Accessibility Standards for Customer Service

Number:	1.0
Originator:	Human Resources Services
Approved By:	President – Chief Executive Officer
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1. Purpose

Contact North | Contact Nord strives to provide exceptional service to all customers, including people with disabilities. To do so it will facilitate the implementation of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2005 (AODA), and Ontario Regulation 429/07 (Accessibility Standards for Customer Service).

2. Our Commitment

Contact North | Contact Nord is committed to providing people with disabilities equal access to, and benefit from, our goods and services. To ensure this outcome, all operational policies and procedures for every department of Contact North | Contact Nord are developed under the guidelines of dignity, independence, integration and equality of opportunity, in compliance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), 2005.

3. Definitions

1. 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.

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

i) a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability;
ii) a learning disability, or dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language;
iii) a mental disorder; or
iv) an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997.

3. 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.

4. Service Animal – as reflected in Ontario Regulation 429/07, an animal is a service animal for a person with a disability if:

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

5. Service Dog – as reflected in Health Protection and Promotion Act, Ontario Regulation 562 a dog other than a guide dog for the blind is a service dog if:

a) it is readily apparent to an average person that the dog functions as a service dog for a person with a medical disability;
b) or the person who requires the dog can provide on request a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires a service dog.

6. Support Person – as reflected in Ontario Regulation 429/07, 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 and services.

4. Providing Goods and Service to People with Disabilities

To meet our commitment Contact North | Contact Nord will carry out its responsibilities in the following areas:

1. Communication

Contact North | Contact Nord will ensure that staff communicate with people with disabilities in ways that will take into account their disability. In order to achieve this goal, all staff will be trained on how to effectively interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities. In addition, Contact North | Contact Nord will provide alternate methods of communication upon request and as quickly as possible including electronic format for standard written documents, large print, or Braille.

2. Assistive Devices

If a person with a disability requires assistive technology to access programs, goods or services at Contact North | Contact Nord, they will be allowed to use such devices within reason, provided it does not present a safety concern. When available, Contact North | Contact Nord will provide assistive technology in order to allow people with disabilities to access Contact North | Contact Nord goods and services while on the premises conducting business. Contact North | Contact Nord will promote staff awareness on the various forms of assistive technology and devices that may be used by people with disabilities. Assistive technology is defined as any item, piece of equipment, or product that is used to increase, maintain or improve functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities.

5. Use of Guide Dogs, Service Animals and Service Dogs

Contact North | Contact Nord is committed to welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by a guide dog, service animal or service dog. Such individuals will be permitted to keep the animal with them unless it is otherwise excluded by law from the premises. In such cases, Contact North | Contact Nord will look to alternate available measures to enable the person to obtain, use or benefit from Contact North | Contact Nord goods and services.

If it is not readily apparent that the animal is being used by the person for reasons relating to his or her disability, Contact North | Contact Nord may request verification which could include: a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons related to the disability; a valid identification card signed by the Attorney General of Canada; or, a certificate of training from a recognized guide dog or service animal training school.

The person accompanied by a guide dog, service animal or service dog is responsible for maintaining care and control of the animal at all times.

6. Use of Support Persons

Contact North | Contact Nord is also committed to welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person. Contact North | Contact Nord may require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person while on the premises in order to protect the health or safely of the person with a disability or the health or safety of others.

7. Notice of Temporary Disruption

Contact North | Contact Nord 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 other areas as deemed appropriate.

8. Training for Staff

Contact North | Contact Nord will provide training to all staff on how to provide excellent customer service to people with disabilities. The training will extend to all new staff as a condition of employment. Contact North | Contact Nord will also provide ongoing training, when needed, to reflect changes to policies, practices and procedures impacting people with disabilities.

1. Accessibility Awareness Training will include the following:

i) A review of the purposes of the AODA and the requirements of the customer service standard;
ii) How to provide goods and services in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities;
iii) How to interact and communicate with persons in a manner that takes into account their disabilities;
iv) How to interact with persons with disabilities who use assistive devices or require the assistance of a guide dog, service animal or a support person to access goods and services;
v) How to use equipment or devices available on Contact North | Contact Nord premises or provided by Contact North | Contact Nord that may help with the provision of goods and services for people with disabilities;
vi) The process for people to provide feedback to Contact North | Contact Nord about the provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities, and how Contact North | Contact Nord responds to the feedback and takes action on any complaint; and,
vii) What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing Contact North | Contact Nord's goods or services.
viii) Records of staff who have received training will be maintained in the Human Resources department.

9. Notice of Availability of Documents

This document and other policies and practices related to the provision of goods and services for people with disabilities will be available on the Contact North | Contact Nord website in order to ensure the public of their existence. These documents will be made available on request and in a format that takes into consideration the person's disability.

10. Feedback Process

The ultimate goal of Contact North | Contact Nord 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 Contact North | Contact Nord provides goods and services to people with disabilities can be made known using various methods and will take into consideration the fact that individuals with disabilities may require access to different modalities of communication depending on their disability. This means that feedback can be given by email, telephone, in writing, in person or through a third party. Concerns regarding service to persons with disabilities should be forwarded to the Human Resources department.