

Background

Ontario has an important law called the “Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act – 2005” – this is the first of its kind in Canada. Its predecessor, the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA), was introduced to improve opportunities for people with disabilities and to provide for their involvement in the identification, removal and prevention of barriers to their full participation in life in the province. To this end, the ODA mandated that each municipality prepare an annual Accessibility Plan. Ours is available on the township website at www.terracebay.ca/AODA or copies are available at the Municipal Office.

People with disabilities should have the same kind of opportunities as everyone else. They should be able to do the things that most of us take for granted like going to work or school, shopping, taking in a movie or eating out at a restaurant.

That’s the goal of Ontario’s Legislation. Businesses and organizations who provide goods and services to people in Ontario will be required to meet certain accessibility standards in five important areas of our lives. These include:

1. Customer Service
2. Transportation
3. Information and Communications
4. Built Environment
5. Employment

Accessible Customer Service

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

Accessible Customer Service follows four basic principles:

1. Dignity
2. Independence
3. Integration
4. Equal Opportunity

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; someone who uses a wheelchair may need help in finding a route they can use; and there may be customers that have difficulty reading or writing.

Township of Terrace Bay Accessible Customer Services Standard Policy -

The Township strives to provide services to all residents and visitors, including those with disabilities. Through our Accessible Customer Service Standard Policy, the Municipality will make reasonable efforts to ensure the following:

- Goods and services will be provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities;
- The provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities and others that will be integrated unless an alternate measure is necessary. Whether temporary or permanent, these measures should enable a person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the goods and services;
- Persons with disabilities will be given an opportunity equal to that given to others to obtain, use or benefit from the goods and services; and
- Persons with disabilities may use assistive devices and/or support persons in the access of goods and services.

Treat all customers with dignity and respect

Disruption of Services

If there is a temporary disruption in a particular facility or service used to allow a person with a disability to access the Township’s goods or services, the Township will give notice of the disruption, the facility affected, and the date and expected length of the disruption. Notice may be provided in any of the following formats:

- Posted notices at the affected facility, Municipal Office, Community Centre or Cultural Centre, and on the Township’s website.
- Announcements through the local media
- Announcements on the Township’s voicemail system; and/or
- Phoning persons with a disability, known to use the facility or services, that are likely to be affected.

How May I Help You?

People with disabilities are generally aware they may need some accommodations and will work with you. Just remember to ask how you can help.

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 person’s service needs, rather than focusing on the disability.

Disabilities are not always visible or easy to distinguish. Following are a few examples of guidelines you can use to provide service to customers with disabilities.

A person who is Deaf, deafened or hard of hearing: Attract customer’s attention before speaking by a touch on shoulder or a wave of your hand; look directly at the person when speaking.

A person with a visual disability: Don’t assume the customer can’t see you at all, speak directly to the customer; offer your elbow to guide; if they accept, walk slowly, wait for permission; identify landmarks; be precise and descriptive with information; do not leave the customer; if the customer has a guide dog, do not touch or talk to the dog.

A person with a mental health disability: Treat the customer with the same level of dignity, respect and consideration as anyone else; take

the customer seriously; be confident and reassuring; if the customer is in crisis, ask how best to help.

A person with a learning disability: Take your time, be patient; demonstrate a willingness to assist; speak normally, clearly and directly to the customer; provide information in a way that works for the customer (ie; use a pen and paper).

Some people may be nervous when serving a customer with a disability. It is very important to recognize your nervousness and just relax!

Assistive Devices at Township Facilities

Audio

The Library has visual and audio materials available for use. They provide users with large print books and magazines, a handicap computer station with large screen, and DAISY Readers for persons with visual and physical disabilities.. They have a partnership with CNIB. For more information contact the Library at 825-3315 ext. 222

Mobility

Service Animals

Service animals are welcome at all Township of Terrace Bay facilities. However, pets are prohibited under By-Law No. 94-04.

Support Persons

One-Person-One-Fare Policy

Any person attending a municipal recreation facility, program or event and who is accompanied by a support person, shall be charged only one fare for admission.

Feedback

The Township of Terrace Bay welcomes any comments on the provision of goods or services to people with disabilities.

Accessibility Working Group

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How May I Help You?



**The Corporation of the
Township of Terrace Bay**

Understanding Accessible Customer Service



How May I Help You?

www.terracebay.ca/AODA