

THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF WASAGA BEACH

BY-LAW #2009-115

A BY-LAW TO ADOPT ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS FOR CUSTOMER SERVICE POLICY, PRACTICES AND PROCEDURES

WHEREAS pursuant to *The Municipal Act, 2001*, S.O. 2001, c.25, as amended, the Council of a Municipality has the capacity, rights, powers and privileges of a natural person for the purpose of exercising its authority under this or any other Act, to enable them to govern their affairs as they consider appropriate and to enhance their ability to respond to municipal issues; and

WHEREAS pursuant the *Municipal Act, 2001, S.O. 2001, C. 25, as amended*, requires that a municipality's capacity, rights, powers and privileges, shall be exercised by by-law; and

WHEREAS pursuant to the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* Ontario Regulation 429/07, Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, prescribes that every provider of goods or services shall establish policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of its goods and services to persons with disabilities; and

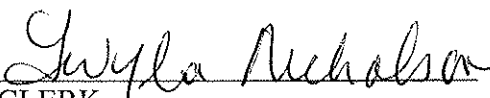
WHEREAS the Corporation of the Town of Wasaga Beach deems it advisable to adopt an Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Policy, Practices and Procedures;

NOW THEREFORE the Council of the Corporation of the Town of Wasaga Beach hereby enacts as follows:

1. **THAT** the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Policy, attached hereto as Appendix "A", be adopted.
2. **THAT** the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Practices and Procedures, attached substantially in the form of Appendix "B", be adopted and implemented.
3. **THAT** this By-Law shall come into force and take effect on the date of its final passing.

READ A FIRST, SECOND AND THIRD TIME AND PASSED THIS 22nd DAY OF DECEMBER, 2009.


MAYOR


CLERK



COUNCIL POLICY

ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS FOR CUSTOMER SERVICE

1. Background

The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA) is Provincial Legislation 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 on or before January 1, 2025.

One of the specific standards that has been developed, and made law, is the Accessible Standards for Customer Service. This standard came into force on January 1, 2008. This regulation establishes accessibility standards specific to customer service for public sector organizations and other persons or organizations that provide goods and services to members of the public or other third parties.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Policy is to fulfill the requirements set out in Regulation 429/07 to establish a policy for the Town of Wasaga Beach for governing the provision of goods or services to persons with disabilities. This policy addresses the following:

- The provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities;
- The use of assistive devices by persons with disabilities;
- The use of service animals by persons with disabilities;
- The use of support persons by persons with disabilities;
- Notice of temporary disruptions in services and facilities;
- Training;
- Customer feedback regarding the provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities;
- Notice of availability and format of document and meetings.

3. Policy Statement

The Town of Wasaga Beach is committed to providing exceptional and accessible service for its customers.

The Town of Wasaga Beach will use reasonable efforts to ensure that its policies, practices and procedures are consistent with the principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity to all of its customers. The 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 will be integrated wherever possible, unless an alternate measure is necessary, whether temporary or on a permanent basis, to enable a person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the goods and services.

Persons with disabilities will benefit from the same services, in the same place and in a similar way as other customers.

Persons with disabilities may use assistive devices and/or support persons or animals in the access of goods and services.

4. Application

This policy applies to all persons who deal with members of the public or other third parties on behalf of the Town of Wasaga Beach, whether the person is an employee of the Town of Wasaga Beach, a member of Council, an agent, a volunteer, Committee member, a student, seasonal staff or otherwise, and all persons who participate in developing the Town of Wasaga Beach's policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of goods and services to members of the public or third parties.

5. Definitions

Accessible shall mean capable of being entered or reached, approachable; easy to get at; capable of being influenced, obtainable; easy to understand or appreciate.

Assistive Device shall mean 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.

Customer shall mean any person who uses the goods and services provided by the Town of Wasaga Beach.

Disability: Shall mean:

- 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 deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or 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.

Dignity shall mean respecting and treating every person including persons with a disability as valued and as deserving of effective and full service as any other customer.

Independence shall mean freedom from control or influence of others, freedom to make your own choices.

Integration of services shall mean the integration of services that allow people with disabilities to fully benefit from the same service, in the same place and in the same or similar way as other customers. All policies, practices and procedures are designed to be accessible to everyone including people with disabilities.

Equal Opportunity shall mean having the same chances, options, benefits and results as others. People with disabilities have the same opportunity to benefit from the way you provide goods or services as others.

Guide Dog shall mean a dog trained as a guide for a person who is blind and having the qualifications prescribed by the regulations.

Goods and Services shall mean goods and services provided by the Corporation of the Town of Wasaga Beach.

Nurse shall mean a Registered Nurse or Registered Practical Nurse who is a registered member in good standing with the College of Nurses of Ontario.

Person with Disabilities shall mean those individuals that are afflicted with a disability as defined under the *Ontario Human Rights Code*.

Physicians shall mean a physician who is a registered member, in good standing with the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario.

Procedure shall mean the steps that Town of Wasaga Beach staff is expected to take to comply with the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Policy.

Practices shall mean how Town of Wasaga Beach staff will offer or deliver services.

Readily Apparent shall mean an animal which is a service animal when it is obvious by appearance or by what it is doing, i.e. wearing a harness, saddle bags, a sign identifying the animal as a service animal.

Service Animals are animals that are used as a service animal for a person with a disability. To be considered a service animal under the standard, it must either be readily apparent that the animal is being used because of a person's disability or the person with a disability must be prepared to show a letter from a doctor or nurse confirming that it is required for reasons relating to his or her disability.

Support Person shall mean any person whether a paid professional, volunteer, family member, or friend who accompanies a person with a disability in order to help provide service with communication, mobility, personal care, and medical needs or help with access to good or services.

6. Exclusions

This Policy shall not apply during any period where Council has declared a "State of Emergency" as defined under the *Emergency Management Act*.

7. Documentation

The Town of Wasaga Beach shall give a copy of the policies, practices and procedures required under Ontario Regulation 429/07 – Accessibility Standards for Customer Service to any person, in a format that takes into account the person's disability, upon request.

8. General Principles

8.1 Providing Goods and Service to People with Disabilities

The Town of Wasaga Beach is committed to excellence in serving all customers including people with disabilities and we will carry out our functions and responsibilities to ensure that its policies, practices and procedures are consistent with the following principles:

- a) The Town's goods and services are provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities;
- b) The provision of the Town'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 Town's goods or services and;
- c) Persons with disabilities are given an opportunity equal to that of persons without disabilities to obtain use or benefit from the Town's goods and services;
- d) Persons with disabilities may use assistive devices and/or support persons or animals in the access of goods and services.

8.2 Communication

- a) The Town will communicate with people with disabilities in a manner that will take into account their disability;
- b) Town staff will be trained on how to interact and communicate with customers with various types of disabilities;

- c) Customers with disabilities will be offered alternative communication formats that will meet the needs of the customer; and
- d) Documents will be provided to customers in an alternative format that will meet the needs of the customer in a timely fashion.

8.3 Use of Service Animals, Support Persons and Assistive Devices

a) Service Animal

The Town of Wasaga Beach is committed to welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal that is not in contravention of any law on the parts of our premises that are open to the public and other third parties and owned and operated by the Town of Wasaga Beach. If a service animal is excluded by law, the Town of Wasaga Beach will ensure that alternate means are available to enable the person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the Town's goods and services.

The Town of Wasaga Beach will also ensure that all staff, volunteers and others dealing with the public on behalf of the Town of Wasaga Beach are properly trained in how to interact with people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal.

b) Support Person

We are committed to welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person. Any person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person will be allowed to enter the Town's premises with his or her support person. At no time will a person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person be prevented from having access to his or her support person while on the Town of Wasaga Beach premises.

The Town of Wasaga Beach may require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person when receiving goods or service or participating in a program offered by the Town 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.

Fees will not be charged for one support person when a customer is accessing services where an admission fee is applicable and where a support service is required. Customers will be informed of this notice that will be posted within the Town of Wasaga Beach's premises and provided in alternate formats such as the Town's webpage, appropriate Town publications, i.e. Recreation Guide, and the Town's page in the local paper.

c) Assistive Devices

A person with a disability may provide their own assistive device for the purpose of obtaining, using and benefiting from the Town's goods and services. Exceptions may occur in situations where the Town 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, the Town may offer a person with a disability other reasonable measures to assist him or her in obtaining, using and benefiting from the Town's goods and services, where the Town 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.

The Town of Wasaga Beach will also ensure that staff is trained to use the following assistive devices for customers with disabilities; wheelchair, TTY, electronic communication devices, interpretive devices, and the internet.

8.4 Notice of Temporary Disruptions

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

The Town of Wasaga Beach will provide customers with notice in the event of a planned disruption in the facilities or services usually used by people with disabilities. In the event of an unplanned disruption of its facilities and services, the Town will make a reasonable effort to provide notice as soon as possible. In both cases, this notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available.

Records will be maintained containing dates of when Temporary Disruption Notices are posted.

When temporary disruptions occur to the Town's services or facilities, the Town will provide notice by posting the information in visible places and on the Town's website (www.wasagabeach.com) or by any other method that may be reasonable under the circumstances.

8.5 Staff Training on Customer Service

The Town of Wasaga Beach will provide customer service training in accordance with Ontario Regulation 429/07 which includes all employees, volunteers, Committees, elected officials and others who deal with the public or other third parties on behalf of the Corporation, and all those who are involved in the development and approvals of customer service policies, practices and procedures.

The training will be provided as soon as practicable upon an individual being assigned the applicable duties.

Training will include the following:

- i) Understanding the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* and the requirements of the customer service standards.
- ii) How to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities
- iii) How to interact with people with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or a support person.
- iv) What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing the Town's goods and services.

Applicable staff will be trained on policies, practices and procedures that affect the way goods and services are provided to people with disabilities. Staff will also be trained on an ongoing basis when changes are made to these policies, practices and procedures.

Records of training will be maintained containing name of staff person trained, date of training and type of training.

8.6 Accessibility of Meetings

The Town of Wasaga Beach will ensure that meetings held by the Corporation are accessible.

The Town of Wasaga Beach will take into consideration and provide alternate forms of communicating with persons with disabilities in attendance at meetings in alternative formats that takes into account their disability.

The Town of Wasaga Beach will provide meeting space that is an accessible physical environment and provide access to the meeting contents and proceedings.

8.7 Feedback Process

In accordance with Ontario Regulation 429/07, the Town of Wasaga Beach is committed to providing its customers with a feedback process to generate customer suggestions and complaints. This policy is a mechanism for customers to provide their suggestions, comments and complaints.

Feedback regarding the way the Town of Wasaga Beach provides goods and services to its customers and to people with disabilities can be made via:

- i) the Town's website at www.wasagabeach.com;
- ii) completion of feedback form submitted to the attention of the Clerk's Department;
- iii) in person.

8.8 Format of Town Documents

The Town of Wasaga Beach is committed to developing customer service policies that respect and promote the dignity and independence of its customers. The Town will provide any document produced by the Town in an alternative format upon request, unless it is not technically feasible to do so and subject to the provisions of the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

Requests for information in an alternative format are to be provided to the customer in a reasonable amount of time.

Alternative formats will include availability on the Town's website, large print versions of the document, a text only electronic file which can then be read by a computer or arrangements made for print in Braille.

8.9 Notice of the Availability of Documents

The Corporation of the Town of Wasaga Beach will provide notice that this policy is available for public viewing.

Questions regarding the policy or if the purpose of a policy is not understood, request for an explanation should be referred to the Town Clerk, 705-429-3844, ex 2223 or email to clerk@wasagabeach.com.

9.0 Practices and Procedures

To implement this policy, the Town shall:

- Establish practices and procedures;
- Evaluate practices and procedures;
- Revise practices and procedures as required.

10.0 Non-Compliance


Failure to comply with this policy may result in disciplinary action.

11.0 Review and Amendments

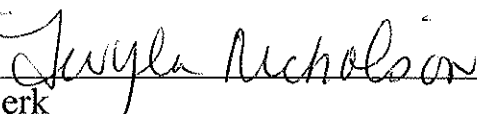
The Clerk shall be responsible for the review process and any subsequent amendments to this policy document. Review and amendments shall take place within the first year of each term of Council.

12.0 Adoption

Adopted by Council of the Corporation of the Town of Wasaga Beach this 22nd day of December, 2009.



Mayor



Clerk

**TOWN OF WASAGA BEACH
BEST PRACTICES AND PROCEDURES**

ACCESSIBLE STANDARDS FOR CUSTOMER SERVICE

Accessible customer service follows four basic principles:

- Dignity
- Independence
- Integration
- Equal Opportunity

What can I do to help people with disabilities access our services?

FEEDBACK

Feedback from our customers gives the Town of Wasaga Beach Council and staff opportunities to learn and improve. The Town recognizes the right of our customers to make a complaint, compliment or make suggestions on ways to improve our services.

To assist the Town of Wasaga Beach in ensuring that the delivery of goods and services to those with disabilities is provided in an effective and timely manner, the customer is invited to provide their feedback as follows:

In writing, in person, e-mail, or telephone, or on the Town's website, addressed to:

Town Clerk
Town of Wasaga Beach
30 Lewis Street
Wasaga Beach, ON L9Z 1A1
Tel: 705-429-3844 ex 2223
Fax: 705-429-6732
Email: clerk@wasagabeach.com
web: www.wasagabeach.com

The Clerk will respond either in writing, in person, e-mail or telephone acknowledging receipt of feedback and will set out the action to be taken in response to any complaints.

SERVICE ANIMALS/SUPPORT PERSON(S)

What about service animals and support persons accompanying a person with a disability?

Service animals, such as guide dogs, offer independence and security to many people with various disabilities. Some laws generally prohibit animals in certain areas – such as food preparation areas; however service animals are permitted in most public situations.

Support people assist people with disabilities in a variety of ways, by assisting with communication such as an intervener sign language interpreter, or as a Personal Support Worker providing physical assistance. A support person may also be a friend or relative that will assist and support the customer.

- Every employee shall use reasonable efforts to allow persons with disabilities to use their own assistive devices to access goods and/or services.
- Every employee shall allow persons with disabilities to be accompanied by their guide dog or service animal unless the animal is excluded by law. Where an animal is excluded by law from the premises, the reason why the animal is excluded shall be explained to the person with disabilities. Other reasonable arrangements to provide goods and services shall be explored with the assistance of the person with the disability.
- When a service animal is unruly or disruptive (jumping on people, biting, or other harmful behaviour) an employee may ask the person with the disability to remove the animal from the area or refuse access to goods or services. Other reasonable arrangements to provide goods or services shall be explored with the assistance of persons with the disability.
- To be considered a service animal under the standard, it must either be readily apparent that the animal is being used because of a person's disability or the person with a disability must be prepared to show a letter from a doctor or nurse confirming that it is required for reasons relating to his or her disability
- Persons with disabilities may be accompanied by their support person while accessing goods and/or services.

ADMISSION FEES – ADVANCE NOTICE

Fees will not be charged for one support person when a customer is accessing services where an admission fee is applicable and a support service is required. In the event that admission fees are charged, advance notice concerning what admission, if any, would be charged to additional support persons shall be posted in a conspicuous place.

SERVICE DISRUPTION – NOTICE

It is possible that from time to time there will be disruptions in service, such as an entrance way that is under repair, renovations that limit access to an area, transit or technology that is temporarily unavailable. If a disruption in service is planned, and expected, it is important to provide reasonable notice.

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 will be provided on the website, over the phone, or in writing.

UNEXPECTED DISRUPTION IN SERVICE – NOTICE

In the event of an unexpected disruption in service, notice may be provided in a variety of ways and will be done as quickly as possible.

In the event of a service disruption, alternative methods of service may be considered and those impacted by service interruption shall be informed of any alternative methods.

TRAINING

Training will be provided to:

- Every person who participates in developing the policy, practices and procedures under Ontario Regulation 429/07 – Accessibility Standards for Customer Service.
- Every person who deals with the public on behalf of the Town of Wasaga Beach, including third parties, employees, agents, volunteers, and Council.

- Current employees, agents, volunteers, committee members, elected officials, shall receive training by January 1, 2010.
- New employees, agents, volunteers, committee members, elected officials, shall receive training as soon as practicable, after being assigned.
- Ongoing training on changes to policies, procedures, and new equipments shall be provided.
- The method and amount of training shall be geared to the trainee's role in terms of accessibility.

TRAINING RECORDS

Training records shall be kept by the Town of Wasaga Beach, including the dates when the training is provided, and the name of individuals to whom the training was provided.

TERMINOLOGY

The following is an excerpt from the Ministry of Community and Social Services (http://www.mcsc.gov.on.ca/mcsc/english/how/howto_choose.htm)

Talk about Disabilities – Choose the Right Word

Words can influence and reinforce the public's perception of people with disabilities. They can create either a positive view of people with disabilities or an indifferent, negative depiction.

Here are some general tips that can help make your communication and interactions with or about people with all types of disabilities more successful.

- Use *disability or disabled*, not *handicap or handicapped*.
- Never use terms such as *retarded, dumb, psycho, moron or crippled*. These words are very demeaning and disrespectful to people with disabilities.
- Remember to put people first. It is proper to say *persons with a disability*, rather than *disabled person*.

- If you don't know someone or if you are not familiar with the disability, it's better to wait until the individual describes his/her situation to you, rather than to make your own assumptions. Many types of disabilities have similar characteristics and your assumptions may be wrong.

The following preferred words and phrases will help you choose language that is neither demeaning nor hurtful. People with disabilities prefer these terms.

Instead of	Please use
Afflicted by cerebral palsy, multiple sclerosis, arthritis, etc.	Person who has cerebral palsy. Person who has multiple sclerosis. Person who has arthritis, etc. Person with a disability.
Aged (the)	Seniors
Autistic	A person with autism. A person who has autism.
Birth defect, congenital defect, deformity	A person who has a congenital disability. A person with a disability since birth.
Blind (the), visually impaired (the)	A person who is blind. A person with a vision disability. A person with vision loss. A person with a visual impairment. A person with low vision.
Brain damaged	A person with a brain injury. A person with a head injury.
Confined to a wheelchair, wheelchair bound	A person who uses a wheelchair.
Crazy, insane, lunatic, psycho, mental, mental patient, maniac, neurotic, psychotic, unsound mind, schizophrenic	A person with a mental health disability. A person who has depression. A person with schizophrenia.
Cripple, crippled, lame	A person with a disability. A person with a mobility impairment or, more specifically, a person who walks with crutches. A person who uses a walker. A person who uses a mobility aid. A person with arthritis, etc.

Instead of	Please use
Deaf (the), hearing impaired (the)	<p>A person who is deaf (person with profound hearing loss who communicates using sign language).</p> <p>A person who is deafened (deaf later in life)</p> <p>A person who is hard of hearing (person with hearing loss who communicates primarily by speech)</p> <p>A person with a hearing loss.</p> <p>When referring to the deaf community and their culture (whose preferred mode of communication is sign language) it is acceptable to use “the Deaf”.</p>
Deaf and dumb, deaf mute	A person who is deaf without speech.
Deaf-Blind (the)	Person who is deaf-blind (person who has an combination of visual and auditory impairments).
Differently Abled	A person with a disability.
Disabled (the)	People with disabilities.
Elderly (the)	Seniors, older adults.
Epileptic	Person who has epilepsy.
Fits, spells, attacks	Seizures.
Handicapped (the)	<p>Person with a disability.</p> <p>The term handicapped may be used when referring to an environmental or attitudinal barrier as in “a person who is handicapped by a set of stairs leading to the entrance.”</p>
Hidden disability	Non-visible disability.
Invalid	Person with disability.
Learning disabled, learning disordered, the dyslexics	A person with a learning disability or people with learning disabilities.
Mentally retarded, idiot, simple, retarded, feeble minded, imbecile	<p>A person with an intellectual disability.</p> <p>A person with a development disability.</p>

Instead of	Please use
Midget, Dwarf	A person of short stature. A person who has a form of dwarfism. A little person. A person diagnosed with “Achondroplasia, SED, or what ever their specific diagnoses is”, a form of dwarfism.
Mongoloid, Mongolism	Person with Down Syndrome. One can use this terminology only when it is directly relevant. A person with an intellectual or developmental disability.
Normal	Person who is not disabled. Person who is able bodied. Specifically, a person who is sighted, a hearing person, a person who is ambulatory.
Patient	Person with a disability. The word patient may be used when referring to a relationship between and medical professional and a client.
Physically challenged	Person with a physical disability.
Spastic	Person who has muscle spasms.
Stutterer	A person with a speech impairment or impediment.
Victim of/suffer from /stricken with cerebral palsy, multiple sclerosis, arthritis, etc.	Person who has cerebral palsy. Person who has multiple sclerosis, etc. Person with a disability.
Visually impaired (the)	A person with a visual impairment. A person with low vision. A person with vision loss. A person with a vision disability.

For additional information visit the Ministry of Community and Social Services website at (<http://www.mcss.gov.on.ca/mcss>)

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

The following defines a specific category of disability and outlines some tips to help you provide service to your customers. 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 may I best help you?”**

PHYSICAL disabilities include a range of functional limitations from minor difficulties in moving or coordinating one part of the body, through muscle weakness, tremors, and paralysis. Physical disabilities can be congenital such as Muscular Dystrophy; or acquired, such as tendonitis. A physical disability may affect an individual’s ability to:

- Perform manual tasks such as holding a pen, turning a key or grip a door knob
- Move around independently
- Control the speed or coordination of movements
- Reach, pull or manipulate objects
- Have strength or endurance

Best practices and procedures for Customer Service:

There are many types and degrees of physical disabilities, and not all require a wheelchair. It may be difficult to identify a person with a physical disability.

Here are some tips on servicing customers who have physical disabilities:

- Speak normally and directly to your customer. Don’t speak to someone who is with them.
- People with physical disabilities often have their own way of doing things. **Ask before you help.**
- Wheelchairs and other mobility devices are part of a person’s personal space, don’t touch, move or lean on them.

- Provide your customer information about accessible features of the immediate environment (automatic doors, accessible washrooms, etc.).
- Keep ramps and corridors free of clutter.
- If a counter is too high or wide, step around it to provide service.
- If your customer cannot walk down or climb stairs, assist them with the lift or come to them.
- Provide seating for those that cannot stand in line.
- Be patient. Customers will identify their needs to you.

HEARING loss can cause problems in distinguishing certain frequencies, sounds or words. A person who is deaf, deafened or hard-of hearing may be unable to:

- Use a public telephone
- Understand speech in noisy environments
- Pronounce words clearly enough to be understood by strangers

Best practices and procedures for Customer Service

Like other disabilities, hearing loss has a wide variety of degrees. Remember, customers who are deaf or hard of hearing may require assistive devices when communicating. Here are some tips on servicing customers who are deaf or hard of hearing:

- Attract the customer's attention before speaking. The best way is a gentle touch on the shoulder or gently waving your hand.
- Always ask how you can help. Don't shout. Speak clearly.
- Be clear and precise when giving directions, and repeat or rephrase if necessary. Make sure you have been understood.
- Face the person and keep your hands and other objects away from your face and mouth.
- People who are deaf may use a sign language interpreter to communicate – always direct your attention to the person that is deaf – not the interpreter.
- Any personal (i.e. financial) matters should be discussed in a private room to avoid other people overhearing.
- If the person uses a hearing aid, try to speak in an area without competing sounds.
- If necessary, write notes back and forth to share information.
- Don't touch service animals – they are working and have to pay attention at all times.

DEAF-BLINDNESS is a combination of hearing and vision loss. The result for a person who is deaf-blind has significant difficulty accessing information and performing daily activities. Deaf-blindness interferes with communication, learning, orientation and mobility. People who are deaf-blind communicate using various sign language systems, Braille, telephone devices, communication boards and any combination thereof. Many people who are deaf-blind use the services of an Intervener who relay information and facilitate auditory and visual information and act as sighted guides.

Best practices and procedures for Customer Service:

Most people who are deaf-blind will be accompanied by an Intervener, a professional who helps with communicating. Interveners are trained in special sign language that involves touching the hands of the client in a two-hand, manual alphabet or finger spelling, and may guide and interpret for their client.

Here are some tips on serving customers who are deaf-blind:

- Do not assume what a person can or cannot do. Some people who are deaf-blind have some sight or hearing, while others have neither.
- A customer who is deaf-blind is likely to explain to you how to communicate with them or give you an assistance card or a note explaining how to communicate with them.
- Do not touch or address the service animals – they are working and have to pay attention at all times.
- Never touch a person who is deaf-blind suddenly or without permission unless it's an emergency.
- Understand that communication can take some time – be patient.
- Direct your attention to your customer, not the Intervener.

VISION disabilities reduce one's ability to see clearly. Very few people are totally blind. Many have limited vision such as tunnel vision, where a person has a loss of peripheral or side vision, or a lack of central vision, which means they cannot see straight ahead. Some can see the outline of objects while others can see the direction of light. Vision loss can result in:

- Difficulty reading or seeing faces.
- Difficulty maneuvering in unfamiliar places.
- Inability to differentiate colours or distances.

- A narrow field of vision.
- The need for bright light, or contrast.
- Night blindness

Best practices and procedures for Customer Service:

Vision disabilities can restrict your customers' abilities to read signs, locate landmarks or see hazards. In some cases, it may be difficult to tell if a person has a vision disability. Others may use a guide dog or white cane.

Here are some tips on serving customers who have vision disabilities:

- Verbally identify yourself before making physical contact.
- If the person uses a service animal – do not touch or approach the animal – it is working.
- Verbally describe the setting, form, location as necessary.
- Offer your arm to guide the person. Do not grab or pull.
- Never touch your customer without asking permission, unless it is an emergency.
- Don't leave your customer in the middle of a room. Show them to a chair, or guide them to a comfortable location.
- Don't walk away without saying good-bye.

INTELLECTUAL disabilities affect a person's ability to think and reason. It may be caused by genetic factors such as Down Syndrome, exposure to environmental toxins, such as Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, brain trauma or psychiatric disorders. A person with an intellectual disorder may have difficulty with:

- Understanding spoken and written information
- Conceptual information
- Perception of sensory information
- Memory

Best practices and procedures for Customer Service:

People with intellectual or developmental disabilities may have difficulty doing many things most of us take for granted. These disabilities can mildly or profoundly limit one's ability to learn. You may not be able to know that someone has this disability unless you are told, or you notice the way people act, ask questions or use body language.

As much as possible, treat your customers with an intellectual or developmental disability like anyone else. They may understand more than you think, and they will appreciate you treating them with respect.

Here are some tips on serving customers who have an intellectual or developmental disability:

- Don't assume what a person can or cannot do.
- Use clear, simple language.
- Be prepared to explain and provide examples regarding information.
- Remember that the person is an adult and unless you are informed otherwise, can make their own decisions.
- Be patient and verify your understanding.
- If you can't understand what is being said, don't pretend. Just ask again.
- Provide one piece of information at a time.
- Speak directly to your customer, not to their companion or attendant.

SPEECH disabilities involve the partial or total loss of the ability to speak. Typical disabilities include problems with:

- Pronunciation
- Pitch and loudness
- Hoarseness or breathiness
- Stuttering or slurring

Best practices and procedures for Customer Service:

Some people have problems communicating. It could be the result of cerebral palsy, hearing loss, or another condition that makes it difficult to pronounce words, causes slurring or stuttering, or not being able to express oneself or understand written or spoken language. Some people who have several difficulties may use communication boards or other assistive devices.

Here are some tips on serving customers with speech or language impairments:

- If possible communicate in a quiet environment.
- Give the person your full attention. Don't interrupt or finish their sentences.
- Ask them to repeat as necessary, or to write their message.
- If you are able, ask questions that can be answered "yes" or "no".

- Verify your understanding.
- Patience, respect and willingness to find a way to communicate are your best tools.

LEARNING disabilities include a range of disorders that affect verbal and non-verbal information acquisition, retention, understanding and processing. People with a learning disability have average or above average intelligence, but take in and process information and express knowledge in different ways. Learning disabilities can result in:

- Difficulties in reading
- Problem solving
- Time management
- Way finding
- Processing information

Best practices and procedures for Customer Service:

- Learning disabilities are generally invisible and ability to function varies greatly – respond to any requests for verbal information, assistance in filling in forms and so on with courtesy.
- Allow extra time to complete tasks if necessary.

MENTAL HEALTH disabilities include a range of disorders; however, there are three main types of mental health disability:

- Anxiety
- Mood
- Behavioural

People with mental health disabilities may seem edgy or irritated; act aggressively; be perceived as pushy or abrupt; be unable to make a decision; start laughing or get angry for no apparent reason.

Best practices and procedures for Customer Service:

- Treat each person as an individual. Ask what would make him/her the most comfortable and respect his/her needs to the maximum extent possible.
- Try to reduce stress and anxiety in situations.

- Stay calm and courteous, even if the customer exhibits unusual behaviour, focus on the service they need and how you can help.

SMELL disabilities can involve the inability to sense smells or a hypersensitivity to odors and smells. A person with a smelling disability may have allergies to certain odors, scents or chemicals or may be unable to identify dangerous gases, smoke, fumes and spoiled food.

TOUCH disabilities can affect a person's ability to sense texture, temperature, vibration or pressure. Touch sensations may be reduced or heightened resulting in a hypersensitivity to touch, temperature, or the opposite, numbness and the inability to feel touch sensations.

TASTE disabilities can limit the experience of the four primary taste sensations; sweet, bitter, salty and sour. A person with a taste disability may be unable to identify spoiled food or noxious substances.

OTHER disabilities result from a range of other conditions, accidents, illnesses and diseases including ALS, asthma, diabetes, cancer, HIV/AIDs, environmental sensitivities, seizure disorders, heart disease, stroke and joint replacement.

Disabilities are not always visible or easy to distinguish.

December 22, 2009



SAMPLE FORMS

1. Notice – Admission Fees
2. Notice – Expected service disruption
3. Notice – Unexpected disruption in service
4. Notice – Training Record



NOTICE

ADMISSION FEES

Fees will not be charged for one support person when a customer is accessing services where an admission fee is applicable and require a support service.

Admission fee shall be charged to additional “support persons” accompanying persons with disabilities. The cost will be \$_____.

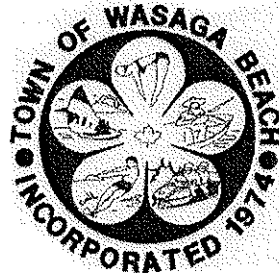
Definitions:

Person with Disabilities shall mean those individuals that are afflicted with a disability as defined under the *Ontario Human Rights Code*.

Support Person shall mean any person whether a paid professional, volunteer, family member, friend who accompanies a person with a disability in order to help provide service with communication, mobility, personal care, and medical needs or with access to good or services.

For more information, please contact:

Twyla Nicholson, CMM111
Town Clerk
Town of Wasaga Beach
30 Lewis Street
Wasaga Beach, ON L9Z 1A1
Tel: 705-429-3844 ex 2223
Fax: 705-429-6732
Email: clerk@wasagabeach.com
web: www.wasagabeach.com



NOTICE

SERVICE DISRUPTION

There will be a scheduled service disruption at the Town of Wasaga Beach Municipal Offices. The disruptions include:

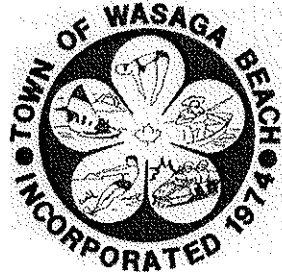
- _____ repairs to doors
- _____ repairs to technology
- _____ repairs to lift
- _____ Other

As an alternative, we would suggest the following:

On behalf of the Town of Wasaga Beach we would like to thank you for your patience in this matter.

For further information, please contact:

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Town of Wasaga Beach
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Wasaga Beach, ON L9Z 1A1
Tel: 705-429-3844 ex 2223
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web: www.wasagabeach.com



NOTICE

SERVICE DISRUPTION

There is currently an unexpected service disruption at the Town of Wasaga Beach Municipal Offices. The estimated time of the service disruption will be from _____ to _____. The disruptions include:

- _____ repairs to doors
- _____ repairs to technology
- _____ repairs to lift

As an alternative, we would suggest the following:

On behalf of the Town of Wasaga Beach we would like to thank you for your patience in this matter.

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