



Customer Service Accessibility Policy and Plan

1. Policy Statement

Somerville Merchandising Inc. is committed to excellence in providing a respectful, welcoming, accessible and inclusive environment for all customers and employees.

We will strive to make certain that the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), 2005, and the standards of all relevant legislation concerning equity and accessibility are observed and adhered to. Somerville will make every effort to ensure that all employees are aware of their rights and responsibilities in fostering an accessible and inclusive environment for persons with disabilities.

Persons with disabilities will be given an equal opportunity to obtain, use and benefit from Somerville's products and services in a way that is respectful of their dignity and independence, and which takes into account the individual's disability. All goods and services provided by Somerville will follow the principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity.

2. Purpose

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (the "AODA") is a Provincial Act with the purpose of developing, implementing and enforcing accessibility standards in order to achieve accessibility for persons with disabilities with respect to goods, services, facilities, accommodation, employment, buildings, structures and premises.

3. Definitions

Disability

(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, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech

impediment, 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.

Assistive Device

A device used to assist persons with disabilities in carrying out activities or in accessing the services of persons or organizations covered by the Customer Service Standard.

Guide Dog

A guide dog as defined in section 1 of the Blind Persons' Rights Act is a dog trained as a guide for a blind person and having qualifications prescribed by the regulations under the Blind Persons' Rights Act.

Service Animal

Any animal used by a person with a disability for reasons relating to the disability where it is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to his or her disability; or where the person provides a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that he or she requires the animal for reasons relating to his or her disability; or 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.

Support Person

A person who accompanies a person with a disability in order to assist him or her with communication, mobility, personal care, or medical needs or with access to goods or services.

4. General Principles

The City of London will use reasonable efforts to ensure that its policies, practices and procedures are consistent with the following principles:

- the City's goods and services are provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities;
- the provision of the City's goods and services to persons with disabilities are integrated with those provided to persons who do

not have disabilities unless an alternative measure is necessary to enable a person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the City's goods or services and,

- persons with disabilities are given an opportunity equal to that of persons without disabilities to obtain, use or benefit from the City's goods and services.

b. Communication with Persons with Disabilities

When communicating with a person with a disability, the City will do so in a manner that takes into account the person's disability.

c. Notice of Temporary Disruptions in Services and Facilities

The City is aware that the operation of its services and facilities is important to the public. However, temporary disruptions in the City's services and facilities may occur due to reasons that may or may not be within the City's control or knowledge.

The City will make reasonable effort to provide notice of the disruption to the public, including information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if any, that may be available. The City will make reasonable effort to provide prior notice of planned disruption if possible, recognizing that in some circumstances such as in the situation of unplanned temporary disruption, advance notice will not be possible. In such cases, the City will provide notice as soon as possible.

When temporary disruptions occur to the City's services or facilities, the City will provide notice by posting the information in visible places, or on the City's website (www.london.ca), or by any other method that may be reasonable under the circumstances as soon as reasonably possible.

d. Assistive Devices and other Measures that Assist with Accessibility

A person with a disability may provide their own assistive device for the purpose of obtaining, using and benefiting from the City's goods and services. Exceptions may occur in situations where the City has determined that the assistive device may pose a risk to the health and safety of a person with a disability or the health and safety of others on the premises.

In these situations and others, the City may offer a person with a disability other reasonable measures to assist him or her in obtaining, using and benefiting from the City's goods and services, where the City has such other measures available.

It should be noted that it is the responsibility of the person with a disability to ensure that his or her assistive device is operated in a safe and controlled manner at all times.

e. Service Animals

Persons with a disability may enter premises owned and operated, or operated, by the City accompanied by a service animal and keep the animal with them if the public has access to such premises and the animal is not otherwise excluded by law. If a service animal is excluded by law, the City will ensure that alternate means are available to enable the person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the City's goods and services.

If it is not readily apparent that the animal is a service animal, the City may ask the person with a disability for a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to his or her disability. The City may also, or instead, ask for 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.

It should be noted that it is the responsibility of the person with a disability to ensure that his or her service animal is kept in control at all times.

f. Support Persons

A person with a disability may enter premises owned and operated, or operated, by the City with a support person and have access to the support person while on the premises.

The City may require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person while on City premises in situations where it is necessary to protect the health or safety of the person with a disability or the health and safety of others on the premises.

A support person, when assisting a person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the City's goods and services, will be permitted to attend at no charge where an admission fee is applicable.

g. Feedback

The City of London is committed to providing high quality goods and services to all members of the public it serves. Feedback from the public is welcomed as it may identify areas that require change and encourage continuous service improvements.

Feedback from a member of the public about the delivery of goods and services to persons with disabilities may be given by telephone, in person, in writing, in electronic format or through other methods.

Information about the feedback process will be readily available to the public and notice of the process will be posted on the City's website (www.london.ca) and/or in other appropriate locations.

h. Training

The City will ensure that all persons to whom this policy applies receive training as required by the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service. The amount and format of training given will be tailored to suit each person's interactions with the public and his or her involvement in the development of policies, procedures and practices pertaining to the provision of goods and services.

The content of the training will include:

- a review of the purposes of the AODA;
- the requirements of the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service

instruction on the City's policies, procedures and practices pertaining to the provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities;

- how to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disabilities;
- what to do if a person with a particular type of disability is having difficulty accessing the City's goods or services;
- how to interact with persons with disabilities who use assistive devices or who require the assistance of a support person or service animal; and
- information about the equipment or devices available on the City's premises that may help with the provision of goods or services to persons with disabilities.

Timeline for Training

Training will be provided as soon as practicable upon an individual being assigned the applicable duties as well as on an ongoing basis as changes occur to the City's policies, procedures and practices governing the provision of goods or services to persons with disabilities.

Records of Training

The City will keep records of the training, including the date on which training is provided and the number of individuals to whom it is provided. The names of individuals trained will be recorded for training administration purposes, subject to the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*