

LOWER TRENT CONSERVATION

Accessibility Policy & Accessible Customer Service Plan

September, 2018



*Customer Service, Information & Communications,
Employment, Design of Public Spaces*



Prepared in accordance with:
Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (O. Reg. 191/11)
under the ***Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005***

Approved by: Lower Trent Conservation Board of Directors
Date: September 13, 2018

This document outlines the policies that Lower Trent Conservation (LTC) will put in place to improve opportunities for people with disabilities and to comply with the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (Ontario Regulation 191/11) under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*.

It also includes an Accessible Customer Service plan intended to meet the requirements of the Customer Service Standards, under the Integrated Accessibility Standards, and applies to the provision of goods, services or facilities to the public or other third parties, not to the goods themselves.

Examples of when these policies should be considered include:

- *When providing orientation to new staff, board members, volunteers*
- *When making changes to websites and public information*
- *When someone asks for accessible information*
- *When LTC is seeking feedback*
- *When advertising positions and hiring new employees*
- *When LTC has one or more employees with a permanent or temporary disability*
- *When building new or making major changes to recreational trails, beach access routes, parking spaces, service counters, or waiting areas*
- *When providing goods, services or facilities to people with disabilities*

For more information:

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/accessibility-laws>

BACKGROUND

About the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*

In 2005, the Government of Ontario passed the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)*. Its goal is to make Ontario accessible by 2025.

The Province has developed accessibility standards as part of the *AODA*. These standards are rules that businesses and organizations in Ontario need to follow to identify, remove, and prevent barriers so that people with disabilities will have more opportunities to participate in everyday life.

The Accessibility Standards for Customer Service was the first standard to become law as a regulation.

The next four standards include information and communications, employment, transportation, and design of public spaces (built environment). All five standards have been combined under one regulation, the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation. This is now law and the requirements are being phased in between 2011 and 2025.

Accessible Customer Service Plan

Lower Trent Conservation (LTC) has developed an Accessible Customer Service Plan, first approved by the Board of Directors in 2011. The plan is in place to meet the requirements under the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service (Ontario Regulation 191/11) under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (Appendix 1.0).

Applicability of the Integrated Accessibility Standards

The Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (Ontario Regulation 191/11) applies to all organizations and businesses in Ontario with one or more employee. An organization's requirements and timelines for compliance depend on which of the following classes it falls under.

- Ontario Government and Legislative Assembly
- Designated public sector organizations with 50+ employees
- Designated public sector organizations with 1-49 employees

- Private and non-profit organizations with 50+ employees
- Private and non-profit organizations with 1-49 employees

LTC is classified as a “small organization” in the regulation (i.e. non-profit organization with 1-49 employees). The policies in this document have been developed following the criteria and timelines for this classification under the regulation.

The Standards for Transportation do not apply to LTC.

Timelines for Implementation

This document identifies the timelines for implementation set out in the *Act* and its regulations. The Authority will work towards implementing the policies on or before the deadlines, to improve opportunities for people with disabilities.

GENERAL POLICIES

Statement of Commitment

LTC is committed to treating all people in a way that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence.

LTC is committed to providing individuals with disabilities the same opportunity to access our goods, services or facilities in a way that respects their dignity and independence and allows them to benefit from those services.

LTC is committed to improving accessibility and will put the following policies into practice as required by the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*.

Accessible Customer Service

Implementation Deadline: January 1, 2012 (Policy in effect)

LTC has adopted an Accessible Customer Service Plan (Appendix 1.0) that applies to the provision of goods, services or facilities at premises owned and operated by Lower Trent Conservation.

Training employees and volunteers

Implementation Deadline: January 1, 2016

LTC will provide training on:

- the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation requirements that apply to the Authority, and
- aspects of the Ontario Human Rights Code that apply to persons with disabilities

LTC will provide training to:

- all employees and volunteers
- anyone who is involved in developing LTC's policies (e.g., Board of Directors)

LTC will ensure that training has been provided to:

- anyone who provides goods, services, or facilities on behalf of LTC.

Training will be provided:

- as part of the orientation requirements for new staff and board members.
- on an ongoing basis through presentations at staff meetings or provision of resource materials
- to volunteers, prior to their involvement in a project
- when accessibility policies are revised.

A record of training for staff, board members, and volunteers will be maintained.

ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS FOR INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS

LTC is committed to meeting the communications needs of people with disabilities. LTC will work with people with disabilities to determine their information and communications needs.

If the information or communications are unconvertible, LTC will provide an explanation as to why the information or communications are unconvertible and a summary of the unconvertible information or communications.

Making emergency information accessible to the public

Implementation Deadline:
January 1, 2012

If LTC prepares emergency procedures, plans or public safety information and makes the information available to the public, we will provide the information in an accessible format or with appropriate communication supports, as soon as practicable, upon request.

What is emergency and public safety information?

There are many types of emergency and public safety information, for example:

- Emergency plans and procedures (e.g., tour boat instructions on how to use a lifejacket)
- Maps, warning signs and evacuation routes (e.g., a “Warning: High Voltage” sign)
- Information about alarms or other emergency alerts (e.g., a brochure explaining how a hotel fire alarm works)

Real-time emergency information (such as announcements and alarms) is not included in the standard.

Making Information Available to the Public

Implementation Deadline: January 1, 2017

LTC will review the information it provides to the public (e.g., our website, email format, brochures, presentations, etc.) to determine if there is anything that could be done to make it easier to read, see, hear or understand for someone with a disability.

- We will advise the public on our website and other communication materials that we will work with persons with disability, upon request, to determine how we can make information more accessible.
- When someone asks for accessible information, staff will work with them to try to meet their needs (e.g. larger print, reading it aloud, etc.).
- We will provide accessible information as soon as possible.

Making Feedback Accessible

Implementation Deadline: January 1, 2016

LTC provides multiple methods whereby people can submit comments (e.g., phone, email, mail). If none of these are acceptable, we will work with the person with a disability, upon request, to find a solution.

ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS FOR EMPLOYMENT

Making Hiring Accessible

Implementation Deadline: January 1, 2017

We will let job applicants know that LTC will accommodate disabilities during the selection process by:

- Including this information in job postings and on the website
- Speaking or corresponding with applicants directly, if they are selected for an interview.

We will consult with job applicants that request accommodation to make adjustments that best suit their needs.

We will notify successful applicants of our policies for accommodating employees with disabilities by:

- including the information in the offer letter or in a separate email, or
- calling applicants directly or speak to them in person.

Advise staff of policies for supporting employees with disabilities

Implementation Deadline: January 1, 2017

We will advise current and new staff about LTC's policies for supporting employees with disabilities through:

- staff orientation
- emails
- staff meetings, and/or
- one-on-one conversations.

We will advise all staff when policies change.

Making Information accessible to employees

Implementation Deadline: January 1, 2017

If asked, LTC will work with any employee with a disability to make workplace information accessible, providing the information in an accessible format or with communication supports suited to the individual needs of the employee.

Workplace information means:

- information that employees need to perform their jobs, and
- general information that is available to all employees at work.

Helping Employees with disabilities stay safe

Implementation Deadline: January 1, 2012

If LTC knows that an employee with a temporary or permanent disability might need help in an emergency, LTC will:

- Provide them with customized workplace emergency information
- Obtain their consent, then share this information with anyone designated to help them in an emergency
- Review the emergency response information when:
 - the employee changes work locations
 - the employee's overall accommodation needs are reviewed

→ LTC's emergency response policies are reviewed

Make performance management, career development and job changes accessible to employees

Implementation Deadline: January 1, 2017

LTC will take into account the accommodation needs of employees with disabilities when:

- Using performance management processes;
- Providing information about career development and advancement opportunities;
- Restructuring and/or revising staff positions and duties.

ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS FOR DESIGN OF PUBLIC SPACES (ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS FOR THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT)

LTC will meet the Accessibility Standards for the Design of Public Spaces when building or making major modifications to public spaces.

Public spaces include:

- Recreational trails/beach access routes
- Accessible off street parking
- Service-related elements like service counters, fixed queuing lines and waiting areas

Make recreational trails and beach access routes accessible

Implementation Deadline: January 1, 2018

LTC will consult with the public and people with disabilities when we start planning to:

- build new recreational trails
- make major changes to existing ones

What are recreational trails?

Recreational trails are public trails intended to allow pedestrians to do recreation and leisure activities, such as walk through parks, access playgrounds or get closer to nature.

They do not include:

- wilderness trails
- backcountry trails
- portage routes, or
- trails only meant for cross-country skiing, mountain biking or driving motorized recreational vehicles, such as snowmobiles and all-terrain vehicles.

- add a boardwalk or ramp.

We will consult on:

- the trail's slope
- the need for and location of ramps on the trail, and
- the need for, location of and design of rest areas, passing areas, viewing areas, amenities and other features on the trail.

If a beach access route is proposed, no consultation is required under the *Act*, and LTC will determine consultation needs on a case-by-case basis.

New and redeveloped recreational trails and beach access routes will follow technical requirements including but not limited to:

- minimum width and height
- edge protection/barrier
- maximum slope
- signage

Exceptions may apply if requirements cannot be met because:

- it is not practical due to existing site constraints (e.g. rocks bordering the route)
- there may be negative effects on properties protected by the *Ontario Heritage Act*, the *Historic Sites and Monuments Act (Canada)* or the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO's) World Heritage List, or
- there may be negative effects on water, fish, wildlife, plants, invertebrates, species at risk, ecological integrity or natural heritage values.

Make Parking Accessible

[Implementation Deadline: January 1, 2018](#)

Should LTC develop new or redevelop off-street parking, technical requirements apply, including but not limited to:

1. Off-street parking facilities must include two types of accessible parking spaces:

- wider spaces for people who use mobility aids, such as wheelchairs, and
 - standard-width spaces for people who use mobility assistive devices, such as canes, crutches and walkers.
2. Off-street parking facilities must include a minimum number of each type of accessible parking space, depending on the total number of parking spaces.
 3. Accessible parking spaces must be marked with signage and have access aisles (a space between parking spaces) that allow people with disabilities to get in and out of their vehicles.

This would not apply if:

- It is not practical to include the minimum number of accessible parking spaces due to an existing site constraint.
- The parking lot is not open to the public.

Make service counters, queuing guides and waiting areas accessible

[Implementation Deadline: January 1, 2018](#)

- ***Service counters***

Should LTC build new or make major changes to our existing service counter, we must make it accessible to people who use mobility aids, such as wheelchairs.

- ***Waiting areas***

If LTC builds a new or makes major changes to our existing waiting areas we will ensure that there continues to be a space in the waiting area where someone using a mobility aid, such as a wheelchair, can wait to receive service.

To enable further accommodation, seating should not be fixed to the floor.

MODIFICATIONS TO THIS OR OTHER POLICIES

This policy, its appendices, and related procedures will be reviewed, as required, in the event of legislative changes.

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

IMPLEMENTATION

LTC will review and modify this plan annually to ensure its effectiveness, to ensure the policy complies with the *Act* and regulations, and to identify action items needed to ensure implementation of the policies on or before the compliance dates.

The plan will be reviewed annually by staff. Minor modifications will be made by staff, as required. If major modifications are required that will result in budget implications, approval of the Board of Directors will be sought.

The Board of Directors will review the plan, at a minimum, every 4 years.

APPENDIX 1.0

LOWER TRENT CONSERVATION **Accessible Customer Service Plan**

Providing Goods, Services or Facilities to People with Disabilities



Prepared in accordance with:
Integrated Accessibility Standards (O. Reg. 191/11)
under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*

Table of Contents

Intent	1
Scope	1
Definitions	1
Policies	3
A. Provision of Goods, Services or Facilities to Persons with Disabilities	3
B. Use of Assistive Devices	4
C. Use of Guide Dogs and Service Animals	4
D. Use of Support Persons	4
E. Notice of Service Disruptions	5
F. Customer Feedback	6
G. Training.....	7
H. Notice of Availability and Format of Required Documents	8
Administration	8
Referenced Documents	9
Appendices	
A. Best Practices for Interacting with Customers with Disabilities	10
B. Notification of Service Disruptions	17
Sample Documents for Notifying the Public about Disruptions in Service	18
C. Customer Feedback	19
Customer Feedback Form	20
Record of Customer Feedback	21
D. Training	22
Training Resources	23
Record of Training Form	24

Intent

This plan is intended to meet the requirements of Accessibility Standards for Customer Service (Ontario Regulation 191/11) under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, and applies to the provision of goods, services or facilities to the public or other third parties, not to the goods themselves.

All goods, services or facilities provided by Lower Trent Conservation shall follow the principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity.

Scope

- a) The policies in this plan apply to the provision of goods, services or facilities at premises owned and operated by Lower Trent Conservation.
- b) The policies in this plan apply to Directors of the Board, employees, volunteers, agents, consultants and/or contractors who deal with the public, or other third parties that act on behalf of Lower Trent Conservation, including when the provision of goods, services or facilities occurs off the premises of Lower Trent Conservation such as public events, meetings, etc.
- c) The section of this plan that addresses the use of guide dogs and service animals only applies to the provision of goods, services or facilities that take place at premises owned and operated by Lower Trent Conservation.

Definitions

Assistive Device – is a technical aid, communication device, or other instrument that is used to maintain or improve the functional abilities of people with disabilities. Personal assistive devices are typically devices that customers bring with them such as a wheelchair, walker, or a personal

oxygen tank that might assist in hearing, seeing, communicating, moving, breathing, remembering, and/or reading.

Disability – the term disability, as defined by the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, and the *Ontario Human Rights Code*, refers to:

- 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 of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical co-ordination, blindness or visual impediment, 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;
- a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability;
- a learning disability or dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language;
- a mental disorder; or
- 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 – is a highly-trained working dog that has been trained at one of the facilities listed in Ontario Regulation 58 under the *Blind Persons' Rights Act*, to provide mobility, safety, and increased independence for people who are blind.

Service Animal – as reflected in the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, an animal is a service animal for a person with a disability if:

- it is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to his or her disability; or
- the person provides a letter from a regulated health professional as listed in subsection 80.45 (4)(b) of Ontario Regulation 191/11 confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability.

Support Person – as reflected in the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, 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, medical needs, or access to goods, services or facilities.

Policies

In accordance with the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service (Ontario Regulation 191/11), this plan addresses the following:

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

A. Provision of Goods, Services or Facilities to Persons with Disabilities

Lower Trent Conservation is committed to excellence in serving all customers including people with disabilities.

Lower Trent Conservation 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;
- allowing customers with disabilities to do things in their own way and at their own pace when accessing goods, services or facilities, as long as this does not present a safety risk;
- using alternative methods, when possible, to ensure that customers with disabilities have access to the same services, in the same place, and in a similar manner;
- taking into account individual needs when providing goods, services or facilities; and
- communicating in a manner that takes into account the customer's disability.

Tips and best practices for interacting, communication, and assisting customers with disabilities are provided in Appendix A.

B. Use of Assistive Devices

Customer's own assistive device(s):

Persons with disabilities may use their own assistive devices as required when accessing goods, services or facilities provided by Lower Trent Conservation.

In cases where the assistive device presents a safety concern or where accessibility might be an issue, other reasonable measures will be used to ensure the access of goods, services or facilities. For example, where elevators are not present and where an individual requires assistive devices for the purposes of mobility, service will be provided in a location that meets the needs of the customer.

C. Use of Guide Dogs and Service Animals

Lower Trent Conservation welcomes people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal. Any "no pet" policies that may be adopted by the Conservation Authority do not apply to guide dogs and/or service animals.

Care and Control of the Animal:

The customer that is accompanied by a guide dog and/or service animal is responsible for maintaining care and control of the animal at all time.

Allergies:

If a health and safety concern presents itself, such as a severe allergy to the animal, Lower Trent Conservation will make all reasonable efforts to meet the needs of all individuals.

D. Use of Support Persons

If a customer with a disability is accompanied by one or more support persons, Lower Trent Conservation will ensure that the customer and the

support person(s) are allowed to enter the premises together and that the customer is not prevented from having access to the support person(s).

Admission Fees:

If there is a Lower Trent Conservation admission fee for an event or program, the fee will not be applicable to support persons.

Lower Trent Conservation will make this information available by posting a notice in its Administration Office and on its website.

Confidential Information:

In situations where confidential information might be discussed, consent will be obtained from the customer to have their support person(s) present, prior to any conversation where confidential information might be discussed.

E. Notice of Service Disruptions

In the event of a planned or unexpected disruption to services or facilities for customers with disabilities (e.g. entrance to either level of the Administration Office or use of Conservation Area facilities that are deemed accessible), Lower Trent Conservation will notify customers promptly.

Notifications Options:

When disruptions are planned or occur unexpectedly, Lower Trent Conservation will provide notice by:

- posting notices at the point of disruption and on the Lower Trent Conservation website;
- contacting customers with appointments that may be impacted;
- verbally notifying customers when they are making an appointment;
- or
- any other method that may be reasonable under the circumstances.

Where possible, advance notice will be provided.

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

- goods, services or facilities that are disrupted or unavailable
- reason for the disruption
- anticipated duration
- a description of alternative facilities or services, if available

Samples of notices are provided in Appendix B.

F. Customer Feedback

Lower Trent Conservation shall provide customers with the opportunity to provide feedback on the service provided to customers with disabilities. Information about the feedback process will be readily available to all customers and notice of the process will be made available at the Administration Office and on our website. Feedback forms will be available upon request along with alternate methods of providing feedback (e.g. in person, by telephone, e-mail, fax, delivered written correspondence).

Submitting Feedback:

Customers can submit feedback to:

Chief Administrative Officer, Lower Trent Conservation

Phone Number: 613-394-4829

Fax Number: 613-394-5226

Mailing Address: 714 Murray Street, RR 1 Trenton, ON K8V 5P4

Email Address: information@ltc.on.ca

Website: www.ltc.on.ca

Customers who wish to provide feedback by completing an on-site customer feedback form can do so with any Lower Trent Conservation employee. This feedback will be forwarded to the Chief Administrative Officer.

Customers that provide written feedback will receive acknowledgement of their feedback (if contact information is provided), along with any resulting actions based on concerns or complaints that were submitted.

A customer feedback form and form for recording customer feedback and action taken are provided in Appendix C.

G. Training

Training will be provided to:

- a) All employees and volunteers;
- b) All persons who participate in developing our policies, including the Board of Directors; and
- c) All other persons who provide goods, services or facilities on behalf of Lower Trent Conservation.

Training Provisions:

As reflected in the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, regardless of the format, training will cover the following:

- An overview of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*.
- An overview of the requirements of the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service.
- Instructions on 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 service animal; or
 - require the use of support person(s) (including the handling of admission fees).
- Instructions on how to use equipment or devices that are available at our premises or that we provide that may help people with disabilities.
- Instructions on what to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing Lower Trent Conservation's goods, services or facilities.
- Lower Trent Conservation's policies, procedures, and practices pertaining to providing accessible customer service to customers with disabilities.

A list of available training resources is provided in Appendix D.

Training Schedule:

Lower Trent Conservation will provide training as soon as practicable.

Training will be provided during orientation to new employees, volunteers, the Board of Directors, and anyone who provides good, services or facilities on our behalf.

Revised training will be provided in the event of changes to legislation, changes to this plan, and/or changes to related procedures/practices.

Record of Training:

Lower Trent Conservation will keep a record of training that includes the date training was provided and the name and signature of those who attended the training.

The Record of Training form is provided in Appendix D.

H. Notice of Availability and Format of Required Documents

Lower Trent Conservation shall notify customers that the documents related to the *Accessibility Standard for Customer Service* are available upon request and in a format that takes into account the customer's disability. Notification will be given by posting the information in a conspicuous location in the Lower Trent Conservation Administration Office and on Lower Trent Conservation's website.

Administration

Priority action items will be identified to facilitate implementation of this Plan. The action items will be reviewed and updated on an ongoing basis.

If you have any questions or concerns about this plan, or its related procedures, please contact:

Chief Administrative Officer, Lower Trent Conservation

Phone Number: 613-394-4829

Fax Number: 613-394-5226

Mailing Address: 714 Murray Street, RR 1 Trenton, ON K8V 5P4

Email Address: information@ltc.on.ca

Website: www.ltc.on.ca

Referenced Documents

- *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*
- Accessibility Standards for Customer Service (Ontario Regulation 191/11)
- *Blind Person's Rights Act, 1990*
- Ontario Human Rights Code, 1990

APPENDIX A

Best Practices for Interacting with Customers with Disabilities

General tips on how to welcome customers with disabilities

- Treat people with disabilities with the same respect and consideration you have for everyone else.
- Use *disability* or *disabled*, not handicap or handicapped.
- Never 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.
- Patience, optimism, and a willingness to find a way to communicate are your best tools.
- Smile, relax, and keep in mind that people with disabilities are just people.
- Do not make assumptions about what type of disability or disabilities a person has.
- Some disabilities are not visible. Take the time to get to know your customers' needs.
- Be patient. People with some kinds of disabilities may take a little longer to understand and respond.
- If you are not sure what to do, ask your customer, "**May I help you?**"
- If you cannot understand what someone is saying, just politely ask again.
- Ask before you offer to help — do not just jump in. Your customers with disabilities know if they need help and how you can provide it.
- Find a good way to communicate. A good start is to listen carefully.
- Look at your customer, but do not stare. Speak directly to a person with a disability, not to their interpreter or someone who is with them.
- Ensure that venues for public meetings/events hosted by Lower Trent Conservation are accessible.
- Arrange to meet customers at a convenient site if accessibility is an issue.

How to communicate with people with different types of disabilities

People with vision loss

Vision loss can restrict someone's ability to read, locate landmarks, or see hazards. Some customers may use a guide dog or a white cane, while others may not.

Tips:

- When you know someone has vision loss, don't assume the individual can't see you. Many people who have low vision still have some sight.
- Identify yourself when you approach and speak directly to the customer.
- Ask if they would like you to read any printed material out loud to them (for example, a schedule of fees).
- When providing directions or instructions, be precise and descriptive.
- Offer your elbow to guide them if needed.
- Provide documentation/reports in larger fonts, upon request.

People who have hearing loss

People who have hearing loss may be deaf, deafened, or hard of hearing. They may also be oral deaf – unable to hear, but prefer to talk instead of using sign language. These terms are used to describe different levels of hearing and/or the way a person's hearing was diminished or lost.

Tips:

- Once a customer has identified themselves as having hearing loss, make sure you are in a well-lit area where they can see your face and read your lips.
- As needed, attract the customer's attention before speaking. Try a gentle touch on the shoulder or wave of your hand.
- If your customer uses a hearing aid, reduce background noise or move to a quieter area.
- If necessary, ask if another method of communicating would be easier (for example, using a pen and paper).

People who are deafblind

A person who is deafblind may have some degree of both hearing and vision loss. Many people who are deafblind will be accompanied by an intervenor, a professional support person who helps with communication.

Tips:

- A customer who is deafblind is likely to explain to you how to communicate with them, perhaps with an assistance card or a note.
- Speak directly to your customer, not to the intervenor.

People with speech or language impairments

Cerebral palsy, hearing loss, or other conditions may make it difficult for a person to pronounce words or may cause slurring. Some people who have severe difficulties may use a communication board or other assistive device(s).

Tips:

- Don't assume that a person with a speech impairment also has another disability.
- Whenever possible, ask questions that can be answered with "yes" or "no".
- Be patient. Don't interrupt or finish your customer's sentences.

People who have learning disabilities

The term "learning disabilities" refers to a variety of disorders. One example is dyslexia, which affects how a person takes in or retains information. This disability may become apparent when a person has difficulty reading material or understanding the information you are providing.

Tips:

- Be patient – people with some learning disabilities may take longer to process information, to understand, and to respond.

- Try to provide information in a way that takes into account the
- customer's disability. For example, some people with learning
- disabilities find written words difficult to understand, while others may
- have problems with numbers and math.

People who have intellectual / developmental disabilities

Developmental or intellectual disabilities, such as Down Syndrome, can limit a person's ability to learn, communicate, do everyday physical activities, and live independently. You may not know that someone has this disability unless you are told.

Tips:

- Don't make assumptions about what a person can do.
- Use plain language.
- Provide one piece of information at a time.

People who have mental health disabilities

Mental health issues can affect a person's ability to think clearly, concentrate, or remember things. Mental health disability is a broad term for many disorders that can range in severity. For example, some customers may experience anxiety due to hallucinations, mood swings, phobias, or panic disorder.

Tips:

- If you sense or know that a customer has a mental health disability, be sure to treat them with the same respect and consideration you have for everyone else.
- Be confident, calm, and reassuring.
- If a customer appears to be in crisis, ask them to tell you the best way to help.

How to interact with people who use assistive devices, and how to use any equipment that your organization provides to help customers with disabilities

An assistive device is a tool, technology, or other mechanism that enables a person with a disability to do everyday tasks and activities such as moving, communicating, or lifting. Personal assistive devices can include things like wheelchairs, hearing aids, white canes, or speech amplification devices.

Tips:

- Don't touch or handle any assistive device without permission.
- Don't move assistive devices or equipment, such as canes and walkers, out of your customer's reach.
- Let your customers know about accessible features in the immediate environment that are appropriate to their needs (e.g., accessible washrooms, lift).
- Make sure you know how to use equipment or devices for customers with disabilities offered by the organization (e.g. lift). It could be helpful to have instruction manuals handy or an instruction sheet posted where the device is located.

How to interact with a person who has a guide dog or other service animal

People with vision loss may use a guide dog, but there are other types of service animals as well. Hearing alert animals help people who are deaf, deafened, oral deaf, or hard of hearing. Other service animals are trained to alert an individual to an oncoming seizure.

Tips:

- Remember that a service animal is not a pet. It is a working animal. Avoid touching or addressing them.
- If you're not sure if the animal is a pet or a service animal, ask your customer.

How to serve a person accompanied by support person(s)

Some people with disabilities may be accompanied by support person(s), such as an intervenor. A support person can be a personal support worker, a volunteer, a family member, or a friend. A support person might help your customer with a variety of things from communicating, to helping with mobility, personal care, or medical needs.

Welcome support people to your workplace or business. They are permitted in any part of your premises that is open to the public. Provide notice, in advance, regarding any fees for events/programs that may or may not apply to a support person.

Tips:

- If you're not sure which person is the customer, take your lead from the person using or requesting your goods or services, or simply ask.
- Speak directly to your customer, not to their support person(s).

How to assist people with disabilities who need help accessing your goods, services or facilities

If you notice that your customer is having difficulty accessing your goods, services or facilities, a good starting point is to simply ask "How can I help you?" Your customers are your best source for information about their needs. A solution can be simple and they will likely appreciate your attention and consideration.

Adapted from: *Accessibility Standard for Customer Service: Training Tips for employees: Ministry of Community and Social Services, © Queen's Printer for Ontario.*

APPENDIX B

Notification of Service Disruptions

Sample Documents for Notifying the Public about Disruptions in Service

Sample 1 – Accessible Trail Closed

This would be posted on our website and at the trailhead at Bleasdell Boulder Conservation Area.

Dear Customers,

The accessible portion of the trail at Bleasdell Boulder Conservation Area is closed from April 1 to 15, 2018 due to upgrades to the bridge. Lower Trent Conservation has other accessible trails at _____ Conservation Area(s).

We regret any inconvenience this may cause. If you have questions or concerns, please call 613-394-4829.

Thank you.
Management

Sample 2 – Accessible washroom out of service

This would be posted near the accessible washroom that is out of order.

Dear Customers/Guests,

Our accessible washroom on the main floor of the Lower Trent Conservation Administration Office is out of service due to a broken pipe.

A repair person will be on the premises tomorrow to fix it. In the interim, customers/guests are welcome to use the washroom on the basement floor. Instructions for use of the lift, and/or assistance, are available at the front desk.

We apologize for any inconvenience.
Thank you.
Management

APPENDIX C

Customer Feedback

Accessible Customer Service - Feedback Form

Thank you for visiting Lower Trent Conservation. We value all of our customers and strive to meet everyone's needs.

Please tell us the date and time of your visit: _____

Name of staff person(s) you met with: _____

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, services or facilities?

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

Other comments:

Contact information (optional):

Please submit to:

Chief Administrative Officer, Lower Trent Conservation

Phone Number: 613-394-4829

Fax Number: 613-394-5226

Mailing Address: 714 Murray Street, RR 1 Trenton, ON K8V 5P4

Email Address: information@ltc.on.ca

Website: www.ltc.on.ca

Information you provide on this form is collected by Lower Trent Conservation in accordance with the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA) and will not be provided to others or used for purposes other than assessing LTC's Customer Service or contacting the respondent.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COMMENTS!

FOR INTERNAL USE

Accessible Customer Service -
Record of Customer Feedback

Date feedback received:

Name of customer :

Contact information :

Details:

Follow-up:

Action to be taken:

Staff member:

Date:

APPENDIX D

Training

Accessible Customer Service - Training Resources

1. HR Downloads – AODA Customer Service Training
2. Lower Trent Conservation Accessible Customer Service Plan
3. Web training: <https://accessforward.ca>
4. How to Train your Staff information provided at <https://www.ontario.ca/page/how-train-your-staff-accessibility>
5. Additional information on “Making Ontario Accessible” is provided at www.ontario.ca/page/accessibility-laws

