

ST. LEONARD'S COMMUNITY SERVICES

Function: Regulations
Policy: 3-61 Accessibility Standards: Client Service
CCA Standard(s):
Approved: Approved October 26, 2017

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REGULATIONS

3-61 ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS: CLIENT SERVICE

Approved October 26, 2017

POLICY

The Agency will meet the requirements of the Customer Service Standards included in the Integrated Accessibility Standards set forth under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* ("AODA") and will provide accessible services to the public or other third parties for persons with disabilities. With all client services, the Agency will follow the principals of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity.

PROCEDURE

Definitions

Assistive Device - Is a technical aid, communication device or other instrument that is used to maintain or improve the functional abilities of people with disabilities. Personal assistive devices are typically devices that clients bring with them (such as a wheelchair, walker, or a personal oxygen tank) that might assist them in hearing, seeing, communicating, moving, breathing, remembering and/or reading.

Disability - The term disability as defined by the AODA and the *Ontario Human Rights Code*, refers to:

- 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;
- A condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability;
- A learning disability, or dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language;
- A mental disorder; or
- An injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997*.

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Guide Dog - Is a highly-trained working dog that has been trained at one of the facilities listed in Ontario Regulation 58 under the *Blind Persons' Rights Act*, to provide mobility, safety and increased independence for people who are blind.

Service Animal - An animal is a service animal for a person with a disability if:

1. the animal can be readily identified as one that is being used by the person for reasons relating to the person's disability, as a result of visual indicators such as the vest or harness worn by the animal; or
2. the person provides documentation from one of the following regulated health professionals confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability:
 - A member of the College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists of Ontario;
 - A member of the College of Chiropractors of Ontario;
 - A member of the College of Nurses of Ontario;
 - A member of the College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario;
 - A member of the College of Optometrists of Ontario;
 - A member of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario;
 - A member of the College of Physiotherapists of Ontario;
 - A member of the College of Psychologists of Ontario; or
 - A member of the College of Registered Psychotherapists and Registered Mental Health Therapists of Ontario.

Service Dog - As reflected in *Health Protection and Promotion Act, Ontario Regulation 562* a dog other than a guide dog for the blind is a service dog if:

- It is readily apparent to an average person that the dog functions as a service dog for a person with a medical disability; or
- The person who requires the dog can provide on request a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires a service dog.

Support Person - In relation to a person with a disability, another person who accompanies them in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care, medical needs or access to goods and services.

Provision of Services to Persons with Disabilities

The Agency 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:

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- Ensuring that all clients receive the same value and quality;
- Allowing clients with disabilities to do things in their own ways, at their own pace when accessing services as long as this does not present a safety risk;
- Using alternative methods when possible to ensure that clients with disabilities have access to the same services, in the same place and in a similar manner;
- Taking into account individual needs when providing services; and
- Communicating in a manner that takes into account the client's disability.

Use of Assistive Devices

Client's Own Assistive Device(s)

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

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 services. For example, open flames and oxygen tanks cannot be near one another. Therefore, the accommodation of a client with an oxygen tank may involve ensuring the client is in a location that would be considered safe for both the client and facility. 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 client.

Assistive Devices Provided by the Agency

The Agency currently possesses the following assistive devices in certain public areas, for example:

- Larger monitors
- High-contrast keyboards
- Portable tablets

Guide Dogs, Service Animals and Service Dogs

A client with a disability that is accompanied by guide dog, service animal or service dog will be allowed access to premises that are open to the public unless otherwise excluded by law. "No pet" policies do not apply to guide dogs, service animals and/or service dogs.

Exclusion Guidelines

If a guide dog, service animal or service dog is excluded by law (see applicable laws below) the Agency will offer alternative methods to enable the person with a disability

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to access services, when possible (for example, securing the animal in a safe location and offering the guidance of a staff member).

Applicable Laws

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 pitbulls) 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.

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

If it is not readily apparent that the animal is being used by the client for reasons relating to their disability, the Agency may request verification from the client.

Care and Control of the Animal

The client who 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, the Agency will make all reasonable efforts to meet the needs of all individuals.

Guide/Service Dogs in Residences

Dogs who will accompany clients in program must graduate from a recognized training centre and have supporting documentation that defines their role. No other dogs should be on site at the residential programs.

Guide and service dogs are working dogs. There are strict guidelines for access to the dog in terms of handling and interaction. Staff training will be necessary prior to any dog attending a residential program with their owner.

Any request for the participation of a guide or service dog must be accompanied by the following documentation:

- certification that the dog is a graduate of a recognized training centre
- immunization record
- dietary needs
- how to handle the dog and their grooming needs
- how to handle the dog during off duty times

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- a commentary outlining expectations with respect to staff and other clients interacting with the dog
- and a signed authorization with respect to the dog being on the property and participating in community activities

Use of Support Persons

If a client with a disability is accompanied by a support person, the Agency will ensure that both persons are allowed to enter the premises together and that the client is not prevented from having access to the support person.

There may be times where seating and availability prevent the client and support person from sitting beside each other. In these situations, the Agency will make every reasonable attempt to resolve the issue.

In situations where confidential information might be discussed, consent will be obtained from the client, prior to any conversation where confidential information might be discussed.

Admission Fees

Where the Agency requires a support person to accompany a person with a disability, and where the person with a disability has agreed to the accompaniment, the Agency will not charge the support persons any fees or fares.

Notice of Disruptions in Service

Service disruptions may occur due to reasons that may or may not be within the control or knowledge of the Agency. In the event of any temporary disruptions to facilities or services that clients with disabilities rely on to access or use the Agency's 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.

In the event that a notification needs to be posted the following information will be included unless it is not readily available or known:

- Services that are disrupted or unavailable;
- Reason for the disruption;
- Anticipated duration; and
- A description of alternative services or options.

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Notifications will be posted at the main entrance, accessible entrance and/or the Agency's website. Every effort will be made to contact clients with scheduled appointments.

Client Feedback

The Agency will provide clients with the opportunity to provide feedback on the service provided to clients with disabilities. Information about the feedback process will be readily available to all clients and notice of the process will be made available by consultation with the client's counsellor and/or on the Agency's website. Feedback forms along with alternate methods of providing feedback such as verbally (in person or by telephone) or written (hand written, delivered, website or email), will be available upon request.

Submitting Feedback

Clients can submit feedback to:
St. Leonard's Community Services Inc.
P.O. Box 638
Brantford, ON N3T 5P9
Phone: (519) 759-8830
Fax: (519) 759-8156
info@st-leonards.com

Clients who wish to provide feedback by completing an onsite customer feedback form or verbally can do so to their counsellor.

Clients who provide formal feedback will receive acknowledgement of their feedback, along with any resulting actions based on concerns or complaints that were submitted, within two weeks of submission.

Training

Training will be provided to:

- All staff, students and volunteers of the Agency;
- All staff who participate in developing the Agency's policies; and
- Any other person who provides goods, services or facilities on behalf of the Agency.

Training Provisions

Regardless of the format, training will cover the following:

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- A review of the purpose of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*.
- A review of the requirements of the Customer Service Standards.
- 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 the Agency's services.
- The Agency's policies, procedures and practices pertaining to providing accessible client service to customers with disabilities.

Training Schedule

The Agency will provide training as soon as practicable. Training will be provided to new staff, students, volunteers, agents and/or contractors during orientation. Revised training will be provided in the event of changes to legislation, procedures, policies, and/or practices.

Record of Training

The Agency will keep a record of training that includes the dates training was provided and the number of staff who attended the training.

Notice of Availability and Format of Documents

The Agency will notify clients that the documents related to the Customer Service Standards are available upon request and in a format that takes into account the client's disability. Notification will be given by posting the information in a conspicuous place owned and operated by the Agency, on the Agency's website and/or any other reasonable method.

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Administration

If you have any questions or concerns about this policy or its related procedures, please contact the Human Resources Manager at:

(519) 759-8830

P.O. Box 638

Brantford, ON N3T 5P9

info@st-leonards.com

This policy and its related procedures will be reviewed as required in the event of legislative changes, or changes to company procedures.