



3791 Victoria Park Avenue, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M1W 3K6

Tel 416-494-8999 Fax 416-494-9721

Communications and Accessibility Aids Policy

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that persons with disabilities are treated respectfully, in a way that respects their independence and dignity, and to provide guidelines with respect to communications and the use of service animals in support persons.

Policy:

The Company is committed to excellence in serving all of our customers including people with disabilities, and will follow the guidelines set out below.

This policy applies to all employees at all company locations in Ontario.

It is the responsibility of managers to ensure that all employees follow the guidelines set out in this policy.

Definitions:

Disability: means disability as defined under accessibility legislation and the Ontario human rights code, and includes:

- any degree of 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;
- an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997

Guide Dog: means a working dog trained at a facility authorized by legislation to provide mobility, safety or increased independence for people who are blind;

Service animal means an animal individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of a person with a disability, and includes a service dog other than a guide dog for the blind. It may be readily apparent that an animal is a service animal when its appearance (wearing a harness or saddlebags) or behavior (opening doors or retrieving items) identifies it as a service animal. The owner may also have a certificate or identification card from service animal training school or have a letter from a physician or nurse.

Support persons are any people, whether paid professionals, volunteers, family members or friends who accompany a person with a disability in order to help with communications, personal care or medical needs or with access to goods or services(such as an intervenor, sign language interpreter or a personal support worker providing physical assistance);

Assistive devices are technical or auxiliary aids or instruments that are used by people with disabilities to help with daily living task, such as communication devices, cognition aids, personal mobility aids, or medical aids, (such as canes, walkers, crutches, wheelchairs, hearing aids, visual aids, and personal oxygen tanks).

Communication:

Personnel will communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability.

The Company will train Personnel who communicate with customers on how to interact and communicate with people with various disabilities.

We will train our staff to communicate with customers over the telephone in clear and plain language and to speak with clarity.

If telephone communication is not suitable or is not available, the Company will offer to communicate with customers by e-mail.

The Company will provide alternative service method such as assistance of a staff person to complete transactions.

Terminology:

Company Personnel will use respectful terminology in their communications:

the word "disability" will be used instead of "handicap/ped" ;

"person with a disability" will be used instead of "disabled person";

Personnel will take into account the specific needs of an individual when communicating with a person with a disability, and utilize a variety of different techniques to best interact with them.

Guidelines for Personnel:

- a) people with disabilities will be treated with the same respect and consideration offered to everyone else.
- b) If not sure what to do, the individual will be asked: "May I help you?"
- c) Allow the person with a disability their independence and the time to shop at their own pace, before jumping in to assist.

- d) Wait for the person with a disability to describe his or her own needs and situation, rather than making assumptions.
- e) Speak normally clearly and directly, and be patient.

Billing

We will provide accessible invoices to our customers upon request. Invoices will be available in large print, hard copy, or e-mail.

Personnel will answer billing questions in person by telephone or e-mail

Meetings

When organizing meetings the Company will consider the location, environment, and written materials and their accessibility to participants or the target audience.

Assistive Devices

Customers with disabilities are welcome to use their own personal assistive devices at each Company location, unless not allowed by law.

The Company's customer service Personnel will provide support to persons with disabilities for the completion of transaction or selection of goods, upon request.

Each of the Company's locations that are open to the public will post information at store entrances that indicate personal assistive devices may be used, and that staff are available for assistance.

We will ensure that our staff are trained and familiar with how to interact with people using various assistive devices that may be used by customers with disabilities while accessing our goods or services.

While training will not be focused on the technical use of assistive devices, if the Company provides any, staff will be trained on how to help customers use them.

Personnel must not touch or move a person's assistive device without the person's permission.

Personnel will practice consideration and safety. Persons with disabilities will not be left in an awkward dangers are undignified position such as facing a wall or in the path of opening doors.

Use of Service Animals, Guide Dogs and Support Persons

Persons with disabilities accompanied by service animals or support persons are welcome in any of the company's locations, in areas, that serve the public, unless a service animal/guide dog is prohibited by law.

If a service animal/guide dog is excluded by law, this will be explained to the individual, and reasonable arrangements to provide our goods and services will be explored, in consultation with the person with the disability.

The Company will ensure that its Personnel are trained in how to interact with people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal, or by a 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 support person while at our locations.

If a person with a disability is accompanied by a support person, communications will be directed to the individual and not the support person.

If confidential matters are to be discussed or disclosed, the individual's consent will be sought before doing so, either verbally or in writing depending on the sensitivity of the information.