, not to their companion or attendant.

## **What You Need to Know About Customers With 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.

Here are some tips on serving customers who have physical disabilities:

- Speak normally and directly to your customer. Don't speak to someone who is with them.
- People with physical disabilities often have their own ways of doing things. Ask before you help.
- Be patient. Customers will identify their needs to you.
- Don't touch assistive devices, including wheelchairs, unnecessarily unless it's an emergency.
- Provide your customer information about accessible features of the immediate environment (automatic doors, accessible washrooms, etc.).
- Remove obstacles and rearrange furniture to ensure clear passage.

## **What You Need to Know About Customers With Speech or Language Impairment**

Some people have problems communicating. It could be the result of cerebral palsy, hearing loss, or another condition that makes it difficult to pronounce words, causes

slurring or stuttering, or not being able to express oneself or understand written or spoken language. Some people who have severe difficulties may use communication boards or other assistive devices.

Here are some tips on serving customers with speech or language impairments:

- Just because a person has one disability doesn't mean they have another. For example, if a customer has difficulty speaking; don't assume they have an intellectual or developmental disability as well.
- If you don't understand, ask your customer to repeat the information.
- If you are able, ask questions that can be answered 'yes' or 'no'.
- Be patient and polite, and give your customer whatever time he/she needs to get his/her point across.
- Don't interrupt or finish your customer's sentences. Wait for them to finish.
- Patience, respect and a willingness to find a way to communicate are your best tools.

## **What You Need to Know About Customers with Vision Disabilities**

Vision disabilities reduce one's ability to see clearly. Very few people are totally blind. Many have limited vision such as tunnel vision, where a person has a loss of peripheral or side vision, or a lack of central vision, which means they cannot see straight ahead. Some can see the outline of objects while others can see the direction of light.

Vision disabilities can restrict your customers' abilities to read signs, locate landmarks or see hazards. In some cases, it may be difficult to tell if a person has a vision disability. Others may use a guide dog or white cane.

Here are some tips on serving customers who have vision disabilities:

- Identify yourself when you approach your customer and speak directly to them.
- Speak normally and clearly.
- Never touch your customer without asking permission, unless it's an emergency.

- If you offer assistance, wait until you receive permission.
- Offer your arm (the elbow) to guide the person and walk slowly.
- Don't touch or address service animals – they are working and have to pay attention at all times.
- If you're giving directions or verbal information, be precise and clear. For example, if you're approaching a door or an obstacle, say so.
- Don't just assume the individual can't see you.
- Don't leave your customer in the middle of a room. Show them to a chair, or guide them to a comfortable location.
- Identify landmarks or other details to orient your customer to the environment around them.
- Don't walk away without saying good-bye.
- Be patient. Things may take a little longer.

## **What You Need to Know About Customers Who Are Deaf-Blind**

A person who is deaf-blind cannot see or hear to some extent. This results in greater difficulties in accessing information and managing daily activities. Most people who are deaf-blind will be accompanied by an intervenor, a professional who helps with communicating.

Intervenors are trained in special sign language that involves touching the hands of the client in a two-hand, manual alphabet or finger spelling, and may guide and interpret for their client.

Here are some tips on serving customers who are deaf-blind:

- 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 them or give you an assistance card or a note explaining how to communicate with them.

- Speak directly to your customer as you normally would, not to the intervenor.
- Identify yourself to the intervenor when you approach your customer who is deaf-blind.
- Don't touch or address service animals – they are working and have to pay attention at all times.
- Never touch a person who is deaf-blind suddenly or without permission unless it's an emergency.

## **Tips for Guiding a Customer who has Vision Loss**

The following are instructions and tips on guiding a customer with vision loss. For more information about guiding someone with vision loss visit [www.cnib.ca](http://www.cnib.ca)

- 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 - shelves and sections).
- 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, passage, etc., the guide goes 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 him or her standing in the middle of the room, with nothing to hold onto. If he/she is not seated, guide him/her to a door, wall, or piece of furniture to stand next to. This will help the person to stay spatially oriented.
- If your customer is accompanied by a guide dog, stand to the right of your customer, as the guide dog is usually at the owner's left side. When guiding a customer with a dog, offer your left arm, but if the person you are guiding prefers to hold your right arm, that's okay too.
- When the customer has a guide dog, offer to open the door first, before doing so. The customer may be using the door's location as a reference point, or he/she may prefer to do it without assistance to protect the dog's paws.

## **Instructions on Helping Someone with an Assistive Device**

Many of your customers with disabilities will have their own personal assistive devices. Don't touch or handle an assistive device without permission.

Examples of personal assistive devices:

- wheelchairs
- scooters
- walker
- amplification devices that boost sound for listeners who are hard-of-hearing without reducing background noise
- hearing aids
- oxygen tanks
- electronic notebooks or laptop computers
- personal data managers
- communication boards used to communicate using symbols, words or pictures
- speech-generating devices that "speak" when a symbol, word or picture is pressed

## Moving Personal Assistive Devices

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;
- avoid uneven ground and objects that create a bumpy and unsafe ride; and
- practice considerations and safety - don't leave the person in an awkward, dangerous or undignified position such as facing a wall or in the path of opening doors.

Do not move items or equipment, such as canes and walkers, out of your customer's reach.

Respect your customer's personal space. Do not lean over them or on their assistive device. Let your customer know about accessible features in the immediate environment (automatic doors, accessible washrooms, etc.)

## Adaptive Technology Resource Centre

### Technical Glossary

**Accessible online Learning Tools:** These are not only online education sources, but also other resources and programs related to online learning tools and accessible learning resources in general.

**Alternative Keyboards:** Alternative keyboard layouts and other enhancements allow people who experience difficulty with conventional keyboard designs to use computers.

**Alternative Mouse Systems:** Alternative pointing devices, trackballs and keypads are used to replace the mouse.

**Animated Signing Characters (also called Signing Avatars):** Animated signing characters are a technology for displaying signed communication without the necessity of displaying a digitized video of a human signer

**Braille Embosser:** A Braille Embosser is a hardware device for "printing" a hard copy of electronic text documents in Braille.

**Closed Circuit Television (CCTV):** Closed Circuit Televisions (CCTV's) allow users to quickly magnify any objects placed under a camera unit: CCTV's vary in sizes from portable pocket-sized units to stationary cameras with large displays.

**Display-based Personal Data Assistants:** Display-based Personal Data Assistants (or PDAs) are handheld computers. PDAs were originally used mainly for organizational purposes and acted as electronic day planners, but new technology has led to their increased usage in many different tasks that were formerly only possible with a home computer.

**Electronic Aids to Daily Living Systems:** Electronic Aids for Daily Living (EADL) are simply devices, or systems that allow individuals to control facets of their environment.

**Grammatical Support Tools:** Grammatical support tools allow people who have difficulties with grammar to make their computing and writing tasks much easier.

**Haptic Devices:** A haptic interface is a device which allows a user to interact with a computer by receiving tactile feedback. This feedback is achieved by applying a degree of opposing force to the user along the x,y, and z axes.

**Linux Accessibility:** Linux is a free, open-source Operating System distributed under the Free Software Foundation's GNU General Public License (GPL) that has grown in popularity in the past few years. Because of the non-commercial nature of Linux, the accessibility options can be hard to find. These links are a starting point for Linux accessibility.

**Non-Display based Personal Digital Assistant:** Personal Digital Assistants (PDA) are portable computers that are designed to act as organizers, note takers and/or communication devices.

**On-Screen Keyboards:** An onscreen keyboard generally appears on the same display used for programs and will remain permanently visible. The keyboard can then be accessed using pointer devices. In the simplest sense appointed is a standard mouse,

but through the use of alternative pointer devices or switches a large number of disabilities can be accommodated.

**Optical Character Recognition / Reading Software:** Optical character recognition (OCR) is the process of converting an image of text, such as a scanned paper document or electronic fax file, into computer-editable text.

**Refreshable Braille Display:** Refreshable Braille Displays are electronic devices that are used to read text that a computer sends to a monitor. The device is connected to the computer by a serial cable and produces Braille output on the Braille display. Refreshable Braille displays only read one line of text at a time.

**Screen Magnifiers:** Screen magnification software enlarges the information on the screen by pre-determined incremental factor. Magnification programs run simultaneously and seamlessly with the computer's operating system and applications.

**Screen Readers and Talking Browsers:** Screen readers are used to replace the visual display traditionally viewed on a monitor for those with visual disabilities. Hardware and software produce synthesized voice output for text display on the computer screen, as well as for keystrokes entered on the keyboard.

**Speech Synthesizer:** An external speech synthesizer is a hardware device used for speech output. Typically, they are used with screen readers or OCR/scanning software [Optical Character Recognition] programs for people who are blind or visually disabled.

**Switches:** Switches are a common solution for users with mobility disabilities who need to use computers or other electronic devices, but have difficulty with the physical interface.

## **Talking Browsers and Email software**

**Text to speech:** Text-to-Speech software is used to convert words from a computer document (e.g. word processor document, web page) into audible speech spoken through the computer speaker.

**Voice Output Communication Aids:** Voice Output Communication Aids (VOCA) / Speech Generating Devices (SGD) are electronic devices that are able to generate printed and/or spoken text. They aid individuals who are unable to use natural speech to meet all of their communication needs.

**Word Prediction:** Word prediction technology is used to assist with text entry. These software packages predict the word you are typing and the next word based on word frequency and context.

## **Resources for Accessible Formats and Communication Supports**

The following is a list resources used in the provisions of accessible formats and communication supports.

**Accessible Information and Communication, A Guide for Small Businesses:**

Provides a comprehensive overview of how to provide information in accessible formats at <http://www.gaates.org/aic/index/html>.

**Accessible Digital Office Documents Project:** a one stop shop for creating accessible digital documents using today's most popular office applications at <http://adod.idrc.ocad.ca/>

**Communication Access Real-time Translation (CART):** this service can be used at public events to display spoken words on large screens to help participants with hearing loss to follow speeches. Services can be provided on location or remotely. To book CART services contact the Canadian Hearing Society.

**Sign Language Interpretation /Intervenor:** the two most frequently used sign languages in Canada are American Sign Language ASL (English) and Langue Signe du Quebec LSQ (French). To book theses services contact the Canadian Hearing Society.

**Braille:** in order to make a request for a document in Braille you will need to ask the requestor if they require a document in Grade 1 or Grade 2 Braille and you will need to

provide the document in a plain text format. A company that provides print Braille and other accessible formats of documents is T-Base Communications.

**Braille It.ca** - Braille It offers many braille and blind related services ranging from braille business cards and documents, product sales, website testing, screen reader instruction (JAWS), audio transcriptions, information and referral, audio games training, motivational speaking, and much more.

**Assistive Technology (AT):** refers to devices which enable persons living with vision loss to perform tasks that would otherwise be more difficult to accomplish. To learn more about how to access these services contact the CNIB.

**Assistive Technologies** - Additional suppliers for assistive technology, transcription, captioning and Braille translation services can be found through the online Canadian Company Capabilities Database maintained by Industry Canada.

**Assistive Technologies -Aroga** - Aroga is a company who can help you with assistive devices for low vision, blindness, communication aids, physical access and education products.

**Video Captioning Services/Transcripts:** many video production companies provide video captioning as a n additional service. It is important to include this criterion when ordering the development of videos.

## **Accessible Website Information**

**WebAIM:** WebAIM has provided comprehensive web accessibility solutions since 1999. These years of experience have made WebAIM one of the leading providers of web accessibility expertise internationally. [www.webaim.org](http://www.webaim.org)

**Accessible Website Guidelines** - Information on guidelines and suggestions for making Web sites accessible appears on the World Wide Web Consortium's (W3C) web site. [www. 3.org](http://www.w3.org)

## Appendix - Section C

- Customer Service Communication Plan
- Training Plan
- Training Report Form
- Accessible Customer Service Feedback Form
- Customer Service Feedback Form
- Pedestrian Travel Concern Form
- Barrier Identification Form
- Website Feedback Form
- Disruption of Service Forms

### Communication Plan

The Town of Parry Sound is committed to accessible customer service and providing the best service to all our customers regardless of their ability. The Town will promote this commitment by:

- Educating staff on the feedback process and policies:
  - Keep staff up to date and aware of policies at the \*General Staff Meeting
  - Outcome of this objective is an informed and knowledgeable staff who can \*spreading the word” and give knowledgeable advice on the Customer Service Feedback Policy and Municipal Policies
- Community Awareness/ Informing the public through the use various communication venues, such as:
  - Mayor’s Corner - commitment statement and feedback process
  - Town website - commitment statement and feedback process
  - Facts Sheet or pamphlets detailing Council’s Commitment to Customer Service feedback process and importance of input from the community.- place at all Town facilities, Chamber, DBA kiosk, Georgian Bay Country and town transit.

- Suggestion Box to submit evaluation forms and suggestions/feedback. To implement at all Town facilities that are open to the public.
- \*SONL - all newsletters will have information on the Customer Feedback Policy
- Promoting equal opportunity to access the civic process and provide input/feedback on service
  - signage at reception areas advising customers that alternate formats and individual assistance/service are available.
  - alternate format symbol on all public information advising people of its availability.
  - signage advising of the opportunity to provide input/feedback
  - example Walmart - courtesy desk.

## **Accessibility Training Plans – Council**

The Town of Parry Sound is committed to providing quality goods and services to all persons regardless of their ability. Further, the Town is committed to providing customer service in a manner that takes in account a person's disability. The following training will be provided to the Mayor and Council 30 days after their inauguration. Ongoing training will be provided at Council's meetings when required or when there is a change in municipal policy.

The municipality will keep records of the training and the training records will be made available upon request.

### **Customer Service Training - legislation**

Webcast – Transcript Part 1, only

<http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/en/mcass/programs/accessibility/customerService/>

Online training – Serving Customers with Disabilities.

<http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/mcass/serve-ability/splash.html>

Module training - AODA - Integrated Accessibility Standard

<http://www.accessforward.ca/>



E-Learning Video - Human Rights Training

<http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/learning/working-together-ontario-human-rights-code-and-accessibility-ontarians-disabilities-act>

and

<http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/disability-and-human-rights>

Municipal policy training conducted by the Accessibility Coordinator.

Self Directed Learning - Further Resources (optional)

<http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/en/mcass/programs/accessibility/>

and

[http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/en/mcass/programs/accessibility/understanding\\_accessibility\\_aoda.aspx](http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/en/mcass/programs/accessibility/understanding_accessibility_aoda.aspx)

Name	
Position	
Date	
Signature	

## **Accessibility Training Plans – Directors**

The Town of Parry Sound is committed to providing quality goods and services to all persons regardless of their ability. The Town is committed to providing customer service in a manner that takes in account a person's disability. The following training will be provided to all municipal directors within 30 days of the commencement of their employment. Ongoing training will be provided on an individual's basis and shall be appropriate to the duties of the employees needed to perform the duties of their jobs. Ongoing training will also be delivered in different formats; such as: handouts, presentations at General Staff meetings, departmental staff meetings.

The municipality will keep records of the training and the training records will be made available upon request.

### **Customer Service Training - legislation**

Webcast – Transcript Part 1, only

<http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/en/mcass/programs/accessibility/customerService/>

Online training – Serving Customers with Disabilities.

<http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/mcass/serve-ability/splash.html>

Module training - AODA - Integrated Accessibility Standard

<http://www.accessforward.ca/>

E-Learning Video - Human Rights Training

<http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/learning/working-together-ontario-human-rights-code-and-accessibility-ontarians-disabilities-act>

and

<http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/disability-and-human-rights>

Municipal policy training conducted by the Accessibility Coordinator.

Conversion of Municipal Publications to an accessible format completed by Accessibility Coordinator

Self Directed Learning - Further Resources (optional)

<http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/en/mcass/programs/accessibility/>

and

[http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/en/mcass/programs/accessibility/understanding\\_accessibility/aoda.aspx](http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/en/mcass/programs/accessibility/understanding_accessibility/aoda.aspx)

Name	
Position	
Date	
Signature	

## **Accessibility Training Plans – Municipal Managers**

The Town of Parry Sound is committed to providing quality goods and services to all persons regardless of their ability. The Town is committed to providing customer

service in a manner that takes in account a person’s disability. The following training will be provided to all municipal managers within 30 days of the commencement of their employment. Ongoing training will be provided on an individual’s basis and shall be appropriate to the duties of the employees needed to perform the duties of their jobs. Ongoing training will also be delivered in different formats; such as: handouts, presentations at General Staff meetings, departmental staff meetings.

The municipality will keep records of the training and the training records will be made available upon request.

**Customer Service Training - legislation**

Webcast – Transcript Part 1, only

<http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/en/mcass/programs/accessibility/customerService/>

Online training – Serving Customers with Disabilities.

<http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/mcass/serve-ability/splash.html>

Module training - AODA - Integrated Accessibility Standard

Only modules related to their department

<http://www.accessforward.ca/>

E-Learning Video - Human Rights Training

<http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/disability-and-human-rights>

Municipal policy training conducted by the Accessibility Coordinator.

Self Directed Learning - Further Resources (optional)

<http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/en/mcass/programs/accessibility/>

and

[http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/en/mcass/programs/accessibility/understanding\\_accessibility/aoda.aspx](http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/en/mcass/programs/accessibility/understanding_accessibility/aoda.aspx)

Name	
Position	
Date	

Signature	
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## **Accessibility Training Plans – Municipal Employees**

### **(Administration)**

The Town of Parry Sound is committed to providing quality goods and services to all persons regardless of their ability. The Town is committed to providing customer service in a manner that takes in account a person's disability. The following training will be provided to all municipal employees within 30 days of the commencement of their employment. Ongoing training will be provided on an individual's basis and shall be appropriate to the duties of the employees needed to perform the duties of their jobs. Ongoing training will also be delivered in different formats; such as: handouts, presentations at General Staff meetings, departmental staff meetings.

The municipality will keep records of the training and the training records will be made available upon request.

#### **Accessible Customer Service training**

Online training – Serving Customers with Disabilities.

<http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/mcass/serve-ability/splash.html>

E-Learning Video - Human Rights Training

<http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/disability-and-human-rights>

Municipal policy training conducted by the Accessibility Coordinator.

Conversion of Municipal Publications to an accessible format completed by Accessibility Coordinator

Self Directed Learning - Further Resources (optional)

<http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/en/mcass/programs/accessibility/>

and

[http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/en/mcass/programs/accessibility/understanding\\_accessibility/aoda.aspx](http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/en/mcass/programs/accessibility/understanding_accessibility/aoda.aspx)

Name	
Position	
Date	
Signature	

## **Accessibility Training Plans – Municipal Employees (Outside Workers)**

The Town of Parry Sound is committed to providing quality goods and services to all persons regardless of their ability. The Town is committed to providing customer service in a manner that takes in account a person’s disability. The following training will be provided to all municipal employees within 30 days of the commencement of their employment. Ongoing training will be provided on an individual’s basis and shall be appropriate to the duties of the employees needed to perform the duties of their jobs. Ongoing training will also be delivered in different formats; such as: handouts, presentations at General Staff meetings, departmental staff meetings.

The municipality will keep records of the training and the training records will be made available upon request.

### **Accessible Customer Service training**

Online training – Serving Customers with Disabilities.

<http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/mcass/serve-ability/splash.html>

E-Learning Video - Human Rights Training

<http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/disability-and-human-rights>

Municipal policy training conducted by the Accessibility Coordinator.

Self Directed Learning - Further Resources (optional)

<http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/en/mcass/programs/accessibility/>

and

[http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/en/mcass/programs/accessibility/understanding\\_accessibility/aoda.aspx](http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/en/mcass/programs/accessibility/understanding_accessibility/aoda.aspx)

Name	
Position	
Date	
Signature	

## **Accessibility Training Plans – Municipal Employees – Summer Students and Volunteers.**

The Town of Parry Sound is committed to providing quality goods and services to all persons regardless of their ability. The Town is committed to providing customer service in a manner that takes in account a person's disability. The following training will be provided to all municipal employees-summer students and volunteers within 30 days of the commencement of their employment. Ongoing training will be provided on an individual's basis and shall be appropriate to the duties of the employees needed to perform the duties of their jobs. Ongoing training will also be delivered in different formats; such as: handouts, presentations at General Staff meetings, departmental staff meetings.

The municipality will keep records of the training and the training records will be made available upon request.

### **Accessible Customer Service training**

Online training – Serving Customers with Disabilities.

<http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/mcass/serve-ability/splash.html>

E-Learning Video - Human Rights Training

<http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/disability-and-human-rights>

Municipal policy training conducted by their supervisor

Self Directed Learning - Further Resources (optional)

<http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/en/mcass/programs/accessibility/>

and

[http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/en/mcass/programs/accessibility/understanding\\_accessibility/aoda.aspx](http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/en/mcass/programs/accessibility/understanding_accessibility/aoda.aspx)

Name	
Position	
Date	
Signature	

# Accessible Customer Feedback Form

Thank you for visiting \_\_\_\_\_. We value all of our customers and strive to meet everyone's needs.

Please tell us the date and time of your visit: \_\_\_\_\_

Did we respond to your customer service needs today?

Yes  No

Was our customer service provided to you in an accessible manner?

Yes  Somewhat  No  (please explain below)

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Did you have any problems accessing our goods and services?

Yes  (please explain below) Somewhat  (please explain below) No

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Please add any other comments you may have:

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Contact information (optional):

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Thank you.

Town of Parry Sound Accessibility Coordinator

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Please Note: In accordance with the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, the information gathered is collected pursuant to the Municipal Act S.O. 2001 and will be used for the purpose of feedback on accessible customer service.

# Customer Service Form

Customer Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Information Taken by:  Telephone  Letter  In Person  Other \_\_\_\_\_

Nature of Information:  Request for Service  Concern  Commendation

Information:

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Information Taken by: \_\_\_\_\_

## Office Use Only

Information Forwarded to: \_\_\_\_\_  Dealt With Issue Myself (not forwarded)

Public Works  Planning & Development  Fire  Finance  By-Law  Building

Parks & Recreation  Public Utilities  Director or Mayor & Council regarding Policy

Other \_\_\_\_\_

Forward received by: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Response to Customer:  By Phone  In Person  In Writing

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Recommendation and / or Action Taken:

---

File Closed:  yes  yes and copy returned to Customer

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Green - retain in file

Yellow - Appropriate Dept.

# Pedestrian Travel

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

## Area of Concern

1. Indicate the area of concern

Curb       Push button at traffic signal       Snow clearing

Ramp       Pedestrian Signal Heads/Timing       Sidewalk

Other (Specify): \_\_\_\_\_

2. Location of barrier (A barrier is defined as an obstacle or obstruction in pedestrian travel) Please be specific and detailed in your description (e.g. northwest corner of AA Street and BB Street).

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. Frequency of travel

Daily       Weekly       Other (Specify): \_\_\_\_\_

4. Please indicate if there are sidewalk issues (check if applicable):

Section missing     Tilts on one side     Broken or damaged     No sidewalk

Sections are raised     Under construction for an extended period

Snow/ Ice covered     Other (Specify): \_\_\_\_\_

5. Please indicate if there are **traffic signal or push button issues** (check all if applicable)

No curb cut     Curb cut too steep     No tactile warning

Other (Specify): \_\_\_\_\_

6. Please indicate if there are **traffic signal or push button issues** (check all applicable)

Button not accessible     Button malfunctioning/broken     Audible not working

Insufficient crossing time     Other (Specify): \_\_\_\_\_

Additional Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

Completed forms may be mailed to: Operations Department, 52 Seguin Street

Parry Sound, ON P2A 1B4 or faxed to: 705 746 7461

## **Barrier Identification Form**

The Town of Parry Sound Barrier Identification Form and the Accessibility Advisory Committee are working to remove barriers to access for persons with disabilities.

Please help us to improve corporate services in our community for persons with disabilities by taking a few moments to let us know about any barriers you experience or any suggestions you have to improve the Town sites and services.

1. What is the barrier?

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2. Where is the barrier?

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3. Have you spoken you a town staff person about the barrier and if so whom did you speak with?

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4. How would you fix the barrier?

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5. Other comments.

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6. How much does the barrier affect you?

Daily Impact     Occasional Impact     Seasonal Impact

Other \_\_\_\_\_

Mail of drop off to: The Town of Parry Sound, Tammy Purdy, Accessibility Coordinator,  
52 Seguin Street, Parry Sound, ON, P2A 1B4

For alternate formats or assistance to complete this form call 705-746-2101

Your contact information will be held in strictest confidence at this office and will only be used to contact you if further details are needed. Only the information regarding the barrier will be forwarded to the appropriate contact for follow-up.

## Customer Service Feedback Website

The Town of Parry Sound is committed to making its web site accessible to all persons regardless of their abilities.

If you use assistive technology and the format of any content on this web site interferes with your ability to access the information, please contact:

Tammy Purdy

Accessibility Coordinator

Town of Parry Sound

52 Seguin Street

Parry Sound, ON

P2A 1B4

(705)746-2413

(705)746-7461 (FAX)

[accessibility@townofparrysound.com](mailto:accessibility@townofparrysound.com)

Please indicate the nature of your accessibility issue or suggested changes, the web address (URL), the preferred format in which receive any information you could not access, and your contact information. The Town will work towards making the web page or feature accessible or to provide the information to you in a format that is accessible.

## **Notice: Admission Fees**

Admission fee shall be charged to a “support person” accompanying person with disabilities. The cost will be \$ \_\_\_\_\_.

### **Definitions:**

“Persons with Disabilities” shall mean those individuals that are afflicted with a disability as defined under the Ontario Human Rights Code.

“Support person” shall mean any person whether a paid professional volunteer, family member, friend who accompanies a person with a disability in order to help with communication, personal care or medical needs or with access to goods and services.



## **Notice: Service Disruption**

There will be a scheduled service disruption at the \_\_\_\_\_ municipal office.

This Disruption will be from \_\_\_\_\_ until \_\_\_\_\_.

These disruptions include:

\_\_\_\_\_ (Repairs to doors)

\_\_\_\_\_ (Repairs to technology)

On behalf of the Town of Parry Sound we would like to thank you for your patience in the matter.

## **Notice: Disruption in Service**

There is currently an unexpected service disruption. The estimated time of the service disruption will be from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_.

These disruptions include:

\_\_\_\_\_ (repairs to doors)

\_\_\_\_\_ (repairs to technology)

On behalf of the Town of Parry Sound we would like to thank you for your patience in this matter.

## Resources – Section D

Local Resources

On-line Accessibility Toolboxes - Ontario

Community Organizations Offering Expertise and Services

### Local Resources

Within the Town of Parry Sound the local service providers for seniors and people with disabilities are:

Provider Name	Address	Phone
The Friends	27 Forest Street	(705) 746-5102
Community Mental Health	26 James Street	(705) 746-4264
Health Unit	70 Joseph Street	(705) 746-6091
RISE	17-D Bay Street	(705) 746-6996
Shoppers Drug Mart	90 Bowes Street	(705) 746-2932
Deaf Camp	Rosseau Road	(705) 378-2898
CNIB Camp	Lake Joseph	(705) 375-2630
Hammond Transportation	6 Mill Lake Road	(705) 746-5430
Community Care Access Centre	6 Albert Street	(705) 773-4602
Mun. Social Services	3 Birchwood Drive	(705) 746-7777
District Health Council	17 James Street	(705) 746-2123
Children's Aid Society	25 Church Street	(705) 746-9354
Ontario Works	76 Church Street	(705) 746-8886
Parry Sound District Housing	100 - 70 Isabella Street	(705) 774-9600
WPS Assoc. Community Living	38 Joseph Street	(705) 746-9330

## **On-line Accessibility toolboxes - Ontario**

### **Accessibility Tools for Municipalities**

On-line toolbox developed by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing

<http://www.mah.gov.on.ca/Page157.aspx>

### **Making Ontario Accessible for People with Disabilities**

Provincial website

<http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/en/mcass/programs/accessibility/>

## **Community Organizations Offering Expertise and Services**

Look for an office near you.

- Canadian Association of Independent Living Centres Virtual Independent Living Resource Centre  
<http://www.ilcanada.ca/>
- Canadian Hearing Society  
<http://www.chs.ca/>
- Canadian Mental Health Association Ontario  
<http://ontario.cmha.ca/>

- Canadian Paraplegic Association Ontario  
<http://www.cpaont.org/client/home.ch2>
- CNIB Canadian National Institute for the Blind  
[www.cnib.ca](http://www.cnib.ca)
- Canadian Association for Community Living  
<http://www.cacl.ca/english/index.html>
- Multiple Sclerosis (MS) Society of Canada  
<http://www.mssociety.ca/en/help/default.htm>
- Ontario March of Dimes  
<http://www.marchofdimescanada.ca/>
- The Easter Seal Society Ontario  
<http://www.easterseals.org>