

Accessible Customer Service Policy

Policy Statement

The North Bay-Mattawa Conservation Authority is committed to excellence in serving all customers, including people with disabilities, based on principles of independence, dignity, integration and equal opportunity.

Purpose

The North Bay-Mattawa Conservation Authority is committed to ensuring that we provide a welcoming, safe, barrier-free and accessible environment for all employees, customers, suppliers, job applicants, visitors and members of the public.

As an organization we are responsible under the Accessibility for Ontarians Act, 2005, to ensure that our business practices and programs, employees, facilities, and policies comply with the governing legislation and best practices that pertain to the accessibility for individuals with disabilities in a way that promotes and ensures their dignity and independence.

This policy establishes Standards for Customer Service for the North Bay-Mattawa Conservation Authority (NBMCA), in accordance with Ontario Regulation 429/07.

Application

This policy applies to all persons who deal with members of the public or other third parties on behalf of the Authority, whether the person does so as an employee, member of the Board of Directors, agent, volunteer, student on placement, or otherwise and all persons who participate in developing the Authority's policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of goods and services to members of the public or other third parties.

Definitions

“Assistive Device” means a device used to assist persons with disabilities in carrying out activities or in accessing the services of persons or organizations covered by the Customer Service Standard.

“Authority” refers to the North Bay-Mattawa Conservation Authority

“Barrier” means anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of his or her disability, including a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, an information or communication barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy or a practice.

“Disability” means

- a) 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,
- b) a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability,
- c) a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,
- d) a mental disorder, or
- e) an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1990

“Guide Dog” means a guide dog as defined in section 1 of the Blind Persons’ Rights Act is a dog trained as a guide for a blind person and having qualifications prescribed by the Regulations under the Blind Persons’ Rights Act.

“Nurse” means a Registered Nurse or Registered Practical Nurse who is a registered member in good standing with the College of Nurses of Ontario.

“Physician” means a physician who is a registered member, in good standing, with the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario.

“Service Animal” means any animal used by a person with a disability for reasons relating to the disability where it is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to his or her disability; or where the person provides a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that he or she requires the animal for reasons relating to his or her disability; or a valid

identification card signed by the Attorney General of Canada or a certificate of training from a recognized guide dog or service animal training school.

“Support Person” means a person who accompanies a person with a disability in order to assist him or her with communication, mobility, personal care, or medical needs or with access to goods or services.

General Principles

a) The Provision of Goods and Services to Persons with Disabilities

The Authority will use reasonable efforts to ensure that its policies, practices and procedures are consistent with the following principles:

- the Authority’s goods and services are provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities;
- the provision of the Authority’s goods and services to persons with disabilities are integrated with those provided to persons who do not have disabilities unless an alternative measure is necessary to enable a person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the Authority’s goods or services and,
- persons with disabilities are given an opportunity equal to that of persons without disabilities to obtain, use or benefit from the Authority’s goods and services.

b) Communication with Persons with Disabilities

When communicating with a person with a disability, the Authority will do so in a manner that takes into account the person’s disability.

c) Notice of Temporary Disruptions in Services and Facilities

The Authority is aware that the operation of its services and facilities is important to the public. However, temporary disruptions in the Authority's services and facilities may occur due to reasons that may or may not be within the Authority's control or knowledge. The Authority will make reasonable effort to provide notice of the disruption to the public, including information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if any, that may be available.

The Authority will make reasonable effort to provide prior notice of planned disruption if possible, recognizing that in some circumstances such as in the situation of unplanned temporary disruption, advance notice will not be possible. In such cases, the Authority will provide notice as soon as possible.

When temporary disruptions occur to the Authority’s services or facilities, the Authority

will provide notice by posting the information in visible places, or on the Authority's website (www.nbmca.ca), or by any other method that may be reasonable under the circumstances as soon as reasonably possible.

d) Assistive Devices and other Measures that Assist with Accessibility

A person with a disability may provide their own assistive device for the purpose of obtaining, using and benefiting from the Authority's goods and services. Exceptions may occur in situations where the Authority has determined that the assistive device may pose a risk to the health and safety of a person with a disability or the health and safety of others on the premises. In these situations and others, the Authority may offer a person with a disability other reasonable measures to assist him or her in obtaining, using and benefiting from the Authority's goods and services, where the Authority has such other measures available.

It is the responsibility of the person with a disability to ensure that his or her assistive device is operated in a safe and controlled manner at all times.

e) Service Animals

Persons with a disability may enter premises owned and operated, or operated, by the Authority accompanied by a service animal and keep the animal with them if the public has access to such premises and the animal is not otherwise excluded by law.

If a service animal is excluded by law, the Authority will ensure that other measures are available to enable the person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the Authority's goods and services. If it is not readily apparent that the animal is a service animal, the Authority may ask the person with a disability for a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to his or her disability.

Service animals must be supervised by their owners and kept in control when used to access the Authority's goods and services.

f) Support Persons

A person with a disability may enter premises owned and operated, or operated, by the Authority with a support person and have access to the support person while on the premises.

The Authority may require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person while on Authority premises in situations where it is necessary to protect the health or safety of the person with a disability or the health and safety of others on the premises. This will only occur after consultation with the person with a disability and when it is the only means to allow the person with a disability to access NBMCA's goods or services.

A support person, when assisting a person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the Authority's goods and services, will be permitted to attend at no charge where an admission fee is applicable.

g) Feedback

The Authority is committed to providing high quality goods and services to all members of the public it serves. Feedback from the public is welcomed as it may identify areas that require change and encourage continuous service improvements. Feedback from a member of the public about the delivery of goods and services to persons with disabilities may be given by telephone, in person, in writing, in electronic format or through other methods. Information about the feedback process will be readily available to the public and notice of the process will be posted on the Authority's website (www.nbmca.on.ca) and/or in other appropriate locations. All feedback will be directed to Supervisor of Communications and Outreach. Customers can expect to hear back in two business days. Complaints will be addressed according to the Authority's regular complaint management procedures.

h) Training

The Authority will ensure that all persons to whom this policy applies receive training as required by the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service. The amount and format of training given will be tailored to suit each person's interactions with the public and his or her involvement in the development of policies, procedures and practices pertaining to the provision of goods and services. The content of the training will include:

- a review of the purposes of the AODA;
- the requirements of the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service (Ontario Regulation 429 / 07);
- instruction on the Authority's policy and Customer Service Plan pertaining to the provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities
- how to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disabilities
- what to do if a person with a particular type of disability is having difficulty accessing the Authority's goods or services;
- how to interact with persons with disabilities who use assistive devices or who require the assistance of a support person or service animal; and
- information about the equipment or devices available on the Authority's premises that may help with the provision of goods or services to persons with disabilities.

Timeline for Training: Training will be provided as soon as practicable upon an individual being assigned the applicable duties as well as on an ongoing basis as changes occur to the Authority's

policies and Customer Service Plan governing the provision of goods or services to persons with disabilities.

Records of Training: The Authority will keep records of the training, including the date on which training is provided. The names of individuals trained will be recorded for training administration purposes, subject to the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (“MFIPPA”).

Availability and Format of Documents Required by the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service (Ontario Regulation 429/07)

All documents required by the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, including the Authority’s Accessible Customer Service policy and plan, notices of temporary disruptions, training records, and written feedback process are available upon request, subject to MFIPPA.

When providing a document to a person with a disability, the Authority will provide the document, or the information contained in the document, in a format that takes into account the person’s disability following discussion with the person requesting the document. The Authority will make reasonable efforts to respond to requests for documents in alternate formats in a timely manner.