

Accessible Customer Service Policy

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Grade A is committed to providing excellent service to all customers, including those with disabilities. In accordance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) 2005, Grade A has developed a policy and process to ensure that individuals with disabilities have equal access to goods and services at Grade A, and that the service they receive is respectful of their dignity and independence.

Scope

- a) This policy applies to the provision of goods and services at premises owned and operated by Grade A.
- b) This policy applies to employees, volunteers, agents and/or contractors who deal with the public or other third parties that act on behalf of Grade A, including when the provision of goods and services occurs off the premises of Grade A such as in: delivery services, call centers, vendors, drivers, catering and third party marketing agencies.
- c) This policy shall also apply to all persons who participate in the development of the Grade A's policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of goods and services to members of the public or third parties.

General Principles

In accordance with the *Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07*, this policy addresses the following:

- A. The Provision of Goods and Services to Persons with Disabilities;
- B. The Use of Assistive Devices
- C. The Use of Guide Dogs, Service Animals and Service Dogs
- D. The Use of Support Persons
- E. Notice of Service Disruptions
- F. Customer Feedback
- G. Training
- H. Notice of Availability and Format of Required Documents

A. The Provision of Goods and Services to Persons with Disabilities

Grade A will make every reasonable effort to ensure that its policies, practices and procedures are consistent with the principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity by:

- ensuring that all customers receive the same value and quality;
- allowing customers with disabilities to do things in their own ways, at their own pace when accessing goods and services as long as this does not present a safety risk;

- using alternative methods when possible to ensure that customers with disabilities have access to the same services, in the same place and in a similar manner;
- taking into account individual needs when providing goods and services; and
- communicating in a manner that takes into account the customer's disability.

B. Assistive Devices

Persons with disabilities may use their own assistive devices as required when accessing goods or services provided by Grade A.

In cases where the assistive device presents a safety concern or where accessibility might be an issue, other reasonable measures will be used to ensure the access of goods and services.

C. Guide Dogs, Service Animals and Service Dogs

A customer with a disability that is accompanied by guide dog, service animal or service dog will be allowed access to premises that are open to the public unless otherwise excluded by law. "No pet" policies do not apply to guide dogs, service animals and/or service dogs.

Allergies:

If a health and safety concern presents itself for example in the form of a severe allergy to the animal, Grade A will make all reasonable efforts to meet the needs of all individuals.

D. Support Persons

If a customer with a disability is accompanied by a support person, Grade A will ensure that both persons are allowed to enter the premises together and that the customer is not prevented from having access to the support person.

In situations where confidential information might be discussed, consent will be obtained from the customer, prior to any conversation where confidential information might be discussed.

E. Notice of Disruptions in Service

Service disruptions may occur due to reasons that may or may not be within the control or knowledge of Grade A. In the event of any temporary disruptions to facilities or services that customer's with disabilities rely on to access or use Grade A's goods or services, reasonable efforts will be made to provide advance notice. In some circumstances such as in the situation of unplanned temporary disruptions, advance notice may not be possible.

In the event that a notification needs to be posted the following information will be included unless it is not readily available or known:

- goods or services that are disrupted or unavailable
- reason for the disruption
- anticipated duration
- a description of alternative services or options

Notifications Options:

When disruptions occur Grade A will provide notice by:

- posting notices in conspicuous places including at the point of disruption, at the main entrance and the nearest accessible entrance to the service;
- contacting customers with appointments;
- verbally notifying customers when they are making a reservation or appointment; or
- by any other method that may be reasonable under the circumstances.

F. Feedback Process

Grade A shall provide customers with the opportunity to provide feedback on the service provided to customers with disabilities. Customers wishing to submit feedback may contact us:

- By calling Human Resources at 613-721-3331
- By e-mailing info@gradea.ca
- By speaking with a member of the management team
- By mailing written feedback to: 1701 Woodward Drive, 3rd Floor, Ottawa, Ontario, K2C 0R4. Attention: Human Resources

Customers that provide feedback will receive acknowledgement of their feedback, along with any resulting actions based on concerns or complaints that were submitted within 48 hrs.

G. Training

Training will be provided to:

- a) All employees, volunteers, agents and/or contractors who deal with the public or other third parties that act on behalf of Grade A; for example: salespersons, drivers, vendors, event operators, call centers and third party marketing agents; and,
- b) Those who are involved in the development and approval of customer service policies, practices and procedures.
- c) Grade A will provide training as soon as practicable. Training will be provided to new employees, volunteers, agents and/or contractor who deal with the public or act on our behalf (insert when such as, during orientation). Revised training will be provided in the event of changes to legislation, procedures and/or practices.
- d) Grade A will keep a record of training that includes the dates training was provided and the number of employees who attended the training.

Training Provisions:

As reflected in *Ontario Regulation 429/07*, regardless of the format, training will cover the following:

- A review of the purpose of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*.
- A review of the requirements of the *Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07*.
- Instructions on how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities.
- Instructions on how to interact with people with disabilities who:
 - use assistive devices;
 - require the assistance of a guide dog, service dog or other service animal; or
 - require the use of a support person (including the handling of admission fees).
- Instructions on how to use equipment or devices that are available at our premises or that we provide that may help people with disabilities.
- Instructions on what to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing your services.
- Grade A's policies, procedures and practices pertaining to providing accessible customer service to customers with disabilities.

Employees will also be trained when changes are made to our accessible customer service plan.

H. Notice of Availability and Format of Documents

Grade A shall notify customers that the documents related to the *Accessibility Standard for Customer Service* are available upon request and in a format that takes into account the customer's disability. Notification will be given by posting the information in a conspicuous place owned and operated by Grade A, the Grade A's website and/or any other reasonable method.

Administration

If you have any questions or concerns about this policy or its related procedures please contact Human Resources in person, by phone (613) 721-3331 or via e-mail at info@gradea.ca. This policy and its related procedures will be reviewed as required in the event of legislative changes.