

Appendix A

Practices and Procedures for Customer Service

To implement this Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Policy, Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority (LSRCA) shall:

- Establish practices and procedures in collaboration with Persons with Disabilities
- Evaluate practices and procedures in collaboration with Persons with Disabilities
- Revise practices and procedures as required on providing goods and/or services to Persons with Disabilities

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

- Ask how you can help;
- Offer a variety of methods of communication and how to interact with customers;
- Understand the nature and scope of the service you offer; and,
- Train staff.

What types of assistive devices are available to people with disabilities at our facilities?

- Wheelchair ramps at Administrative Office on Bayview Parkway, at our Professor E. A. Smith Education Centre facility in Bradford as well as wheelchair access into our Nature Centre building in Bradford.
- Wheelchair accessible public washrooms at our Administrative Office on Bayview Parkway and at our Professor E. A. Smith Education Centre facility in Bradford.
- Elevator at our administrative office on Bayview Parkway and a stair lift at our Professor E. A. Smith Education Centre facility in Bradford.

Support Persons and Service Animals

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 volunteer, friend or relative who will assist and support the customer.

Service animals and support persons offer independence and security to many people with various disabilities. “Examples of service animals include dogs used by people who are blind, hearing alert animals for people who are deaf, deafened or hard of hearing, and animals trained to alert an individual to an oncoming seizure and lead them to safety”.

Some laws generally prohibit animals in certain areas – such as food preparation areas; however service animals are permitted in most public situations.

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- Employees of LSRCA will direct all communication to the person directly and not the support person, unless instructed to do so.
- Any confidential information such as personal information etc. that is discussed in the presence of a support person will be identified as such prior to the information being released and the person with the disability will determine if the information can be released in the presence of the support person.
- Persons with disabilities may be accompanied by their support person while accessing goods/services. Support persons are non-participants who will be permitted to attend the goods and/or services being accessed by the person with a disability they are accompanying at no charge where an admission fee is applicable.
- 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 persons with disabilities. Other reasonable arrangements to provide goods and services shall be explored with the assistance of the person with a disability.
- When a service animal is unruly or disruptive (jumping on people, biting or other harmful behavior) an employee may ask the person with a 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 the person with a disability.
- If you cannot easily identify that the animal is a service animal, you can ask the person to provide documentation from a regulated health professional (Audiologist, Speech Language Pathologist, Chiropractor, Nurse, Occupational Therapist, Optometrist, Physician or Surgeon, Physiotherapist, Psychologist, Psychotherapist or Mental Health Therapist.) The documentation must confirm that the person needs the service animal for reasons relating to their disability

Physical Disabilities

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 may 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 gripping a doorknob;
- Move around independently;
- Control the speed or coordination of movements;

- Reach, pull or manipulate objects; and,
- Have strength or endurance.

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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.

Tips for serving 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 if they would like 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 wheelchair washrooms etc.).
- Keep ramps and corridors free of clutter.
- If a counter is too high or wide, step around it to provide service.
- Provide seating for those that cannot stand in line.
- Be patient, customers will identify their needs to you.

Deaf, Deafened and Hard of Hearing

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

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

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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.

Tips for serving customers who have hearing disabilities:

- 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 may 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.
- A person who is deaf may use a sign language interpreter to communicate– always direct your attention to the person who 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 with few competing sounds.
- If necessary, write notes back and forth to share information.

Deaf-Blindness Disabilities

Deaf-Blindness disabilities are a combination of hearing and vision loss. The result for a person who is deaf-blind is 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 relays information and facilitates auditory and visual information and acts as a sighted guide.

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Most people who are deaf-blind will be accompanied by an Intervener, a professional who helps them communicate.

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.

Tips for 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

Disabilities reduce one's ability to see clearly. Vision disabilities can include a loss of peripheral or side vision, or a lack of central vision, which means the person cannot see straight; very few people are totally blind. Many have limited vision such as tunnel vision, where a person only sees ahead. Some can see the outline of objects while others can see the direction of light.

Vision loss may 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; and
- Night blindness.

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Vision disabilities may 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.

Tips for 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

Intellectual disabilities affect a person's ability to think and reason. It may be caused by genetic factors such as Down's 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; and,
- Memory.

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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.

Tips for serving customers who have an intellectual or developmental disability:

- Do not 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

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; and,
- Stuttering or slurring.

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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 severe difficulties may use communication boards or other assistive devices.

Tips for 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; and,
- Patience, respect and willingness to find a way to communicate will be your best tools.

Learning Disabilities

Learning disabilities include a range of disorders that effect 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; and,
- Processing information.

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- 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

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

- Anxiety;
- Mood; and,
- 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.

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- 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 behavior, focus on the service they need and how you can help.

Smell Disabilities

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

Touch Disabilities

Touch disabilities may 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

Taste disabilities may 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

Other disabilities result from a range of other conditions, accidents, illnesses and diseases including ALS (Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis – Lou Gehrig's disease), asthma, diabetes, cancer, HIV/AIDS, environmental sensitivities, seizure disorders, heart disease, stroke and joint replacement. Disabilities are not always visible or easy to distinguish.

Terminology – Speaking About Disabilities

The following is an excerpt from the Ministry of Community and Social Services.

http://www.mcsc.gov.on.ca/mcsc/english/how_to_choose.htm

“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 person 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.

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.

Instead of	Please use
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.
Deaf (the), hearing impaired (the)	A person who is deaf. (person with profound hearing loss who communicates using sign language). A person who is deafened (deaf later in life). A person who is hard of hearing. (person with hearing loss who communicates primarily by speech.) A person with a hearing loss. When referring to the deaf community and their culture (whose preferred mode of communication is sign language) it is acceptable to use “the Deaf”.
Deaf and dumb, deaf mute	A person who is deaf without speech.
Deaf Blind (the)	Person who is deaf-blind (person who has any 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)	Person with a disability. 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”.
Hidden disability	Non-visible disability.
Invalid	Person with a disability.
Learning disabled, learning disordered, the dyslexics.	A person with a learning disability or people with learning disabilities.

Instead of	Please use
Mentally retarded, idiot, simple, retarded, feeble minded, imbecile	A person with an intellectual disability. A person with a developmental disability.
Midget, Dwarf	A person with a short stature. A person who has a form of dwarfism. A little person. A person diagnosed with "Achondroplasia, SED or whatever their specific diagnoses is" a form of dwarfism.
Mongoloid, Mongolism	Person with Down's 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 a medical professional and a client.
Physically challenged	Person with a physical disability.
Spastic	Person who has muscle spasms.
Stutter	A person with a speech impairment or impediment.
Victim of/suffers 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.mcscs.gov.on.ca/mcscs>

Admission Fees

Admission fees will not be charged to a support person who accompanies a person with a disability in order to assist them to obtain, use or benefit from LSRCA's goods or services.

Planned Disruption in Service - 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, or technology that is temporarily unavailable. If a disruption in service is planned and expected, LSRCA will provide notice and will include information about the reason for disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available.

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

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. LSRCA will provide notice and will include information about the reason for disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available.

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.

(please refer to the Sample Forms and Processes section at the end to review the Draft Notice Service Disruption forms for planned and unexpected service disruption notifications)

Training

Every provider of goods or services shall receive training on the following:

- Purposes of the Accessibility of Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005;
- LSRCA policies, practices and procedures relating to the requirements under Ontario Regulation 429/07 – Accessibility Standards for Customer Service;
- How to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disabilities;
- How to interact with persons with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a guide dog or other service animal or the assistance of a support person;
- How to use equipment or devices available on the provider’s premises or otherwise provided by the provider that may help with the provision of goods or services to a person with a disability; and,
- What to do if a person with a particular type of disability is having difficulty accessing the provider’s goods or services.

Training Records

Training records shall be kept, including the dates when the training is provided, content of training and the number of individuals to whom the training was provided. Please refer to Appendix B.

Feedback

Feedback from our customers gives LSRCA opportunities to learn and improve. LSRCA recognizes the right of our customers to make a complaint, compliment or suggestion on ways to improve our services.

To assist LSRCA in ensuring that the delivery of goods and services to those with disabilities is processed in an effective and timely manner, the customer is invited to provide their feedback.

This process will permit persons to provide feedback in person, by telephone, online, by email, in writing, by fax, or by other method.

Feedback Forms are to be posted in hard copy at reception and the planning counter and in soft copy on LSRCA's website. The feedback will be forwarded to Human Resources and disseminated in a timely manner to the appropriate department for follow-up.

Under the following conditions, staff will complete the form for the person who is providing the feedback:

- Feedback is from a person who is unable to provide written information due to their disability.
- Feedback is received over the telephone.

Staff will repeat back the information taken to the person providing the feedback to ensure it has accurately been recorded. Please refer to Appendix B.

Review and Amendments

Human Resources shall be responsible for the review of processes and any subsequent amendments to this policy document. Review and amendments shall take place with the first year of each term of the Board of Directors.