

Customer Service Accessibility Policy

The College of Opticians of Ontario (the “College”)

Purpose and Application

Under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA), all Colleges must meet the requirements of accessibility standards established by regulation. This policy establishes the accessibility standards for customer service for the College, in accordance with Ontario Regulation 429/07. This policy applies to all employees, agents, volunteers and contracted service staff of the College.

Definitions

Accessible means customer service is provided in a manner that is capable of being easily understood or appreciated, easy to get at, capable of being reached or entered, and obtainable.

Assistive Device means any device or mechanism that assists a person with a disability in accessing, and benefiting from the services provided. Assistive devices may include, but are not limited to, American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation, wheelchair, walker, cane, assistive listening device, visual alarms, or assistive software programs.

Disability means:

- a) Any degree of physical 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 impairment, 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,
- 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*.

Guide Dog means a dog trained as a guide for a blind person and having the qualifications prescribed by the *Blind Persons' Rights Act* R.S.O. 1990, c. B.7, s. 1 (1).

Service animal is an animal that provides assistance for a person with a disability. It may be readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to his/her disability

or a person may be asked to provide a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability

Policy Statement

Goods and services will be provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of all people with disabilities. The provision of services to persons with disabilities will be integrated wherever possible. Persons with disabilities will be given an opportunity equal to that given to others, to obtain, use or benefit from the goods and services provided by and on behalf of the College.

Policy Requirements

1) Use of Service Animals, Support Persons, and Assistive Devices

- a. If a person with a disability is accompanied by a guide dog or other service animal, the College will ensure that the person is permitted to enter any facility with the animal and to keep the animal with him or her unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law. Where a service animal is excluded by law, the College will ensure that other measures are available to enable the person with a disability to obtain, use and benefit from the College's goods and services.
- b. If a person with a disability is accompanied by a support person, the College will ensure that both persons are permitted to enter any facility, and that the person with a disability is not prevented from having access to the support person. Where and if a fee is charged for the support person, prior notice of the fee will be made available.
- c. If a person with a disability uses one or more assistive devices to obtain, use or benefit from our goods and services, the College will allow the person to use the assistive device(s) when accessing our service. The College will also ensure that our staff is trained and familiar with various assistive devices at our premises that the person with a disability may use.

2) Notice of Temporary Disruptions

The College will provide notice of temporary disruptions. The notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of any available, alternative services. Notice will be made conspicuous and may be displayed at the location of the disruption, on the website, in a mailing or another reasonable method.

3) Accessibility Training Policy

- a. Training will be provided to every person dealing with members of the public, or who participates in developing the College's policies, practices, and procedures governing the provision of goods and services to the public. This includes employees, volunteers, agents, contractors, and others who provide goods and services on behalf of the College.

- b. The training includes the following information:
 - i. The purpose of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*
 - ii. How to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disabilities
 - iii. How to interact with persons with disabilities who use an assistive device, or require the assistance of a service animal or support person
 - iv. How to use equipment made available by the College to help people with disabilities access goods and services
 - v. What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing the College's goods and services
- c. Training will be provided to each person according to his or her needs and duties and as soon as is practicable after he or she is assigned the applicable duties. Training will be provided on an ongoing basis in connection with changes to policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of goods or services to persons with disabilities.

4) **Feedback process** ([PDF Form](#))

- a. The College employs a feedback process through which people with disabilities are encouraged to provide information and feedback about the goods and services they receive. Feedback can be received in ways appropriate to the person's disabilities and includes in person, by mail, email, telephone, fax or other methods.
- b. The feedback process is promoted on the website and through other printed outreach methods. A copy of the feedback form is available upon request.

NOTICE of **SERVICE DISRUPTION**

The estimated length of the temporary disruption is from _____ to _____

The following services and/or facilities are currently unavailable:

_____ due to _____

_____ due to _____

The following alternative services and/or facilities are available:

_____ [insert alternative service or facility name and location]

Thank you for your patience in this matter.

For questions or additional information please contact:

Name:

_____ [insert department manager or supervisory staff person's name]

Phone: _____

Fax : _____

Email: _____