



# ACCESSIBLE CUSTOMER SERVICE POLICY

**Updated April 22, 2016**

## **Providing Goods and Services to People with Disabilities**

### **1. Purpose:**

The Accessible Customer Service Policy of the Town of Prescott has been developed in accordance with the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service (Ontario Regulation 429/07), and is required for the implementation of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA).

### **2. Policy Statement and Organizational Commitment:**

The Town of Prescott strives at all times to provide its goods and services in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. We are also committed to giving people with disabilities the same opportunity to access our goods and services and allowing them to benefit from the same services, in the same place and in a similar way as other customers.

### **3. The Provision of Goods and Services to Persons with Disabilities**

The Town of Prescott is committed to excellence in serving all customers including people with disabilities and make reasonable efforts to:

- Provide its goods and services in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities.
- Give people with disabilities the same opportunity to access our goods and services and allow them to benefit from the same services, in the same place and in a similar way as other customers.

### **4. Communication with Persons with Disabilities**

The Town of Prescott will communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability. Staffs who communicate with customers will be trained on how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities.

The Town of Prescott is committed to providing fully accessible telephone service to our customers. Staff will be trained to communicate with customers over the telephone in clear and plain language, to speak clearly and slowly and to tailor their responses as much as possible in support of the individual.

## **5. Correspondence, Invoices and Other Documentation**

The Town of Prescott is committed to providing accessible information to all of our customers. For this reason, correspondence, invoices and other documentation will be provided in large print or by e-mail, upon request.

The Town of Prescott may provide a document, or information contained in a document, in a format that takes into account the person's disability. The Town of Prescott and the person with a disability may agree upon the format to be used for the document or information.

Any questions customers may have about the content of a document will be answered in person, by telephone or email.

Should a customer require an alternative form of communication, such as a document printed in Braille or the need for the services of a sign language interpreter, the Town will make every possible attempt to accommodate those needs. In order to accommodate certain requests and services, the customer may be required to provide advance notice to the Town.

## **6. Assistive Devices**

The Town of Prescott is committed to serving people with disabilities who use assistive devices to obtain, use or benefit from our goods and services. Staff will be trained and become familiar with various assistive devices that may be used by customers with disabilities while accessing our goods or services.

The Town of Prescott will also ensure that staff are aware of and where appropriate know how to use the assistive devices available on our premises for customers, including elevators and lifts.

## **7. Use of Service Animals and Support Persons**

The Town of Prescott is committed to welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal, in the areas of our premises that are open to the public and other third parties. All staff, volunteers and others dealing with the public will be properly trained in how to interact with people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal.

An animal is a service animal for a person with a disability:

- i) If it is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to his or her disability; or
- ii) If the person provides a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability.

The Town of Prescott is committed to welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person. Any person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person will be allowed to enter the Town of Prescott's buildings with his or her support person. At no time will a person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person be prevented from having access to his or her support person while on our premises.

A "support person" means, in relation to a person with a disability, another person who accompanies him or her in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs or with access to goods or services.

In order to accommodate a person with a disability and their support person at an event where attendance is by pre-arranged seating, advanced booking may be required.

Customers will be informed of this policy by a notice that will be posted in each building and on the Town of Prescott website.

## **8. Notice of Temporary Disruption**

The Town of Prescott will provide customers with notice in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in the facilities or services usually used by people with disabilities. This notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available.

The notice will be placed at all public entrances and service counters on our premises, by posting it on the Town of Prescott website, media, or by such other method as is reasonable in the circumstances.

## **9. Training**

The Town of Prescott will make training available to all employees, volunteers and others who deal with the public or other third parties on their behalf, and all those who are involved in the development and approvals of customer service policies, practices and procedures. The accessible customer service training will be provided during orientation, in a timely manner before staff commence their formal duties.

New employees, volunteers and others shall also be informed, on an individual basis, of the Town's duty, as an employer, to accommodate their individual accessibility needs, as per guidelines, and shall also be informed that the Town will provide individualized workplace emergency response information to employees who have a disability.

Agents working on various projects for the municipality and who have been approved by successful tender shall have the opportunity to receive training from the Town of Prescott to meet the requirements of Ontario Regulation 429/07. Information will be provided as part of the tender package. All contracts will be required to certify they will conform to all Town accessibility policies prior to beginning work for the Town.

Training will include the following:

- The purposes of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and the requirements of the customer service standard
- How to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities
- How to interact with people with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or a support person
- The types of and training on appropriate devices based on the nature of their duties.
- What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing the Town of Prescott's goods and services
- The Town of Prescott's policies, practices and procedures relating to the customer service standard.

Staff will be trained on policies, practices and procedures that affect the way goods and services are provided to people with disabilities. Staff will also be trained on an ongoing basis when changes are made to these policies, practices and procedures.

#### **10. Accessibility Regulations for Contracted Services**

In accordance with Ontario Regulation 429/07, Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Sect. 6, every provider of goods and services shall ensure that every person who deals with members of the public or participates in the developing of the service providers policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of goods and services to members of the public, shall be trained on the following:

1. How to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disability
2. How to interact with persons with disabilities who use assistive devices or require the assistance of a guide animal, or a support person
3. How to use equipment that is available on the premises that may help in the provision of goods or services
4. What to do if a person with a particular type of disability is having difficulty accessing the provider's goods or services
5. Information on the policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of goods and services to people with disabilities.

In the Town of Prescott, all tenders and RFP's shall require the contractor to certify that they have met these conditions. Should a contractor not have received

the appropriate training, training can be requested from the Town of Prescott at a time and in a format the Town deems reasonable.

### **11. Feedback Process**

The ultimate goal of the Town of Prescott is to meet and surpass customer expectations while serving customers with disabilities. Comments on our services regarding how well those expectations are being met are welcome and appreciated.

Feedback regarding the way the Town of Prescott provides goods and services to people with disabilities can be made by using a feedback form, by mail, e-mail, or verbally. All feedback will be directed to the Manager of Safety Compliance & Accessibility. Customers can expect a response within thirty (30) days.

### **12. Modifications to this or other Policies**

The Town of Prescott is committed to developing customer service policies that respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. Therefore, no changes will be made to this policy before considering the impact on people with disabilities.

Any policy of the Town of Prescott that does not respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities will be modified or removed.

### **13. Questions about this Policy**

This policy exists to achieve service excellence to customers with disabilities. If anyone has a question about the policy, or if the purpose of a policy is not understood, an explanation should be provided by, or referred to the Clerk of the Town of Prescott.

We will provide our accessibility policies to persons with disabilities in an accessible format, upon request.



## ACCESSIBLE CUSTOMER SERVICE FEEDBACK FORM

### Providing Goods and Services to People with Disabilities

Thank you for visiting the Town of Prescott. We value all of our customers and strive to meet everyone's needs. This feedback form may be submitted by mail, fax, email or dropped off at any Town facility.

Please tell us the date, time and location of your visit:

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Did we respond to your customer service needs today?  YES  NO

Was our customer service provided to you in an accessible manner?

YES  SOMEWHAT  NO (please explain below)

Did you have any problems accessing our goods and services?

YES (please explain below)  SOMEWHAT (please explain below)  NO

Please add any other comments you may have:

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I provide my comments as information only and do not wish to receive a response

I wish to receive a response to my comments

Contact information:

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