



## Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act Customer Service Standard

---

It's the law!  
It's good business!  
It's everyone's business!





# The AODA Accessibility Service Standard

---



- 1) Introduction and background information
- 2) The purpose of the Standard
- 3) The requirements of the Standard
- 4) Living our values: interacting with
  - a) people with disabilities
  - b) people's assistive devices
  - c) service animals
  - d) support persons
- 5) Living our values: what we do when we see a person having difficulty accessing TOH goods & services
- 6) Resources available to help people access our goods & services

# People with disabilities: some context



---

Disability: a much more common and natural human experience than many think!

- Often we quickly imagine a disability which is primarily physical, visible and severe. Yet these popular « default settings » can be misleading. Disabilities are much more varied and wide-spread than our « first impressions »
- The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates there are about 600 million people with disabilities in the world.
- In the U.S.A., estimates vary from 45 to 54 million people with disabilities.
- In Canada, the 2006 PALS survey indicates about 4.4 million Canadians with disabilities.
- These numbers will only increase as populations age.
- The likelihood of disability increases with age and in addition, we use health care services more as we age.
- Increasing accessibility to Health Care for all citizens is therefore both timely and urgent.



# Inclusion and participation in context: some milestones

---

1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights

1982 Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms

1985 Canadian Human Rights Act

2001 Ontarians with Disabilities Act (ODA)

2005 Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)

2008 Accessibility Standards for Customer Service,  
Ontario Regulation 429/07

Future: 4 Other Accessibility Standards to come...





# Some background information

---

- “The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) is a law in Ontario that allows the government to **develop** specific standards of accessibility and to **enforce** them”.
- “The standards require public and private sector organizations to identify, remove, and prevent barriers for people with disabilities in 5 key areas:  
**goods and services, information and communication, employment, the built environment and transportation** on or before January 1, 2025.
- Ontario’s accessible customer service standard became law on January 1, 2008. It creates legal obligations for all who provides goods or services to the public.
- Designated public sector organizations must demonstrate compliance by **Jan. 1, 2010**.
- All other service providers (e.g. private businesses, non-profit organizations) must demonstrate compliance by **Jan. 1, 2012**

# Barriers

---

A barrier is anything that stops or makes it difficult for a person to participate in society or access goods or services

There are many kinds of barriers experienced by people. They can include: physical, architectural, informational, technological, communication, systemic (policies, practices or procedures) and attitudinal/behavioural.

- ❖ Barriers do not have to be intentional, visible or considerable to exclude people.
- ❖ Even unintentional, invisible and “minor” barriers still exclude and prevent people’s participation.





## Purpose of the Standard

---

“Recognizing the **history of discrimination** against persons with disabilities in Ontario, the purpose of this Act is to benefit all Ontarians by... developing, implementing and enforcing **accessibility standards** in order to achieve accessibility for Ontarians with disabilities...”

to ensure that citizens with disabilities can **access, use and benefit from** TOH goods and services





# Requirements

In order to comply, we must:

---



- 1) Establish policies, practices and procedures on providing goods or services to people with disabilities
- 2) Demonstrate reasonable efforts to ensure that our policies, practices and procedures are consistent with the core principles of ***dignity, independence, integration, and equality of opportunity.***
- 3) Develop a policy dealing with people's use of their own **personal assistive devices** to access our goods or services or other measures that TOH offers to enable them to access the goods or services.
- 4) Communicate with people with disabilities in a manner that takes into account the person's disability.



# Requirements

In order to comply, we must:

---



- 5) Let people with disabilities bring their service animals onto parts of the premises open to the public or other third parties except where the animal is excluded by law.
- 6) Let people with disabilities be accompanied by their support persons while on the premises open to the public or other third parties
- 7) Provide notice when facilities or services that people with disabilities usually use to access goods or services are temporarily disrupted.
- 8) Train everyone who interacts with the public (all staff, volunteers) as well as those people responsible for developing policies, practices and procedures on topics outlined in the Customer Service Standard.

# Requirements

## In order to comply, we must:

---



- 9) Establish a process for receiving and responding to feedback about the way we provide goods or services to people with disabilities, including what action will be taken if complaints are received, and make this information about the process readily available and accessible to the public.



- 10) In addition, designated public sector organizations and other providers with 20 or more employees must:
- ♦ document in writing their policies, practices and procedures for providing accessible service to people with disabilities
  - ♦ let customers know that the documents are available upon request and
  - ♦ upon request, provide the information to a person with a disability in a format that takes into account their disability

# Demonstrating our values

---

- Compassion
- Commitment to quality
- Working together
- Respect



# Demonstrating our values

## Some general tips...

---

- Refer to a person's disability only when it is relevant. People are not their diagnosis or disability!
- Avoid stereotypes and assumptions about what a person can/cannot do! Ask the person what he/she is able to do and/or what devices or supports (accommodations) they might use to better access our goods and services.
- If you are not sure what to do, ASK the person « May I help you? » People with disabilities know if they need help and how you can provide it.
- Make an effort to learn about appropriate language and terminology to use when referring to people with disabilities

**Refer to TOH Accessibility Guide for more tips**

# Interacting and communicating with people with mobility disabilities

---

- Place yourself at eye level when speaking for more than a minute or so with someone using a wheelchair or a scooter
- Ask permission before you begin to help. People have developed their own and safe ways of doing things.
- Respect the person's personal space.
- Do not touch assistive devices without permission and wait for the person's instructions.



# Interacting and communicating with people with vision loss

---

- Address the person by name and identify yourself and your role. Always identify yourself and ask permission before touching the person.
- Remember: few people with vision loss are totally blind. Most have some residual vision and work with that vision to be as independent as possible.
- If guiding a person, offer to orient them to your elbow. Wait for permission to lead. Do not pull.
- Inform the person by describing any procedures such as the administration of medication, physical examinations, transportation needs, personal hygiene, etc.
- If you need to leave the person, inform him/her you are leaving and will be back. Do not leave him/her in the middle of a room. Show him/her to a chair or guide them to a comfortable location.





## Interacting and communicating with people who are Deaf, oral deaf, deafened, or hard of hearing

---

- Look at and speak directly to the person. Make sure you are in a well-lit area where the person can see your face. Maintain eye contact.
- Address the person; not the support person or the interpreter.
- Speak slowly and clearly. Do not shout.
- Ask the person what is their preferred communication method. Remember: not everyone is comfortable using a pen and paper, or reading lips.
- Provide clear and precise instructions and repeat if necessary. Confirm that the person understands you.
- Arrange for a sign language interpreter when a person indicates they prefer speaking ASL or LSQ.



## Interacting and communicating with people with communication difficulties or disabilities

---

- Do not assume that difficulty speaking means difficulty thinking!
- Ask the person to repeat the information if you do not understand.
- Look at the person you are talking to and pay attention.
- If you are having difficulty, ask questions that can be answered by 'yes' or 'no' if possible.
- Do not interrupt or finish the person's sentences.
- People with communication disabilities may use a communication board, paper and pen, speech generating device, or a support person.







# Interacting and communicating with people with intellectual disabilities

---

- Do not assume what a person can or cannot do.
- Use simple words and short sentences.
- Make sure that the person understands what you've said. Ask him/her to review the information with you or demonstrate that he/she understands
- Written instructions may be useful.
- Give one piece of information at a time.
- Speak directly to the person, while acknowledging a support person who may be with him/her. Ensure that the person accompanying the patient understands.

# Interacting and communicating with people who have mental health disabilities

---

- A person dealing with a mental health disability may have difficulty with thinking clearly, hallucinations, depression or mood swings, concentration, remembering, motivation, etc.
- If a person is having difficulty controlling their symptoms or anxiety, remain calm. Ask them how you can best help.
- Treat any person with a mental health disability with the same respect and consideration you have for everyone else
- Be confident and reassuring. Listen carefully and work with them to meet their needs.



## Interacting with people's assistive devices

- Some examples of common assistive devices include: Teletypewriter (TTY), hearing aid, magnifier, FM transmitter system, mobility canes, communication board, walker, glasses, wheelchair, scooter, etc.
- People's personal devices are expensive and critical to their independence. Demonstrate the same care and respect for their device as you do for the person.
- Do not touch assistive devices without permission.
- Do not remove or move a person's equipment out of the person's reach without their knowledge.
- Be responsible and accountable for the devices if they must be separated from the person: e.g. removing hearing aids for a test or surgery.



## Interacting with people using service animals

---

- Remember: a service animal is not a pet. It is a working animal.
- Do not touch, distract or speak to service animals without permission from their owner.
- Do not be offended if the person does not want to talk about their service animal. Your focus is on the person; not their animal.
- The person is responsible for the care and supervision of their service animal.
- If you wish to offer assistance, ask "how may I help?"





## Interacting with support persons

---

- A support person can be anyone hired or chosen to accompany a person with a disability to assist with communication, mobility, personal care, medical needs, etc.
- The person may/may not introduce their support person. If you are unsure who the person is or their role, simply ask.
- Address yourself to the person with the disability; not to their support person.



## We care...and it shows!

---



A person's difficulty = our opportunity to CARE!



**Ask** permission: "May I help you?"

**Ask** for details: "How may I help you?"

**Listen** carefully to the person's instructions.

**Clarify** if unsure what to do or how to help.

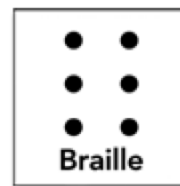
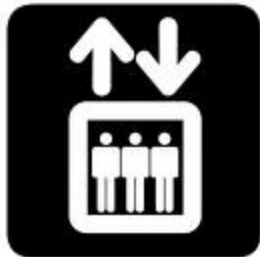
**Speak** directly to the person; not to a support person

**Know** what resources, equipment and services we offer to enhance people's access to and experience of TOH goods and services.



# Some resources and assistive devices which support and enhance people's access

---



# Conclusion

---

ACCESSing health care at TOH...  
It's YOUR business!  
It's OUR business!

For even more tips and resources  
consult the  
TOH Accessibility Guide