



John Nater, MP

Perth—Wellington

“Accessibility Standards for Customer Service” Policy Document

Drafted: March 2016

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The following policy is adopted in accordance with Ontario Regulation 429/07 the “Accessibility Standards for Customer Service” which came into force on January 1, 2008. The Regulation establishes accessibility standards specific to customer service for public sector organizations and other persons or organizations that provide goods and services to members of the public or other third parties

OBJECTIVES

John Nater, MP (the MP) is committed to providing quality goods and services that are accessible to all persons he serves. This policy also applies to all individuals who deal with members of the public or other third parties on behalf of the MP, whether the person does so as an employee, agent, volunteer, or student on placement, and ensures that all citizens with disabilities are accommodated. This policy is required based on the specifications of Ontario Regulation 429/07 to ensure consistency from all persons delivering services in the offices of the MP.

BACKGROUND

Ontario passed the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) in 2005, becoming the first jurisdiction in Canada to commit to breaking down barriers through mandatory standards. The AODA allows the government to develop specific standards of accessibility that are designed to help make Ontario more accessible.

This policy is drafted in accordance with the "Accessibility Standards for Customer Service" and addresses the following:

- The provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities;
- The use of assistive devices;
- Service animals;
- Support persons;
- Notice of temporary disruptions in services and facilities;
- Staff training;
- Customer feedback regarding the provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities; and
- Notice of availability and format of documents.

DEFINITIONS

Assistive Device: A device used to assist persons with disabilities in carrying out activities or in accessing the services of persons or organizations covered by the Customer Service Standard.

Disability: Shall mean the same as the definition of a disability found in the Ontario Human Rights Code.

Service Animal: Any animal where it is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to his or her disability.

Support Persons: Any person whether a paid professional, volunteer, family member or friend who accompanies a person with a disability in order to assist them with communications, personal care, medical needs or with access to goods or services.

POLICY

a) Provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities

The MP will use reasonable efforts to ensure that policies and practices are consistent with the following principles:

- the MP's goods and services are provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.
- the provisions of the MP's goods and services to persons with disabilities are integrated with those provided to persons who do not have disabilities unless an alternative measure is necessary.
- when communicating with persons with a disability, the MP will do so in a manner that takes into account the person's abilities.
- persons with disabilities may use assistive devices and/or support persons in the access of goods and services.

b) 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. Exceptions may occur in situations where the MP has determined that the assistive device may pose a risk to the health and safety of another individual. It should be noted that 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.

Assistive devices may include but are not limited to:

- communication aids
- cognition aids
- personal mobility aids
- medical aids

c) Service Animals

Service animals, such as, but not limited to, Guide dogs, Hearing dogs, Seizure Response dogs, or other certified service animals, shall be permitted entry to all MP offices and meeting rooms which are open to the public. Service animals are required to be leashed or otherwise properly controlled so the animal does not run at large.

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 an office or meeting room, other accommodations may be afforded, such as:

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

If a service animal is unruly or disruptive (e.g. barking) the person with a disability, or their support person, may be asked to remove the animal from the office.

d) Support Persons

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.

Support Persons shall be permitted entry to all offices and meeting rooms which are open to the public.

e) Notice of temporary disruptions in services and facilities

The MP is aware that the operation his offices and their service facilities is important to the public, however, temporary disruptions in offices/services may occur. The MP will make reasonable effort to provide notice of the disruption, including information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative facilities/services, if any, that may be available. The MP will make reasonable effort to provide prior notice where possible.

To inform the public of temporary disruptions, the MP will provide notice by posting information in visible places such as office entrance doors, on the MP website (www.johnnater.ca) and by any other method that may be reasonable under the circumstances as soon as possible.

All notices shall include;

- name of the office
- normal service being impacted
- alternative service locations/methods
- contact information
- anticipated duration

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:

- alternative locations/time
- if appropriate/required, delivery of the goods/service to the person's place of residence
- any other measure deemed appropriate

f) Staff Training

All employees and agents of the MP 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 corresponding corporate 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 the MP's services.

Timeline for Training

Training will be provided as soon as practicable upon an individual being assigned the applicable duties as well as on an ongoing basis as changes occur to the MP's policies, procedures and practices governing the provision of goods or services to persons with disabilities. The MP will maintain records of the training, including the date, type of training and names of individuals trained.

g) Customer Feedback

The MP is committed to providing high quality goods and services to all members of the public he serves. Feedback from the public is welcomed as it may identify areas that require change and encourage continuous service improvements.

Feedback from a member of the public about the delivery of goods and services to persons with disabilities may be given in a manner most convenient to them such as via telephone, in person, in writing, in electronic format, TTY or through other methods.

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

h) 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 MP'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.

Note: This policy is delivered in accordance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, and Regulation 429/07 Accessibility Standards for Customer Service.