



Accessible Customer Service (CS)

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)

Overview – Module 1

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Welcome

Why are you taking this training?

- Mandatory training under Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)
- The objectives of the Common Purpose support the objectives of the AODA in serving our customers, in that our customers:
 - have a positive experience with us, every time
 - are always a central part of decision making
 - get what they need
 - are satisfied with the amount of time it took to get the service
 - are treated fairly
 - are aware and informed about our services and how to access them
 - are satisfied with the service they receive regardless of the outcome
- Failure to comply with an Order issued under the AODA Regulation will result in a \$100,000/day fine.



Accessibility Standards for Customer Service

Several acronyms or references will be used in this presentation such as:

- ODA – Ontarians with Disabilities Act
- AODA – Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act
- Regulation – Accessible Standards for Customer Service – O. Reg. 429/07
- OHRC – Ontario Human Rights Code
- Ministry – the Ministry of Community and Social Services



Accessibility Standards for Customer Service

What will you learn?

- Purpose of the AODA
- Accessible Customer Service Standard and Policy By-law No. 28/2009
 - a) Serving customers with disabilities
 - b) Service animals
 - c) Support persons
 - d) Assistive devices
 - e) What to do if a customer with a disability is experiencing difficulties in accessing your programs, services or facilities



The Purpose of the AODA

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA - “the act”) sets out Regulations/Standards in key areas:

- Customer service
- Transportation
- Information and communications
- Employment
- Built environment



The Purpose of the AODA

What do these regulations accomplish?

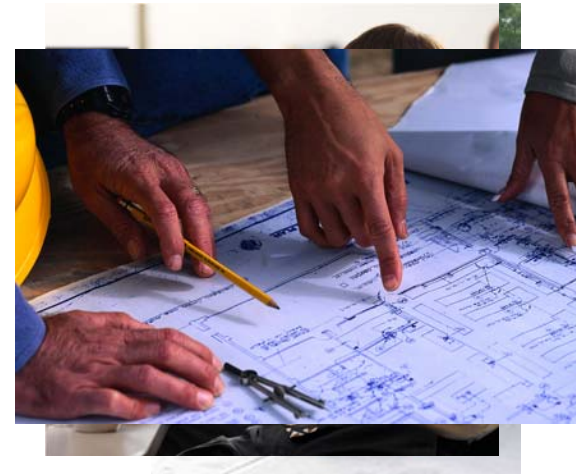
- Equal participation opportunities for all Ontarians including Ontarians with disabilities.
- Greater involvement of people with disabilities in all areas of daily life.
- Greater economic contributions by persons with disabilities.



The Purpose of the AODA

Facts to Remember

- The goal of the AODA is to achieve accessibility for Ontarians with disabilities by the year 2025
- The AODA establishes five accessibility standards:
 - Customer service
 - Transportation
 - Information and communications
 - Employment
 - Built environment

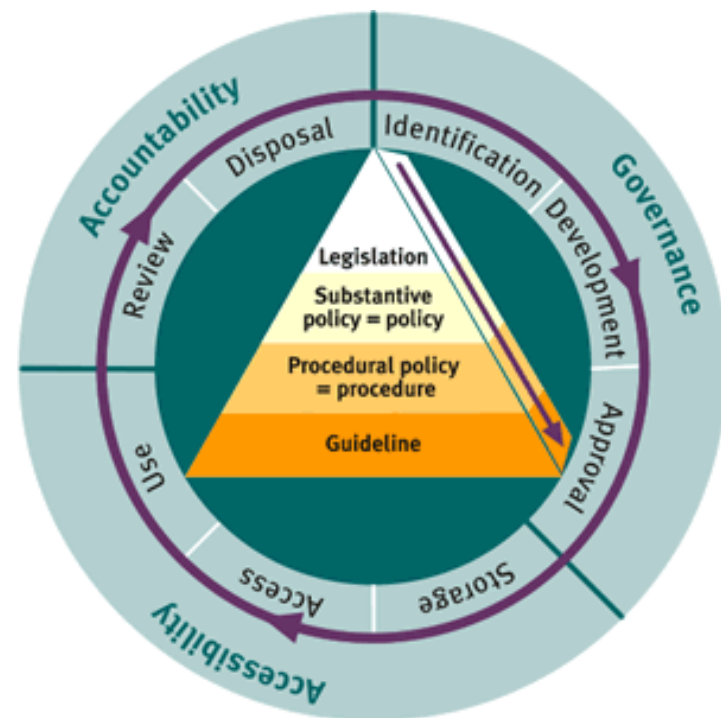




The Accessible Customer Service Policy By-law No. 28/2009

The AODA requires employers to have policies, practices, and procedures to address the following:

- Assistive devices
- Communication
- Service animals
- Support persons
- Service disruptions
- Training of staff
- Notice of Service Disruption
- Feedback





The Accessible Customer Service Policy

Key Principles

- Dignity
- Independence
- Equity/Equality of Outcome
- Integration



Policy, Practices and Procedures

The Accessible Customer Service Policy By-law No. 28/2009 establishes the following key principles for the delivery of customer service.

- Dignity
- Independence
- Equity/Equality of Outcome
- Integration
- Sensitivity
- Responsive



Customers with Disabilities

Disabilities can generally be grouped into four broad groups:

- Mobility
- Vision
- Hearing
- Non-Visible





Customers with Disabilities

What does a disability look like?

- Disabilities don't define a person.
- Some disabilities are visible.
- Some disabilities are invisible.





Serving Customers with Disabilities

What does a disability look like?

- any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement, birth defect or illness and 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
 - Reliance on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device;
 - a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability;
 - a learning disability, or a 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*.



Serving Customers with Disabilities

General Tips for Serving Customers with Disabilities

- Ask "**May I help you?**" Your customers with disabilities know if they need help and how you can provide it.
- Speak directly to your customer, not to an intervener (sign-language interpreter or personal attendant).
- Don't make assumptions about your customer's disabilities, if visible.
- If you don't understand what your customer is saying, politely ask him or her to repeat their request, exercise patience and allow the customer to describe what help they need from you.
- Lastly, your customer may have had a lifetime of living with their disability, or the disability may be new to them and they may still be learning about it.



Mobility Disabilities

Serving customers with mobility disabilities:

- “Ask” before you help; the customer may have their own way of doing things.
- A mobility device is deemed to be part of their personal space. Never lean over your customer or on an assistive device.
- Never move assistive devices such as canes and walkers out of the customer’s reach.



Mobility Disabilities

When moving a customer in a wheelchair:

- ensure your customer is ready to be moved
- describe what you're going to do
- never leave the customer in an undignified position, such as facing a wall or in the path of opening doors.
- Inform your customer about accessible features in the immediate environment, such as automatic doors, accessible washrooms, elevators and ramps.



Vision Disabilities

Serving Customers with a Vision disability:

- Never assume the customer can't see you.
- Identify yourself when you approach your customer and speak directly to him or her.



Vision Disabilities

- Offer your elbow to guide the customer. If the customer accepts, walk slowly, and describe your surroundings
- Identify landmarks or other details to orient your customer to the environment around them.
- If you're giving directions or providing any information, be precise and descriptive. For example, if you're approaching a door or an obstacle, say so.
- Don't leave your customer in the middle of a room. Guide them to a chair or a comfortable location. Don't walk away without saying good-bye.



Hearing Disabilities

Serving customers with a hearing disability:

- Get the customer's attention with a visual cue before speaking
- Walk into their vision path
- Look and speak directly to the customer
- Wave your hand and say "**hello, may I help you**" from outside of their personal space as the customer may rely on speechreading.
- Don't SHOUT; speak clearly and naturally.
- Make sure you are in a well-lit area where your customer can see your face.
- If the customer uses a hearing aid, reduce background noise or move to a quieter area.



Hearing Disabilities

Serving Customers who are Deafblind:

- If in attendance, identify yourself to the intervener when you approach a customer who is Deafblind.
- Speak directly to your customer, not to the intervener.
- A customer who is Deafblind is likely to explain to you how to communicate by providing you with a card.



Non-Visible Disabilities

Serving Customers with Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities

- Don't assume what a customer can or cannot do.
- Use plain language.
- Make sure your customer understands what you've said. You can be direct and ask: "Please don't hesitate to ask me if you need additional information?"
- Provide one piece of information at a time. You can break down the information into simpler concepts, without exaggerating speech or gestures or being patronizing.



Non-Visible Disabilities

Learning Disabilities

- Be patient. Allow the customer to understand the information given, process and respond.
- Provide information in a way that works for your customer. Keep a pen and paper handy, then you can explain and review and repeat the information using the notes.
- Be prepared to explain any written materials that you provide to your customers.



Non-Visible Disabilities

Mental Health Disabilities

- Be confident and reassuring. As with all customers, listen carefully and focus on meeting the customer's needs.
- If the customer appears to be in crisis, ask them to tell you the best way to help. "How can I help?"
- If a customer appears to show signs of mental health related stress, be mindful that the customer's reactions are not connected to you personally, the customer is simply showing symptoms of mental illness.



Non-Visible Disabilities

Speech or language impairments

- Don't assume that just because a customer has a speech disability that they must also have other disabilities.
- Give your customer sufficient time they need to get their point across.
- If possible, ask questions that can be answered "yes" or "no,"
- Don't interrupt or finish your customer's sentences; wait for them to finish.



Service Animals

Serving Customers with service animals:

- Service animals may provide assistance to customers with a variety of disabilities:
 - Vision loss
 - Hearing loss
 - Seizures
- Service animals assist people with:
 - Autism
 - Mental health disabilities
 - Mobility disabilities
 - Other disabilities
- Service animals are generally permitted anywhere customers have access.





Support Persons

Serving Customers with Support Persons:

- Personal Attendant
- Volunteer
- Family member
- Friend





Support Persons

- a support person must be allowed to accompany your customer
- Your customer may not introduce their support person, take your cue from the person using or requesting your goods or services
- speak directly to your customer not to the support person



Assistive Devices

Serving Customers with Personal Assistive Devices:

- Assistive devices are part of the customer's personal space
- Respect personal space
- Know how to operate an assistive device that your service provides





Assistive Devices

Assistive Devices that Assist People with Disabilities in Accessing Your Services

TTY - Teletypewriter

Sends typed text messages across phone lines

Bell Relay Service: 711 or 1-800-267-6511

- Operator assistance is intermediary
- Free for local calls
- Standard long-distance charges apply

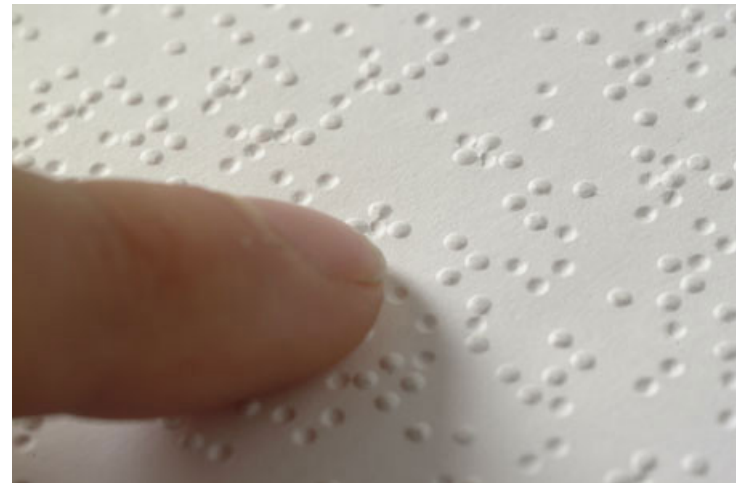




Assistive Devices

Other Assistive Devices

- Special Keyboard(s)
- Pen and paper
- Pointing device
- Information in Braille
- Automatic door opener
- Hearing and amplification devices





Unable to Access Services

When Customers with Disabilities experience difficulties in accessing services:

- Be flexible
- Ask: **“May I Help You?”**
- Solicit a few suggestions from the customer to guide the conversation and find a mutually respectful solution
- Offer to communicate via pen and paper
- As with all customers, confirm that needs are met



Notice of Service Disruption

- You must provide notice that access to goods or services are temporarily unavailable
- Policy By-law No. 28/2009 provides templates for giving notice of service disruptions



Summary and Review - Conclusion

It is not a person's disability that is a barrier to full participation, it is structures, attitudes and policies that create the barriers.

Consider what you have learned about serving customers with disabilities.

Consider what you will do differently to serve customers with disabilities.

Consider how you can remove barriers for your customers with disabilities.





Serve-Ability: Transforming Ontario's Customer Service

Customer Service Standards (CSS)

Thank You for Taking this Training

Contact Us accessibility@porthope.ca

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