

Accessible Customer Service Policy

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 Process
- G. Training
- H. Notice of Availability and Format of Required Documents

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

Project SHARE 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. The Use of Assistive Devices

Customer's own assistive device(s):

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

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. For example, open flames and oxygen tanks cannot be near one another. Therefore, the accommodation of a customer with an oxygen tank may involve ensuring the customer is in a location that would be considered safe for both the customer and business. Or, where elevators are not present and where an individual requires assistive devices for the purposes of mobility, service will be provided in a location that meets the needs of the customer.

C. The Use of Guide Dogs, Service Animals and Service Dogs



Recognizing a Guide Dog, Service Dog and/or Service Animal:

If it is not readily apparent that an animal is being used by the client for reasons relating to his or her disability, Project SHARE may request verification from the customer, which may include:

- a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons related to the disability;
- a valid identification card signed by the Attorney General of Canada; or,
- a certificate of training from a recognized guide dog or service animal training school.

Care and Control of the Animal:

The customer that is accompanied by a guide dog, service dog and/or service animal is responsible for maintaining care and control of the animal at all time.

Allergies:

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

Exclusion Guidelines:

If a guide dog, service animal or service dog is excluded by law (see applicable laws below) Project SHARE will offer alternative methods to enable the person with a disability to access goods and services, when possible (for example, securing the animal in a safe location and offering the guidance of an employee).

Applicable Laws:

Food Safety and Quality Act 2001, Ontario Regulation 31/05: Animals not intended for slaughter or to be euthanized are not allowed in any area or room of a meat plant. It also makes an exception for service dogs to allow them in those areas of a meat plant where food is served, sold or offered for sale to customers and in those areas that do not contain animals or animal parts and are not used for the receiving, processing, packaging, labelling, shipping, handling or storing of animals or parts of animals.

The *Health Protection and Promotion Act, Ontario Regulation 562 Section 60*, normally does not allow animals in places where food is manufactured, prepared, processed, handled, served, displayed, stored, sold or offered for sale. It does allow guide dogs and service dogs to go into places where food is served, sold or offered for sale. However, other types of service animals are not included in this exception.

Dog Owners' Liability Act, Ontario: If there is a conflict between a provision of this Act or of a regulation under this or any other Act relating to banned breeds (such as Pitbull's) and a provision of a by-law passed by a municipality relating to these breeds, the provision that is more restrictive in relation to controls or bans on these breeds prevails.

D. The Use of Support Persons



If a customer with a disability is accompanied by a support person, Project SHARE 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 Project SHARE. In the event of any temporary disruptions to facilities or services that customer's with disabilities rely on to access or use of our 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.

Notifications will Include:

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 and anticipated duration
- a description of alternative services or options

Notifications Options:

When disruptions occur Project SHARE will provide notice by:

- posting notices in conspicuous places, at the main office front door entrance and/or on the Project SHARE website;
- contacting customers with appointments;
- by any other method that may be reasonable under the circumstances.

F. Customer Feedback Process

Project SHARE shall provide customers with the opportunity to provide feedback on the service provided to customers with disabilities. Feedback may be provided verbally (in person or by telephone) or written (hand written, delivered, website or email), will be available upon request by submitting it to the Executive Director or through our website at.

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 Project SHARE; and,
- b) those who are involved in the development and approval of customer service policies, practices and procedures.

Training Provisions:



As reflected in *Ontario Regulation 429/07*, 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.
- Policies, procedures and practices pertaining to providing accessible customer service to customers with disabilities.

Training Schedule:

Project SHARE 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 during orientation. Revised training will be provided in the event of changes to legislation, procedures and/or practices.

Record of Training:

Project SHARE will keep a record of training that includes the dates training was provided and the number of employees who attended the training.

H. Notice of Availability and Format of Documents

Project SHARE shall notify customers that the documents related to the *Accessibility Standard for Customer Service* are available upon request and in a format that considers the customer's disability. Notification will be given by posting the information in a conspicuous place on our website.