

COUNCIL POLICY RESOLUTION

POLICY NUMBER: I-217

DATE: NOVEMBER 23, 2009

POLICY TYPE: ADMINISTRATION

SUBJECT: ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS FOR CUSTOMER SERVICE

POLICY CONTENT:

1. Requirements

Under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, the Ontario Regulation 429/07, Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, requires every provider of goods and services to establish policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of its goods and services to persons with disabilities.

2. Policy Statement

The City of Kitchener values the contributions and participation of all citizens in the life of the City. To facilitate this involvement, the City of Kitchener is committed to providing goods and services that are accessible to all.

3. Definitions

Assistive Devices

For the purposes of this policy, 'assistive devices' are defined as any piece of equipment or product that is used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of persons with disabilities.

Service Animal

For the purposes of this policy, a 'service animal' is defined as either:

- i) A 'guide dog' as defined in section 1 of the Blind Persons Rights' Act, R.S.O. 1990, c.B.7; or
- ii) An animal used by a person with a disability, including but not limited to a dog, if:
 - a. It is readily apparent that such animal is used by the person for reasons related to his or her disability; or

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3. Definitions, cont'd

Service Animal, cont'd

- b. If the person provides a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires such animal for reasons relating to his or her disability.

Service Disruption

For the purposes of this policy, a 'service disruption' is defined as planned or unplanned unavailability of facilities or services operated by the City of Kitchener including but not limited to programs, washroom facilities, elevators and websites.

Support Persons

For the purpose of this policy, a 'support person' is defined as, in relation to a person with a disability, another person who accompanies him or her in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs or with access to goods or services.

4. General Principles

a) Provision of Goods and Services to Persons with Disabilities

The City of Kitchener will use reasonable efforts to ensure that its policies practices and procedures promote accessibility and reflect the principles of independence, integration, dignity and equal opportunity.

b) Training

The City of Kitchener will ensure that the following persons receive training in Accessibility Standards for Customer Service:

- i) All employees, volunteers, agents and those other third parties who deal with members of the public on behalf of the City.
- ii) Every person who participates in the developing the provider's policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of goods and services to members of the public or other third parties.

Training will be provided as soon as practicable upon an individual being assigned the applicable duties and on an ongoing basis in connection with changes to City policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities.

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4. General Principles, cont'd

b) Training, cont'd

Training will include the following but not limited to:

- i) A review of the purposes of the Act and the requirements of the Regulation.
- ii) How to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disability.
- iii) 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.
- iv) How to use equipment or devices available on the City's premise or otherwise provided by the City that may help with the provision of goods or services to a person with a disability.
- v) What to do if a person with a particular type of disability is having difficulty accessing the City's goods or services.

The City will keep records of the training provided including dates the training is provided and the number of persons trained.

c. Communication with Persons with Disabilities

When communicating with a person with a disability, the City will do so in a manner that takes into account the person's disability. The individual with a disability may request an accommodation and/or alternate formats to facilitate their interaction with the City. City staff and volunteers will work with the individual with a disability to provide a timely and appropriate accommodation and/or alternate format.

d. Service Animals

The City is committed to welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal onto all City of Kitchener owned and operated public facilities that are open to the public. The City will ensure that the individual is permitted to keep the animal with him or her unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law.

If a service animal is excluded by law, the City will ensure that alternate means are available to enable the person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the City's goods and services.

4. General Principles, cont'd

d. Service Animals, cont'd

If it is not readily apparent that the animal is a service animal, the City may ask the person with a disability for a letter from a physician or a nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to his or her disability.

It is the responsibility of the person with a disability to ensure that his or her service animal is kept in control at all times.

e. Support Persons

A person with a disability may participate in City of Kitchener programs and services accompanied by a support person. A support person, when assisting a person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the City's goods and services will be permitted to attend at no-charge. To facilitate the attendance of a support person, the City of Kitchener recognizes the Personal Attendant for Leisure (PAL) Card.

The City may require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person while on City premises in situations where it is necessary to protect the health and safety of the person with a disability or the health and safety of others on the premises.

If, in the presence of a support person, personal information is being discussed, City staff must ensure that the individual consents to the support person being present. Consent can be given verbally or in writing

f. Assistive Devices

The City shall use reasonable efforts to allow persons with disabilities to use their own assistive devices to access goods and/or services.

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.

The City provides a variety of assistive devices at its facilities. A detailed list and information on the operating procedures for those devices will be available on the City's website or by requesting a copy from the facility where the device exists.

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4. General Principles, cont'd

g. Notice of Service Disruptions

The City is aware that the operation of its services and facilities is important to the public. However, temporary disruptions in the City's services and facilities may occur.

The City will make reasonable effort to provide notice to the public of the disruption. The notice will include 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 City will make reasonable effort to provide advance notice of planned disruption. In situations of unplanned disruption, advance notice may not be possible. In such instances, the City will provide notice as soon as possible.

The City will provide notice by posting the information in visible places and/or on the City's website as soon as reasonably possible.

h. Feedback

The City of Kitchener values the feedback from its citizens. Feedback from a member of the public about the delivery of goods and services to persons with disabilities may be submitted by telephone, in person, in writing, in electronic format, through TTY or through other methods.

Following the Citizen Service Standards, staff will respond within one business day to the author of the feedback. The author of the feedback will be provided with a response in the format in which the feedback was received and will outline the actions taken to resolve the concern, if any.

5. Availability of Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Documents

This policy and any other documents key to the delivery of goods and services will be made available on the City's website and available through the City Clerk's Office. This document can be provided in alternate formats, upon request.