



Operational Procedure: Accessible Customer Service

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Location: All operational locations of Peterborough Green-Up Association	

Accessible Customer Service

Purpose:

To ensure that Peterborough Green-Up Association (commonly referred to as "GreenUP") provides goods and services to the public in a manner that is accessible to persons with disabilities in accordance with the applicable provisions of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)*.

Scope

Applies to all employees, volunteers including Board Members, students and every other person or organization that interacts with the public on behalf of GreenUP. In this document, they will be referred to as "staff".

Definitions:

Disability as defined under the AODA is as follows:

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

The definition includes disabilities of different severity, visible as well as non-visible disabilities, and disabilities the effects of which may come and go.

Barrier, as defined by the AODA, means anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of his/her disability, including a physical barrier, architectural barrier, information or communication barrier, attitudinal barrier, a policy, procedure or a practice.

Assistive Devices are technical aids, communication devices, or medical aids modified or customized, that are used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional abilities of persons with disabilities in seeing, hearing, speaking, mobility, walking, breathing, performing manual tasks, learning, working or self care. Examples of assistive devices include wheelchairs, scooters, walkers, amplification devices that boost sound for listeners, hearing aids, oxygen tanks, electronic notebooks, laptop computers and speech generative devices.

An animal is a **Service Animal** for a person with a disability, as defined by the AODA, if

- a. It is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to his/ her disability; or
- b. The person provides a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability.

Service animals include, but are not limited to "guide dogs".

A **Support Person** is an individual chosen or hired to accompany a person with a disability to provide services or assistance with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs or with access to goods or services. Examples of a support person may include attendants, note takers, interveners, translators, etc.

Policy:

GreenUP is committed to providing its goods and services in a way that respects the dignity, independence and integration of people with disabilities. In addition, we will make reasonable efforts to ensure that people with disabilities have equal opportunity to access our goods and services and are allowed to benefit from the same services, in the same place and in the same or similar way as other customers.

Procedures for Providing Goods and Services to People with Disabilities:

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

1.0 Communication

We will communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability. We will train staff who communicate with customers on how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities.

2.0 Telephone Services

We are committed to providing fully accessible telephone service to our customers. We will train staff to communicate with customers over the telephone in clear and plain language and to speak clearly and slowly. We will offer to communicate with customers by other means of communication that apply if telephone communication is not suitable to their communication needs or is not available.

3.0 Assistive Devices

We are committed to serving people with disabilities who use assistive devices to obtain, use or benefit from our goods and services. We will ensure that our staff is trained and familiar with various assistive devices that may be used by customers with disabilities while accessing our

goods or services. We will also ensure that staff knows how to use any assistive devices available on our premises for customers.

4.0 Billing

We are committed to providing accessible invoices to all of our customers. For this reason, invoices will be provided in the following formats upon request, for example, hard copy, large print, e-mail, etc. We will answer any questions customers may have about the content of the invoice in person, by telephone or e-mail.

5.0 Service Animals and Support Persons

We are committed to welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal on the parts of our premises that are open to the public and other third parties. We will also ensure that all staff, volunteers and others dealing with the public are properly trained in how to interact with people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal.

We are committed to welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person. Any person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person will be allowed to enter GreenUP premises with his or her support person. 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 our premises. Fees will not be charged for support persons for admission to GreenUP's premises.

6.0 Notice of Temporary Disruption

GreenUP will provide customers with notice in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in the facilities or services usually used by people with disabilities. This notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available. The notice will be placed at all public entrances and service counters on our premises.

7.0 Questions about this policy

This policy exists to achieve service excellence to customers with disabilities. If anyone has a question about the policy, or if the purpose of a policy is not understood, an explanation should be provided by the Executive Director or the Manager of Finance and Operational Services.

8.0 Feedback process

The ultimate goal of GreenUP is to meet and surpass customer expectations while serving customers with disabilities. Comments on our services regarding how well those expectations are being met are welcome and appreciated. Feedback regarding the way GreenUP provides goods and services to people with disabilities can be made by e-mail, verbally, suggestion box, feedback card, etc. All feedback will be directed to the Executive Director or the Manager of Finance and Operational Services. Customers can expect to hear back in ten (10) business days in a format that is accessible to the person with a disability.

Staff Training and Communication

GreenUP will provide training to all employees, volunteers and others who deal with the public or other third parties on their behalf, and all those who are involved in the development and approvals of customer service policies, practices and procedures.

Training will include the following:

- The purposes of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* and the requirements of the customer service standard
- How to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities
- How to interact with people with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or a support person
- How to use the any equipment available on provider's premises or otherwise that may help with the provision of goods or services to people with disabilities
- What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing goods and services
- GreenUP's policies, practices and procedures relating to the customer service standard

Staff will be trained on policies, practices and procedures that affect the way goods and services are provided to people with disabilities as soon as practicable within the first month after s/he is assigned applicable duties. In addition, staff will also receive communication and/or be trained, as required, when changes are made to this policy and its related procedures and practices.

Evaluation

Evaluation of this policy and related procedures, as well as a review of any related feedback, will be done on at least an annual basis or earlier if necessary to improve GreenUP services.

We are committed to developing customer service policies that respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. Therefore, no changes will be made to this policy before considering the impact on people with disabilities. Any policy of GreenUP that does not respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities will be modified or removed.

Forms/Records

GreenUP maintains staff training records including dates when training is provided, the name and number of employees who received training related to accessible customer service.

Reference Materials

Ontario's [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005](#).