


AODA-CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARD POLICY			
Section:	Human Resources	Policy No.:	HR 5.00
Scope:	All employees, volunteers, students	Pages:	10
Approval Authority:	Michele Bell, Chief Executive Officer	Issued:	09/12/2011
Review		Revised:	18/03/2014/ 14/04/2017/ 14/10/2019, 15/05/2024

POLICY

Bruce Peninsula Association for Community Living (BPACL) is committed to being responsive to the diverse needs of all, by providing to the best of its ability, barrier free access to services, supports and employment. In the most accessible environment possible and based on the key principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity, the agency will comply with the requirements of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2005 (AODA), the Ontario Human Rights Code and other legislative requirements.

STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

BPACL believes in equal opportunity and is committed to providing a barrier-free environment that allows all people to maintain their independence and dignity. As an organization we respect and uphold the requirements set forth under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (2005)* and its associated regulations and strive to meet the needs of people with disabilities in a timely and effective manner.

Definitions

1. **Accessibility:** The term accessibility means giving people of all abilities opportunities to participate fully in everyday life. It is used to describe how widely a service, product, device, or environment is available to as many people as possible. Accessibility can be seen as the ability to access and benefit from a system, service, product or environment.
2. **Assistive device:** an item or device that help a person accomplish day to day activities (ie. Wheelchair, hearing aids, etc.)
3. **Communication:** the process or method used to transfer information from one person to another
4. **Disability:** the Ontario Human Rights Code and the AODA defines disability as
 - 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 impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness, or speech impediment

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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 1997

5. Service Animals

Any animal that has been trained to perform tasks that assist people who have a disability. The international assistance animal community has categorized three types

- Guide Animal-to guide the blind
- Hearing Animal-to signal the hearing impaired
- Service Animal- to do work for persons with disabilities other than blindness or deafness


6. Direct Support Professional

A person hired or chosen by a person with a disability to accompany a person with a disability in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs or with access to goods or services. The support person could be a paid personal support worker, a volunteer, a friend or a family member.

7. Barrier: An obstacle that prevents a person with a disability from doing the day-to-day activities that many take for granted. A barrier may make it difficult or impossible for people with disabilities to take part in society, to go shopping, work or take public transportation.

8. "As soon as Practicable": as soon as both possible and practical, taking into account all the facts and circumstances.

9. "Timely Manner": quickly, on time, or without wasting any time.

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GENERAL PRINCIPLES


In accordance with the *Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07*, this policy addresses the following:

- A. The Provision of Goods and Services to Persons with Disabilities:
- B. The Use of Assistive Devices
- C. The Use of Guide Dogs, Service Animals and Service Dogs
- D. The Use of Support Persons
- E. Notice of Service Disruptions
- F. Customer Feedback
- G. Training
- H. Notice of Availability and Format of Required Documents

A. The Provision of Goods and Services to Persons with Disabilities

BPACL will make every reasonable effort to ensure that its policies, practices and procedures are consistent with the principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity by:

- Ensuring that all customers receive the same value and quality of service
- Allowing persons with disabilities to do things in their own ways, at their own pace when accessing goods and services, if this does not present a safety risk
- Using alternative methods, when possible, to ensure that persons with disabilities have access to the same services, in the same place, and in the similar manner as our other customers.
- Permitting persons with disabilities to use assistive devices, support persons, and guide dogs, service dogs or service animals, as required when accessing services
- Considering person's needs when providing services
- Communicating in a manner that considers the person's disability
- Providing notice in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in the facilities or services usually used by persons with disabilities to access BPACL products and services and
- Provide Customer Feedback process and procedure for follow-up.

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ACCESSIBLE COMMUNICATION

BPACL will communicate in a manner that is respectful, individualized and appropriate considering the person’s disability. Consideration will be taken into account how the person expresses, receives or processes communication. BPACL and the person will agree upon the alternative format for documents taking into consideration available agency resources.

There are a variety of ways to make communication more accessible. These include:

- Making the original communication more accessible such as plain language
- Changing the usual method of communication
- Using assistive devices or services

B. Use of Assistive Devices

Person’s own assistive device(s):

Persons with disabilities may use their own assistive devices as required when accessing services provided by BPACL. Where possible BPACL staff will be trained and familiarized with various assistive devices that may be used by people with disabilities while accessing services


In cases where the assistive device presents a health and safety concern or where accessibility might be an issue, other reasonable measures will be used to ensure the access of services.

Assistive Devices Provided by BPACL

BPACL will ensure that staff, students and volunteers are trained and familiarized with any assistive devices available in our workplace that may be used by people with disabilities while accessing our services. In the event a person with a disability is hindered from accessing our services, BPACL will accommodate the person by using any other assistive measures available within reason.

C. The Use of Guide Dogs, Service Animals and Service Dogs

BPACL is committed to welcoming persons with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal on the part of its premises that are open to the public.


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- a) If a person with a disability is accompanied by a guide dog or other service animal, BPACL shall ensure that the person is permitted to enter the premises with the service animal. It is the responsibility of the person with a disability to keep the service animal under full control and with him or her unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law from the premises.
- b) If a service animal is excluded by law from the premises or it is deemed unsafe for a person with a disability to be accompanied by a guide dog or other service animal, BPACL shall ensure that other reasonable measures are available to enable the person with a disability to have the opportunity to obtain, use or benefit from BPACL services by bringing services to the person in a part of the premises where the animal is not restricted or by offering a safe location where the service animal can wait, if the person is able to be separated from the animal while obtaining the service and offering assistance to the person with a disability while they are separated from the service animal.
- c) BPACL shall ensure that all employees, volunteers and affiliates dealing with the public are trained in how to interact with persons with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal.
- d) If it is not readily apparent that the service animal is used by the person for reasons relating to his or her disability, BPACL reserves the right to request a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability.
- e) A person with a disability who is accompanied by a service animal must maintain care and control of the animal at all times
- f) In very exceptional circumstances where a service animal becomes out of control, causing a clear disruption or a threat to the health and safety of others, and the animal's behaviour is not corrected by the owner, a person with a disability may be asked to remove their service animal from the premise
- g) If a person in receipt of support, employee or agency affiliate has an allergy to animals; BPACL shall make every reasonable effort to meet the needs of the person with a disability without
- h) compromising the safety of all people.

D. Use of Support Person

BPACL is committed to welcoming persons with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person

- a) If a person with a disability is accompanied by a support person, BPACL shall ensure that both persons are permitted to enter the premises together and that

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the person with a disability is not prevented from having access to the support person while on the premises

- b) BPACL may require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person when on the premises, but only if support is necessary to protect the health and safety of the person with a disability or the health and safety of others on the premises. Before making a decision, BPACL will consult with the person who has a disability to understand their needs
- c) Support persons will be permitted access to BPACL services at no charge when there is a regular fee to access the service.
- d) Consent from the person with a disability is required when communicating private issues related to the person with a disability in the presence of a support person.

E. Notice of Disruptions in Service


Service disruptions may occur for reasons that may or may not be within the control or knowledge of Bruce Peninsula Association for Community Living. In the event of any temporary disruptions to facilities or services that customers with disabilities rely on to access or use goods or services, reasonable efforts will be made to provide advance notice. In some circumstances, such as in the situation of unplanned temporary disruptions, advance notice may not be possible.

If a notification needs to be posted, the following information will be included unless it is not readily available or known:

- Goods or services that are disrupted or unavailable;
- Reason for the disruption;
- Anticipated duration; and
- A description of alternative services or options.

When disruptions occur, Bruce Peninsula Association for Community Living will provide notice by:

- Posting notice [HR 5.00 \(a\) Notice of Service Disruption](#) in conspicuous places, including at the point of disruption, at the main entrance, and the nearest accessible entrance to the service disruption, and on BPACL website;
- Contacting customers with appointments by phone and notifying customers when they are making an appointment

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F. Customer Feedback

BPACL shall provide customers with the opportunity to provide feedback on the services provided to customers with disabilities. SupSer 3.30 Feedback and Complaint Policy. Information about the feedback process will be made available to the public on BPACL's website or on request in person at our office (314 George St. Wiarton).

Feedback Policy and Procedures will be made available to people with disabilities in accessible formats or with appropriated communication supports, on request.

G. Training


Training will be provided to:

- Management, employee, volunteer and Board members with BPACL
- Those who are involved in the development and approval of customer service policies, practices and procedures

All new employees, volunteers and Board Members will complete AODA training at the time of orientation. Re- training will be provided in the event of changes to legislation, policies, procedures or practices.

Delivery of Training will be conducted in the following method during orientation:

- Review the purpose of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2005*
- Review the requirements of the *Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Ontario Regulation 429/07*
- Review of BPACL AODA policies and procedures
- Review "May I help you" package which covers the following topics
 - how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities;
 - Instructions on how to interact with people with disabilities who:
 - Use assistive devices;
 - Require the assistance of a guide dog or other service animal; or
 - Require the use of a support person
 - Instructions on how to use equipment or devices that are available at our premises or that we provide that may help people with disabilities;

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- Instructions on what to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing our services.
- HR downloads Training
 1. AODA Customer Service Training (Comprehensive)
 2. Understanding Human Rights Training (AODA Edition)

Record of Training

Bruce Peninsula Community Living will maintain a record of training that includes the dates training was provided on AIMS HR Personnel files.

H. Notice of Availability and Format of Documents

Bruce Peninsula Community Living will ensure that its process for receiving and responding to information is accessible to persons with a disability by providing, or arranging for the provision of accessible formats and communications supports, upon request.

Upon request, the responding manager or support worker will provide, or will arrange for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports for persons with disabilities in a timely manner that takes into account the person's accessibility needs due to the disability. The accessible format and/or communication supports requested will be at a cost that is no more than the regular cost charged to another person.


The responding manager or support worker will consult with the person making the request to determine the reasonableness and suitability of an accessible format or communication support.

BPACL will post on the website and at 314 George St. Office the availability of accessible formats and communication supports upon request. Form [HR 5.00 \(b\)](#)

Integrated Accessibility Standard (IASR)

The IASR establishes accessibility standards and introduces requirements for information and communications, employment and transportation.

Definitions

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1. Accessible formats-formats that are an alternative to standard print and are accessible to people with disabilities. Assessable formats may include large print, braille, and audio electronic formats.
2. Communication Supports- supports that people with disabilities may need to access information. Some examples include plain language formats, sign language, as well as reading out loud, captioning, or using written notes to communicate.

Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

BPACL has developed and maintained a Multi-Year Accessibility Plan which outlines the actions put in place to improve opportunities for people with disabilities, as well as the agency’s strategy to prevent and remove barriers to meet its requirements under the Act and regulations. The Multi-Year Accessibility Plan will be reviewed and updated every 5 years by the Chief Executive Officer with input from the operational team. This plan will be made available on our website and upon request, in an accessible format.

Accessible Websites and Web Content

BPACL website and all web content will conform to the World Wide Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.0) level A.

All Employment Standard requirements under the IASR are imbedded into the related Human Resource and Health and Safety Policies

HR 1.00 Recruitment and selection


[HR 1.40](#) AODA Individual Accommodation Plan- includes:

- Workplace Emergency Response Information
- Performance Management and Redeployment

[HS 6.40](#) Early and Safe Return to Work

Accessible Formats and Communication Supports for Employees

BPACL will ensure that employees are aware of our policies for employees with disabilities and any changes to these policies as they occur

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If an employee with a disability requests it, BPACL will provide or arrange for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports for the following:

- Information needed in order to perform their job
- Information that is generally available to all employees in the workplace

BPACL will consult with the employee making the request to determine the best way to provide the accessible format or communication support

POLICY REVIEW/REVISION

Annual review of this policy and procedure will be conducted Senior Management to ensure it is effective and that the contents are current to legislation and best practices. All customer feedback will be taken into consideration

REFERENCES

SupSer 3.30 Feedback and Complaint Policy

FORMS

[HR 5.00 \(a\)](#)

[HR 5.00 \(b\)](#)

HR 5.00 (c)