



Township of East Zorra-Tavistock

Corporate Policy Manual

Title: Accessible Customer Service Policy	
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Applies to: Council, Employees, Volunteers, Contractors	
Review/Revision History:	

A. PURPOSE

This policy establishes that goods and services provided by the Township of East Zorra-Tavistock shall be provided to persons with disabilities and all customers in accordance with the following key principles:

Dignity: Service is provided in a respectful manner consistent with the needs of the individual.

Independence: Services for persons with disabilities shall support their independence while respecting their right to safety and personal privacy.

Equity/Equality of Outcome: Service outcome is the same for persons with disabilities as for persons without disabilities.

Integrated: Services allow people with disabilities to fully benefit from the same services, in the same place and in the same or similar way as other customers.

In addition to the above key principles as provided for in the Customer Service Standard, the Township of East Zorra-Tavistock will be:

Sensitive: Service is provided in a manner that is respectful to an individual's needs.

Responsive: Service is delivered in a timely manner, considering the nature of the service and the accommodation required. For example, if needed, alternate formats will be provided by a specific deadline.

B. SCOPE

The subject policy is delivered in accordance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, and Regulation 429/07 Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, and is applicable to all policies, procedures and processes of Township of East Zorra-Tavistock.

C. POLICY**1. Assistive Devices**

Persons with disabilities shall be permitted to obtain, use or benefit from goods or services through the use of their own assistive devices.

In the event a person with a disability is hindered from accessing goods or services and after consulting with the customer, the Township of East Zorra-Tavistock will accommodate the customer by using any other assistive measures available such as but not limited to providing temporary access to other assistive devices or a Support Person.

2. Service animals

Service animals, such as but not limited to Guide dogs, Hearing dogs, Seizure Response dogs, other certified service animals shall be permitted entry to all Township facilities and meeting rooms which are open to the public. A service animal is defined as:

“Any animal where it is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to his or her disability and if the person provides a letter from a physician or nurse or other government issued certification confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability.”

Service animals are not permitted:

- Where food preparation is being undertaken; or
- as otherwise disallowed by law.

Where a Service Animal is to be denied access to a facility or meeting room, other accommodations may be afforded, such as:

- alternate meeting format, such as teleconference/videoconference, where technology permits;
- deliver the goods or service at an alternate time or location;
- any other assistive measures available to deliver a good or service to ensure equality of outcome.

Owners of Service Animals may receive information from staff as to the location of fresh water for the service animal and where service animals may be walked to relieve themselves.

3. Support Persons

Support Persons shall be permitted entry to all Township facilities and meeting rooms which are open to the public, except:

- when there are fees applied against participants by a third party; and
- the Support Person was not pre-registered; and
- no vacancy exists.

If admission to an event is permitted and fees are payable to a third party, the Support Person is permitted to attend the event at their own cost.

If admission to an event is permitted and fees are payable to the Township of East Zorra-Tavistock, the Support Person is permitted to attend at no cost.

Where a Support Person is necessary to protect the health or safety of the person with a disability or the health or safety of others on the premises, the person with a disability shall be accompanied by a Support Person when on the premises.

The customer shall determine whether a Support Person is necessary, however where an employee believes that a Support Person should be in attendance to protect the health and safety of the customer or others, the following criteria shall be used in consulting with the customer:

1. when there is a significant risk to the health and safety of the person with a disability or others (the mere possibility of risk is insufficient);
2. when the risk is greater than the risk associated with other customers;
3. when the risk cannot be eliminated or reduced by other means;
4. when the assessment of the risk is based on consideration of the duration of the risk, the nature and severity of the potential harm, the likelihood that the potential harm will occur, and the imminence of the potential harm; and
5. when the assessment of the risk is based on the individual's actual characteristics, not merely on generalizations, misperceptions, ignorance or fears about a disability.

4. Notice of Service Disruptions

In the event a temporary service disruption occurs that would limit a person with a disability from gaining access to township facilities, goods or service, the Township will

post notice or otherwise make the disruption known to customers in the following methods/places:

- Website; and
- Notice on entrance doors; and
- with Delivery Agents.

If an unexpected disruption occurs, persons with disabilities will be accommodated by the use of other means possible to deliver the goods and service, such as:

- the goods and service delivery agent may provide the goods or service directly to the person with a disability at an alternate place and time, as deemed appropriate; or
- If appropriate or required, deliver the goods and service to the person's place of residence; or
- Any other assistive measures available and deemed appropriate to deliver goods and services.

All notices of disruption shall include:

- the name of the event/service;
- the normal service location being impacted;
- alternate service locations;
- alternate service methods;
- hours of service availability;
- contact information; and
- any other information deemed appropriate to deliver a good or service.

As a guide, sample notices are attached to this policy as Appendix A and B.

5. Training

All employees and agents of the Township of East Zorra-Tavistock providing direct service to persons with a disability shall be trained in the various aspects of accessible customer service delivery.

All training, regardless of format, shall have regard for:

- An overview of the purposes of the AODA and an awareness of the subject Regional policy;
- Instruction on how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities;

- Instruction on interacting with people with disabilities who use assistive devices or require the assistance of a guide dog, other service animal or a support person;
- Instruction on the use of equipment or devices available, such as wheelchairs and TTY;
- Instruction on what to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing your services.

Depending on the services provided, the Department Manager and Supervisor can select from a variety of training options, including but not limited to:

- Review/Training of this policy with employees
- Use of the East Zorra-Tavistock - Accessible Customer Service – Training Manual (copy attached)
- Online Training <http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/mcass/serve-ability/splash.html>
- 3rd Party Training Courses & Seminars
- Combination of the above

Training shall be mandatory for all new employees upon their initial orientation. In addition all employees should receive “refresher” training on a regular basis and more comprehensive training should there be changes to this policy.

Training records shall be maintained for all training completed under this Policy.

6. Feedback process

Feedback may be provided by a person with a disability in the manner deemed most convenient to them, such as in person, by telephone, in writing, or by delivering an electronic text by email or on diskette or otherwise.

Feedback may be provided directly to the service provider or:

Chief Administrative Officer
90 Loveys Street, Box 100
Hickson ON N0J 1L0
Phone: 519-462-2697
Fax: 519-462-2961
Email: cao@twp.ezt.on.ca

All feedback will be kept in strict confidence and used to improve customer service. In addition, the author of the feedback will be provided a response in the format in which the feedback was received outlining actions deemed appropriate, if any.

7. Notice of Availability of Documents

This policy and any other document deemed to be a key in the delivery of goods and service will be made available upon request in a format that takes into account the person's disability to any person to whom it provides goods or services.

Notwithstanding the above, this policy will be made available on the Township of East Zorra-Tavistock's website, and made available to any person to whom it provides goods or services by any other method or format as is reasonable in the circumstances.

Appendix A

SAMPLE TEXT

Notice of Planned Service Disruption

There will be a scheduled service disruption at Address impacting the delivery of goods and services for customers from hour and date.

The goods and services unavailable during this service disruption are:

1. Service/Event name
2. Service/Event name
3. Service/Event name
4. Service/Event name
5. Service/Event name

The services listed above can be accessed at the following time, date, location, or method:

1. Service/Event name Location, date, time
2. Service/Event name Location, date, time
3. Service/Event name Location, date, time
4. Service/Event name Location, date, time
5. Service/Event name Location, date, time

We apologize for any inconvenience this disruption has caused. Should you require additional information on the delivery of this service, please call phone number or speak to an facility employee.

Appendix B

SAMPLE TEXT

Notice of Unplanned Service Disruption

Due to unforeseen circumstances, there is a service disruption at Address impacting the delivery of goods and services for customers from hour and date.

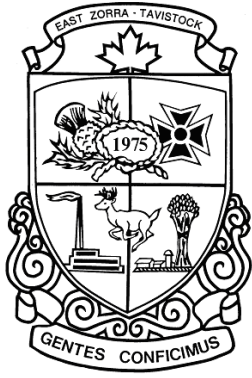
The goods and services unavailable during this service disruption are:

1. Service name
2. Service name
3. Service name
4. Service name
5. Service name

The services listed above can be accessed at the following time, date, location, or method:

1. Service/Event name Location, date, time
2. Service/Event name Location, date, time
3. Service/Event name Location, date, time
4. Service/Event name Location, date, time
5. Service/Event name Location, date, time

We apologize for any inconvenience this disruption has caused. Should you require additional information on the delivery of this service, please call call phone number or speak to an facility employee.



Township of East Zorra-Tavistock

Accessible Customer Service – Training Manual

*Guidelines for Delivering Accessible Customer Service at
the Township of East Zorra-Tavistock.*



January 1, 2010

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Part 1: Accessible Customer Service at the Township of East Zorra-Tavistock

The Township of East Zorra-Tavistock is committed to providing client-centred service. Through Our Common Purpose, we know that focusing on meeting client needs will help us build trust and confidence with our community. It's a key focus for our organization, and it's the right thing to do. That's why we are committed to ensuring that we comply with Provincial standards to provide accessible customer service to all our customers including those with a disability.

Provincial Accessibility Standards

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) was passed by the Ontario legislature with the goal of creating standards to improve accessibility across the province in five areas:

- Customer Service
- Information and Communication
- Transportation
- Employment
- Built Environment

The **Accessibility Standards for Customer Service is the first of the five standards and will take effect on Jan. 1, 2010**. This standard details specific requirements for all service providers, including municipalities.

The following is a summary of the key requirements of the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service:

1. Establish policies, practices and procedures for providing goods or services to people with disabilities.
2. Communicate with a person with a disability in a way that takes their disability into account.

3. Set a policy to allow people to use their own personal assistive devices to access our goods or services.
4. Allow people with disabilities to be accompanied by their guide dog or service animal in those areas of our premises that are open to the public, unless the animal is excluded by law.
5. Permit people with disabilities who use a support person to bring that person with them while accessing goods or services in premises open to the public or third parties.
6. Train staff, volunteers, contractors and any other people who interact with the public or other third parties on our behalf on a number of topics as outlined in the Customer Service Standards.
7. Establish a process for people to provide feedback on how you provide goods or services to people with disabilities. Also outline how you will respond to any feedback and take action on complaints.
8. Provide notice when facilities or services that people with disabilities rely on are unavailable.

Part 2: What do we mean when we say ‘Disability’?

Disabilities come in many different forms, sometimes obvious and sometimes not.

A ‘**Disability**’ as defined by the AODA includes:

- Any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness
- A condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability
- A learning disability, or a 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; (“handicap”)

Part 3: What is Accessible Customer Service?

Accessible customer service encompasses a variety of elements. The Township of East Zorra-Tavistock is committed to providing customer service to persons with disabilities in a manner that:

- Respects their **dignity** and **independence**
- Is **integrated** as fully as possible into the method of service delivery
- Ensures reasonable efforts are made to provide an **opportunity equal** to that offered to other customers to obtain and use our goods or services
- Allows persons with disabilities to benefit from the same services, in the same place, and in a similar way as other customers; in other words, an **equality** of outcome
- Is **sensitive** to an individual's need
- Is **responsive** by delivering service in a timely manner, considering the nature of the service and the specific accommodation required

Accessible customer service can mean many things. Mostly, it is the understanding that each individual may need a slightly different type of accommodation for the service we provide.

Some examples of this include:

- A person who is blind may need to have information read aloud to them
- An individual with a learning disability may need to have instructions written down
- Someone who uses a wheelchair may need help in finding an accessible route

Accessible customer service is **good** customer service — courteous, helpful and prompt.

Part 4: How should I interact with persons with disabilities who use assistive devices, the assistance of a service animal or a support person?

Assistive Devices:

Definition	Do	Don't
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Devices that people may bring with them or that are already on the premises and are used to assist persons with disabilities in carrying out activities or in accessing the services provided by the Township. • Include, but are not limited to, wheelchairs, walkers, white canes used by people who are blind or who have low vision, note-taking devices, portable magnifiers, recording machines, assistive listening devices, personal oxygen tanks and devices for grasping. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that the customer is permitted to enter the premises with the assistive device and to utilize the device unless excluded by law. • Remove potential barriers to the use of assistive devices where possible. • Offer assistive devices in a manner that respects the person's dignity and independence. • Ensure persons with disabilities are aware of assistive devices available on the providers' premises or otherwise supplied by the provider. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lean on or reach over a customer or their device.

Service Animals:

Definition	Do	Don't
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An animal trained specially to assist an individual with a disability. Many times it is readily apparent that the animal is used by a person with a disability for reasons relating to their disability. For example, a guide dog wearing a harness. • If it is not apparent that the animal is a service animal, then a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to a disability, or the customer may be asked to present a certificate to confirm that the service animal has been trained to assist a person with a disability by a professional service animal institution. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow service animals anywhere customers normally have access. • Permit the customer to keep the service animal with him or her, unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law from the premises i.e. areas where food is prepared. They are permitted access to dining or food ordering areas. • Leave the care and supervision of the service animal with the customer. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk to, touch or make eye contact with the service animal.

Support Persons:

Definition	Do	Don't
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Those who accompany a person with a disability to help them with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs or with access to goods or services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Permit customers and their support person to enter the premises together. Provide the person with a disability access to their support person while on the premises. Obtain consent from the customer if confidential information is going to be shared when a support person is present. Speak directly to your customer, not to the support person. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do not charge support persons an admission fee or access fee where a fee has been paid by an attendee to the Township of East Zorra-Tavistock (a separate fee for additional food or lodging is permissible). If a support person is admitted to an event and fees are payable to a third party, the support person is permitted to attend the event at their own cost.

Part 5: How can I provide excellent service to customers with disabilities?

Each table below defines a specific category of disability and outlines some tips to help you provide service to customers.

Always start with person first language, which means by saying "person with a disability", rather than "a disabled person". In any interaction, it means addressing the person's service needs, rather than focusing on the disability.

Hearing Disabilities:

Definition:	Tips For Serving Customers:
<p>Deaf — severe to profound hearing loss</p> <p>Hard of Hearing — a person who uses their residual hearing and speech to communicate</p> <p>Deafened — caused to hear poorly or not at all</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Attract the customer's attention before speaking by waving your hand and say 'hello' from outside of their personal space.• Look directly at the person• Use pen and paper to communicate if necessary• Speak clearly, keep your hands away from your face• Reduce background noise• Ensure appropriate lighting

Deafblind Disability:

Definition:	Tips For Serving Customers:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cannot see or hear to some degree• Many will be accompanied by a support person to help them communicate	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Speak directly to your customer, not the support person• Identify yourself to the support person• The customer may explain how you should communicate with them• Use clear, plain print on a contrasting colour on signage

Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities:

Definition:	Tips For Serving Customers:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Can mildly or profoundly limit ability to learn, communicate, do everyday activities and live independently• May be an invisible disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Don't assume what the customer can or cannot do• Use plain language• Take your time, be patient• After assisting, ask: "Do you require additional information?"• Provide one piece of information at a time - step-by-step instruction• Offer information in simple concepts

Learning Disabilities:

Definition:	Tips For Serving Customers:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affects how person acquires, interprets, retains or takes in information • May affect: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ language based learning ○ mathematics ○ writing, fine motor skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take some time, be patient • Demonstrate a willingness to assist • Speak normally, clearly and directly to your customer • Provide information in a way that works for your customer (i.e. pen and paper) • Be prepared to explain any materials you provide

Mental Health Disabilities:

Definition:	Tips For Serving Customers:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental illness is not a single disease but a broad classification for many disorders, including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ mood disorders, such as depression and bipolar disorder, which affect how one feels ○ schizophrenia, which affects how one perceives the world ○ anxiety disorders which affect how fearful one perceives places, events or situations to be ○ personality disorders, which affect how one sees oneself in relation to others ○ eating disorders, such as anorexia or bulimia, which influence how one feels about food and one's body image 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be confident and reassuring • Do not be confrontational • If the customer is in crisis, ask how best to help • Take your customer seriously • Don't take things personally

Speech or Language Disabilities:

Definition:	Tips For Serving Customers:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May have problems communicating • May have difficulty pronouncing words, may slur or stutter • May use communication boards or other assistive devices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't make assumptions • Give them time to get their point across - be patient • Ask questions that can be answered 'yes' or 'no', if possible • Don't interrupt or finish your customer's sentences • You may want to use pen and paper • Say: "I don't understand, can you repeat the question?"

Physical or Disabilities Affecting Mobility:

Definition:	Tips For Serving Customers:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May restrict a person in the following ways: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ control or speed of movements ○ co-ordination and balance ○ ability to grasp some objects ○ ability to walk long distances ○ ability to sit or stand for prolonged periods • Can be present at birth, result from disease, injury or be temporary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speak directly to the customer • Ask before you help • Respect personal space • Don't move any items the customer may have • Describe what you are going to do beforehand • Don't leave your customer in an awkward, dangerous or undignified position

Vision Disabilities:

Definition:	Tips For Serving Customers:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most individuals who are legally blind have some remaining vision - very few are totally blind • Low or no vision can restrict ability to read signs, locate landmarks, or see hazards • May use guide dog or white cane • May need to view written documents in large print or use a magnifier 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't assume the customer can't see you • Speak directly to your customer • Offer your elbow to guide - if they accept, walk slowly • Identify landmarks along the route • Be precise and descriptive with information • Don't leave the customer without advising them that you are leaving them • Offer to read, summarize or describe printed information • Determine the customers preferred means of "consuming" information and determine whether it can be provided in that format (large print, high contrast print, computer readable documents, etc.)

Most importantly, if you are nervous, relax! People with disabilities are generally aware they may need some accommodations and will work with you; just remember to ask how you can help.

Other General Tips for Good Customer Service:

- Avoid stereotypes and assumptions about what disability someone may have. If you are not sure about a disability, it's better to wait until the individual describes their situation to you rather than make your own assumptions. Many types of disabilities have similar characteristics and your assumptions may be wrong.
- Take the time to know the customer's needs and focus on meeting the needs, as with any customer
- Be patient, listen carefully
- Use appropriate terminology - Words can influence and reinforce the public's perception of people with disabilities. They can create a positive view of people with disabilities, or a negative view. Here are some tips that can help

make your communication and interaction with people with all types of disabilities more successful:

- Use “disability” or “disabled,” not “handicap” or “handicapped.”
- Don’t use terms such as “retarded,” “dumb,” “psycho,” “moron” or “crippled.” These words are very demeaning and disrespectful to people with disabilities.
- Remember to put people first. It is proper to say “person with a disability,” rather than “disabled person.”

Part 6: What happens if for some reason we can't serve a person with a disability?

It is possible that from time to time there will be disruptions in service, such as elevators under repair, renovations that limit access to an area or technology that is temporarily unavailable. If a disruption in service is planned, and expected, it is important to provide reasonable notice.

Customers with disabilities may go to a lot of trouble to access services such as booking specialized transit or arranging for their support person to attend. By providing reasonable notice of service unavailability, you can save the customer an unnecessary trip. Notice can be provided by several methods, such as on the Region's website, by telephone or in writing.

In the event of an unexpected disruption in service, provide notice quickly and in as many ways as possible. Please refer to the Temporary Disruption of Service template included in the Accessible Customer Service Policy. Consider offering alternative methods of service while informing those that may be impacted personally.

It is important to recognize that there are internal and external resources available to assist you in delivering service to persons with disabilities:

- Review the Township of East Zorra-Tavistock Accessible Customer Service Policy and the Township's Accessibility Plan
- Speak to your Manager and/or Supervisor
- Bell Relay Service Operators (BCRS) are available to assist in placing or receiving calls to and from persons who use a TTY (telephone typewriter or teletypewriter). There is no charge for local calls. To place a call through the BCRS call 1-800-855-0511
- Book a sign language interpreter at Ontario Interpreting Services
<http://www.chs.ca/en/ontario-interpreting-service/ontario-interpreting-services.html>
- Access resources from Municipal Associations, the Province, other local governments
 - www.amo.on.ca
 - <http://www.accessiblemunicipalities.ca/home.asp?itemid=12217>
 - <http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/en/mcass/programs/accessibility/>



Deliver to:

Township of East Zorra-Tavistock

90 Loveys Street, Box 100

Hickson ON N0J 1L0

Attention: AODA Customer Service Training Records

Name:

Department:

Date:

Signature:

By signing above and submitting this registration card, I hereby confirm my acceptance of the booklet titled 'Accessible Customer Service - EZT Training Manual'.

Further, I have read and understand the booklet material which constitutes completion of the mandatory Accessible Customer Service training as required under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (The Act). Also, any questions I have about this matter have been addressed by the trainer and/or my Manager/Supervisor.

Please register my compliance with the Act.