

"May I Help You?"

Understanding Accessible Customer Service



Thank you to the City of Thunder Bay
for giving permission to adapt
their handbook for our use.

Background

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) was passed by the Ontario legislature with the goal of creating standards to improve accessibility across the province.

The AODA allows the government to develop specific standards of accessibility that are designed to help make Ontario more accessible.

One of the specific standards that has been developed, and made law, is the Accessible Customer Service Standard. This standard details specific requirements for all service providers.

The Municipality of Chapple Policy Statement

It is the policy of The Corporation of the Municipality of Chapple that citizens with disabilities achieve accessibility to the provision of goods and services by the Municipality to this community, consistent with the principles of independence, dignity, integration and equality of opportunity as set out in the regulations of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2005.

What is Accessible Customer Service?

Accessible customer service can mean many things. Mostly, it is the understanding that each individual may need a slightly different type of accommodation.

For example, a person who is blind may need to have information read aloud to them; an individual with a learning disability may need to have instructions written down; and someone who uses a wheelchair may need help in finding a route they can use. Accessible customer service is **good** customer service -- courteous, helpful and prompt.

Implementation of the Municipal Policy

Guide Dogs, Service Animals

If a person with a disability is accompanied by a guide dog or other service animal, the Municipality will permit the person to enter the premises with the animal and keep it with him or her, unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law from the premises. If the service animal or guide dog is excluded by law from the premises, the Municipality will look to other available measures to enable the person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the Municipality's' goods and services.

"Service Animal" is:

- An animal which is specially trained to assist an individual with disabilities.
- An animal is a "Service Animal" if it is readily apparent that the animal is used by a person with a disability for reasons relating to his or her disability, for example a guide dog wearing a harness.
- If it is not readily apparent that the animal is a Service Animal, then a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability is required.

Support Persons

If a person with a disability is accompanied by a support person, they are permitted to enter the premises together and are not prevented from having access to each other while on the premises. The Municipality may require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person while on its premises, but only if a support person is necessary to protect the health or safety of the person with a disability or the health or safety of others on the premises.

"Support Person" means:

- In relation to a person with a disability, another person who accompanies him or her in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs or with access to goods or services.
- May be a paid professional, a volunteer, a family member or a friend

Where fees for goods and services are advertised or promoted by the Municipality, it will provide advance notice of the amount payable, if any, in respect of the support person.

Operational Procedures of the Municipal Policy

Feedback Mechanism

The public can provide feedback on the accessibility of the provision of goods and services by the Municipality:

- (a) by mail addressed to: P.O. Box 4, Barwick, ON P0W 1A0
- (b) by phone at telephone: 487-2354
- (c) in person at: 54 Barwick Road
- (d) or by email at: chapple@tbaytel.net

Feedback will be responded to within three (3) business days of its receipt by the Municipal Office

Assistive Devices

If a person with a disability requires assistive devices to access goods or services of the Municipality, they are allowed to use such devices.

Disruption of Services

People with disabilities may often go to a lot of trouble to access services, such as booking transit or arranging a ride. By providing notice, you can save that person an unnecessary trip. Notice can be provided on the Municipal website, by telephone, or in writing. In the event of an unexpected disruption in service, provide notice in a variety of ways and as quickly as possible

If there is a temporary disruption in a particular facility or service used to allow a person with a disability to access goods or services, the Municipality will give notice of the disruption to the public by posting the reason for the disruption, the anticipated duration of the disruption, and alternative facilities or services that may be available. This posting will be in a conspicuous place on the premises of the Municipality, or

by other reasonable methods in the circumstances. If the disruption is anticipated, the Municipality will provide a reasonable amount of advance notice of the disruption. If the disruption is unexpected, notice will be provided as soon as possible.

What Else Can I Do?

Always start with people first. In language, that means saying “person with a disability”, rather than “a disabled person”. In any interaction, it means addressing the persons’ service needs, rather than focusing on the disability.

Lets’ take some time to understand the definition of different disabilities and some tips to assist you in providing accessible customer service.

Each point below defines a specific category of disability and outlines some tips to help you provide service to your customers.

HEARING DISABILITIES:

Definition:	Tips For Serving Customers:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deaf – severe to profound hearing loss • Hard of Hearing – a person who uses their residual hearing and speech to communicate • Deafened – caused to hear poorly or not at all 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attract customers’ attention before speaking – gentle touch on the shoulder or wave of your hand • Look directly at the person • Speak clearly, keep your hands away from your face • Reduce background noise • Ensure appropriate lighting

DEAFBLIND DISABILITY:

Definition:	Tips For Serving Customers:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cannot see or hear to some degree • Many will be accompanied by a support person (A professional who helps with communication by using Sign language that involves touching the hands of the client) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speak directly to your customer, not the support person • Identify yourself to the support person

INTELLECTUAL OR DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES:

Definition:	Tips For Serving Customers:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intellectual development and capacity that is below average • Can mildly or profoundly limit ability to learn, communicate, do everyday activities and live independently • May be an invisible disability • They may understand you more than you know 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't assume what customer can or cannot do • Use plain language • Take your time, be patient • Ask: "Do you understand this?" • Provide one piece of information at a time – step-by-step instructions • Offer information in simpler concepts

LEARNING DISABILITIES:

Definition:	Tips For Serving The Customer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affects how persons acquire, interprets, retains or takes in information • In many cases individual has average or above-average intelligence • May affect: 	

Most importantly, recognize your nervousness and relax! People with disabilities are generally aware they may need some accommodations and will work with you. Just remember to ask how you can help.

It is important to recognize that there are available internal & external resources for you to use to assist you in delivering service to persons with disabilities:

- Speak to your Team Leader, Supervisor and / or Manager
- Review the Government of Ontario Website: <http://www.accesson.ca>
- Review the Municipality of Chapple Website: www.chapple.on.ca
- The Bell Relay Service Operator is available to assist in placing or receiving calls to/from persons who use a TTY. There is no charge for local calls. To place a call through the BCRS (Bell Canada Relay Service), call: 1-800-855-0511. The Bell Relay Operator will ask if you have used this service in the past. If you have not, they will provide you with simple instructions on how to use the service.

To ensure that the Municipality of Chapple meets its obligations under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, Ontario Regulation 429/07, once you have read this handbook, you will complete all areas of this form, and give it to your supervisor who will send it to the CAO/Clerk-Treasurer.

QUIZ: (please circle correct answer)

- 1) The Accessibility for Ontarians With Disabilities Act (AODA) was passed in what year?
 - a) 2000
 - b) 2003
 - c) 2005
- 2) When you are dealing with a person with a disability and are unsure if they need help, you should?
 - a) Go ahead and help them – if they don't like it, they will say so.
 - b) Ignore them until you have time for them.
 - c) Always serve customers with disabilities away from other customers.
 - d) Ask “ May I help you?”
- 3) Which of the following statements is always true:
 - a) Older people are all hard of hearing.
 - b) Avoid touching a service animal without permission.
 - c) Support people are paid employees of persons with disabilities.
 - d) People who are blind cannot see anything.
- 4) Which statement about persons with disabilities is true:
 - a) Their disability might affect how they interact with you and it might not.
 - b) They all use assistive devices like a wheelchair or a hearing aid.
 - c) Their disability affects them with the same severity at all times.
 - d) All people with the same disability are affected in the same way.
- 5) If you need to communicate by telephone with a person who is Deaf, orally deaf, deafened, or hard of hearing, you can use the Relay service. Their phone # is
 - a) 911
 - b) 411
 - c) 1-800-855-0511
 - d) none of the above

NAME: _____ DEPARTMENT: _____

SIGNATURE: _____ SUPERVISORS SIGNATURE: _____

DATE OF TRAINING: _____ TIME OF TRAINING _____



