



Township of Georgian Bay Accessibility Policy

Policy Number: 2022-003-HR

Department: Human Resources

Effective Date: March 14, 2022

Approval: March 14, 2022

Attachments:

Related Documents / Legislation: Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and Ontario Human Rights Code, Blind Person's Rights Act

A. Policy Statement

The Township of Georgian Bay, hereinafter referred to as "The Township", is committed to ensuring equal access and participation for people with disabilities. The Township is committed to treating people with disabilities in a way that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence. The Township believes in integration and are committed to meeting the needs of people with disabilities in a timely manner. The Township will do so by removing and preventing barriers to accessibility and meeting the accessibility requirements under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA) and Ontario's accessibility laws.

The Township is committed to meeting its current and ongoing obligations under the Ontario Human Rights Code respecting non-discrimination.

The Township also understands that obligations under the AODA and its accessibility standards do not substitute or limit its obligations under the Ontario Human Rights Code or obligations to people with disabilities under any other law.

The Township is committed to excellence in serving and providing goods, services or facilities to all customers including people with disabilities.

Our accessible customer service policies are consistent with the principles of independence, dignity, integration, and equality of opportunity for people with disabilities.

B. Purpose

To meet the requirements of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA), through provincial legislation designed to achieve

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accessibility for Ontarians with disabilities with respect to goods, services, facilities, accommodation, employment, buildings, structures, and premises on or before January 1, 2025, by developing, implementing, and enforcing accessibility standards.

This policy shall apply to the Members of Council, all Township employees, volunteer firefighters as well as volunteers, agents and/or contractors who act on behalf of or represent the Township in any manner. This also applies to members and volunteers of all Township Committees and Boards.

C. Definitions

Accessible Formats includes, but are not limited to, large print, recorded audio and electronic formats, braille and other formats usable by persons with disabilities;

Accommodation means the special arrangement made or assistance provided so that persons with disabilities can participate in the experiences available to persons without disabilities. Accommodation will vary depending on the person's needs;

Assistive Devices shall include but are not limited to wheelchairs, hearing aids, adaptive computer technologies, ventilators, walkers, crutches, and personal sound amplification devices.

Barrier means anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of their disability. This includes physical, architectural, information or communication, attitudinal or technological barriers, as well as a policy or a practice.

Communication Supports includes, but are not limited to, captioning, alternative and augmentative communication supports, plain language, sign language and other supports that facilitate effective communications;

Disability means (Human Rights Code):

1. 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 coordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical

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reliance on a guide dog or other animal, or on a wheelchair, or other remedial appliance or device;

2. a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability;
3. a learning disability or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language;
4. a mental disorder; or
5. any injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997.

Guide Dog means a guide dog as defined under Section 1 of the Blind Persons' Rights Act.

Information includes data, facts and knowledge that exists in any format, including text, audio, digital or images, and that conveys meaning;

Self-service Kiosk means an interactive electronic terminal, including point of sale device, intended for public use that allows users to access one or more services or products or both.

Service Animal means any animal, including a guide dog, where it is readily apparent that the person for reasons relating to his or her disability uses the animal or if the person provides a letter from a regulated health professional confirming that, the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability. O.Reg.429/07, s.4(9).

Support Person means a person who accompanies a person with a disability in order to assist with communications, mobility, personal care or medical needs or with access to good or services O.Reg.429/07,s.4(8).

D. General Terms and Procedures

Training

We are committed to training all staff and volunteers in accessible customer service, other Ontario's accessibility standards and aspects of the Ontario Human Rights Code that relate to persons with disabilities.

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In addition, we will train:

- a) all persons who participate in developing the organization's policies, and
- b) all other persons who provide goods, services, or facilities on behalf of the organization

Training of our employees and volunteers on accessibility relates to their specific roles.

Training includes:

- purpose of the AODA and the requirements of the Customer Service Standards
- our policies related to the customer service standards
- how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities
- how to use equipment or devices available on-site or otherwise that may help with providing goods, services, or facilities to people with disabilities. These include:
 - Providing materials in electronic formats
 - The Township website
 - Online training modules
- What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing our organization's goods, services, or facilities.

We train every person as soon as practicable after being hired and provide training in respect of any changes to the policies.

We maintain records of the training provided including the dates on which the training was provided and the number of individuals to whom it was provided.

Assistive Devices

People with disabilities may use their personal assistive devices when accessing our goods, services, or facilities.

In cases where the assistive device presents a significant and unavoidable health or safety concern or may not be permitted for other reasons, other measures will be used to ensure the person with a disability can access our goods, services, or facilities.

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Some assistive devices in the Township include:

- Accessible Power Doors
- Elevator- MacTier Arena
- Accessible washrooms

We ensure that our staff are trained and familiar with various assistive devices we have on site or that we provide that may be used by customers with disabilities while accessing our goods, services, or facilities.

Staff will be oriented on the assistive devices in their work areas during their on-boarding/orientation.

Communication

We communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability. This may include the following:

- Email
- Phone
- In-person
- Electronic document formats
- Hard-copy document formats
- Through the feedback section on the Township's website

We will work with persons with disabilities to determine what method of communication works for them.

Service Animals

We welcome people with disabilities and their service animals. Service animals are allowed on the parts of our premises that are open to the public and third parties.

When we cannot easily identify that an animal is a service animal, staff may ask for documentation from a regulated health professional that confirms the person needs the service animal for reasons relating to their disability.

A service animal can be easily identified through visual indicators, such as when it wears a harness or a vest, or when it helps the person perform certain tasks.

A regulated health professional is defined as a member of one of the following colleges:

- College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists of Ontario

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- College of Chiropractors of Ontario
- College of Nurses of Ontario
- College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario
- College of Optometrists of Ontario
- College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario
- College of Physiotherapists of Ontario
- College of Psychologists of Ontario
- College of Registered Psychotherapists and Registered Mental Health Therapists of Ontario

If service animals are prohibited by another law, the Township will do the following to ensure people with disabilities can access our goods, services, or facilities:

- Explain why the animal is prohibited
- Discuss with the customer another way of providing goods, services, or facilities

Service animals are only prohibited from kitchen areas or areas where food is prepared under the guidance of the health unit.

Support Persons

A person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person will be allowed to have that person accompany them on our premises.

If a fee or fare is normally charged to a customer for accessing the goods, services, or facilities the fee/fare will not be charged to the support person for the admission to our premises.

Customers will be notified of this through a posting of this policy on the Township's website.

In certain cases, the Township might require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person for the health or safety reasons of:

- The person with a disability
- Others on the premises

Before making a decision, the Township will:

- Consult with the person with a disability to understand their needs
- Consider health or safety reasons based on available evidence
- Determine if there is no other reasonable way to protect the health or safety of the person or others on the premises

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If the Township determines that a support person is required, the admission fee/fare will be waived for the support person.

Notice of Temporary Disruption

In the event of a planned or unexpected disruption to services or facilities for customers with disabilities, the Township will notify customers promptly. This clearly posted notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated length of time, and a description of alternative facilities or services available.

Interruption notices will be provided on the elevator at the MacTier arena and on the Township website when it is broken down or temporarily put out of service for maintenance purposes.

Feedback Process

The Township welcomes feedback on how we provide accessible customer service. Customer feedback will help us identify barriers and respond to concerns.

Feedback can be provided on the Township website at the following link:

<https://forms.gbtownship.ca/Report-a-Concern>

All feedback and complaints will be directed to the Human Resources department, and someone will follow up within 2-business days.

The Township ensures the feedback process is accessible to people with disabilities by providing or arranging for accessible formats and communication supports, on request.

Notice of Availability of Documents

The Township notifies the public that documents related to accessible customer service are available upon request by posting a notice on the Township website.

The Township will provide these documents in an accessible format or with communication support, on request. The Township will consult with the person making the request to determine the suitability of the format or communication support. We will provide the accessible format in a timely manner and, at no additional cost.

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Self-service Kiosks

The Township will incorporate accessibility features for people with disabilities when designing, procuring, or acquiring self-serve kiosks.

Procurement

The Township will incorporate accessibility criteria and features when procuring or acquiring goods, services, or facilities, including self-service kiosks. If it is not possible and practical to do so, the Township will provide an explanation upon request.

Information and Communications

The Township has a process for receiving and responding to feedback and the process is accessible to persons with disabilities upon request.

The Township communicates with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability. When asked, the Township will provide information about the organization and its services, including public safety information, in accessible formats or with communication supports:

- a) In a timely manner, taking into account the person's accessibility needs due to disability; and
- b) At a cost that is not more than the regular cost charged to other persons

The Township will consult with the person making the request in determining the suitability of an accessible format or communication support. If the Township determines that information or communication are unconvertible, the Township shall provide the requestor with:

- a) An explanation as to why the information or communications are unconvertible; and
- b) A summary of the unconvertible information or communications

The Township will notify the public about the availability of accessible formats and communication supports by posting on the Township's website.

The Township will also meet the internationally recognized Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level AA website requirements in accordance with Ontario's accessibility laws.

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Employment

The Township notifies employees, job applicants and the public that accommodations can be made during recruitment and hiring. Job applicants are notified when they are individually selected to participate in an assessment or selection process that accommodations are available upon request. The Township consults with the applicants and provides or arranges for suitable accommodation.

The Township notifies successful applicants of policies for accommodation to employees with disabilities when making offers of employment.

Staff are notified that supports are available for those with disabilities as soon as practicable after they begin their employment. Updated information is provided whenever there is a change to existing policies on the provision of job accommodation that take into account an employee's accessibility needs due to a disability.

The Township will consult with employees when arranging for the provision of suitable accommodation in a manner that takes into account the accessibility needs due to disability. Consultation with the person making the request in determining the suitability of an accessible format or communication supports specifically for:

- a) Information that is needed in order to perform the employee's job;
and
- b) Information that is generally available to employees in the workplace

Where needed, the Township will also provide customized emergency information to help an employee with a disability during an emergency. With the employee's consent, the Township will provide workplace emergency information to a designated person(s) who is providing assistance to that person during an emergency.

The Township will provide the information as soon as practicable after becoming aware of the need for accommodation due to the employee's disability.

The Township has a written process to develop individual accommodation plans for employees.

There is also a written process for employees who have been absent from work due to a disability and require disability-related accommodations in order to return to work.

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Performance management, career development and redeployment processes take into account the accessibility needs of all employees.

Design of Public Spaces

The Township will meet accessibility laws when building or making major changes to public spaces. Public spaces include:

- Recreational trails/beach access routes
- Outdoor public eating areas like picnic areas
- Outdoor play spaces, like playgrounds
- Accessible off-street parking
- Accessible on-street parking
- Service-related elements like service counters, and waiting areas

There are procedures in place to present service disruptions to the accessible parts of the public spaces.

The Township may not be able to provide accommodations if it affects the bona fide occupational requirements of the position. The Township is also not required to create a new position to provide an accommodation.

Transportation

The Township does not currently provide public transportation.

Changes to Existing Policies

Any policies of the Township that do not respect and promote the principles of dignity, independence, integration, and equal opportunity for people with disabilities will be modified or removed.