

Corporate Procedures to Accessibility Standards for Customer Service

Policy Statement & Strategic Plan Linkages

Through the establishment of the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service policy and supporting procedures and practices that respect the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities, the Town of Newmarket is reflecting its commitment to sound governance, accountability and focus on service excellence in fulfilling its vision of being Well Beyond the Ordinary.

Purpose

The Town of Newmarket is committed to giving people with disabilities the same opportunity to access Town goods and services and allowing them to benefit from the same services, in the same place and in a similar way as other customers. To ensure support for and compliance with the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA) and relevant regulations, the Town of Newmarket will make reasonable efforts to ensure that it provides accessible customer service to people with various kinds of disabilities and respects the core principles of independence, dignity, integration and equal opportunity, as defined herein.

Procedures

Accessible Customer Service

The Town of Newmarket shall make reasonable efforts to ensure that its policies, procedures and practices as amended from time to time are consistent with the following principles by establishing a set of procedures in support of this policy:

- a) The goods or services will be provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.
- b) The provision of goods or services to persons with disabilities and others must be integrated unless an alternate measure is necessary, whether temporarily or on a permanent basis, to enable a person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the goods or services.
- c) Persons with disabilities must be given an opportunity equal to that given to others to obtain, use and benefit from the goods or services.

Assistive Devices

The Town of Newmarket permits persons with disabilities to use and keep with them their own personal assistive devices to obtain, use or benefit from the goods or services offered by the Town of Newmarket.

Where Town owned assistive devices are available, appropriate staff within the applicable department will be knowledgeable of the presence and trained in the use of the assistive devices. Staff will be available to assist with the Town owned assistive devices if requested for use by an individual.

Each department will maintain a list of assistive devices available within the department and will review it from time to time.

A person with a disability may use an assistive device such as, but not limited to, wheelchairs, walkers, white canes used by people who are blind or who have low vision, note taking devices, portable magnifiers, recording machines, assistive listening devices, personal oxygen tanks and devices for grasping.

When interacting with a person with a disability who may use one or more assistive device:

- Ensure that the person is permitted to enter the premises with the device and to use the device to access goods or services.
- Ensure that persons with disabilities are aware of assistive devices available on the Town of Newmarket premises.
- Offer an assistive device in a manner that respects the person's dignity and independence.
- Do not lean or reach over an assistive device.
- Remove potential barriers to the use of assistive devices where possible.

Communication

When acting on behalf of the Town of Newmarket and communicating with a person with a disability do so in a manner that takes into account the person's disability.

Should the Town of Newmarket be requested to provide a person with a disability a public document or information, the Town of Newmarket will take into consideration the communication needs of the person with a disability and provide the information to the person with a disability in a format that is agreed upon.

In-house printed material and publications produced on behalf of the Corporation of the Town of Newmarket should contain a note indicating "alternative formats are available upon request" and include the relevant contact information.

In-house printing and publications produced on behalf of the Corporation of the Town of Newmarket, where possible, should adhere to the CNIB's Clear Print Standards. The Standards are available at:
<http://www.cnib.ca/en/services/accessibilities/resources/clearprint/Default.aspx>

If one form or method of communication cannot be used by a person with a disability, he/she may be able to use another form or method, or a combination.

When communicating with a person with a disability ensure you confirm with him/her to ensure they understand the information being presented.

Each table below defines a specific category of disability and outlines some communication tips to help provide service to customers.

Vision Disabilities:

Definition:	Tips For Serving Customers:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A vision disability reduces a person's ability to see clearly. • It may restrict a person's ability to read signs, locate landmarks or see hazards. • Most individuals who are legally blind have some remaining vision – very few are totally blind. • May use a guide dog or white cane. • May need to view written documents in large print, or with help of a magnifier. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't assume your customer can't see you. • Speak normally and directly to customer. • Offer your elbow to guide. • If they accept, walk slowly, wait for permission. • Identify landmarks. • Be precise and descriptive with information. • Don't walk away without saying goodbye • Be patient, interactions may take longer.

Hearing Disabilities:

Definition:	Tips For Serving Customers:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A person with a hearing loss may be deaf or hard of hearing. • Like other disabilities, hearing loss has a wide variety of degrees. • A person with a hearing impairment may require assistive device when communicating. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attract the customer's attention before speaking – gentle touch on the shoulder or wave of your hand. • Look at and speak directly to the person. • May have to use pen and paper to communicate. • Speak clearly; keep hands away from your face. • Reduce background noise.

Physical Disabilities or Disabilities Affecting Mobility:

Definition:	Tips For Serving Customers:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May restrict a person in the following ways: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Control or speed of movements ○ Coordination and balance ○ Ability to grasp some objects ○ Ability to walk long distances ○ Ability to sit or stand for prolonged periods • Can be present at birth, result from disease, injury or be temporary. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speak directly to the person. • Ask before you help. • Don't touch assistive devices, including wheelchairs unnecessarily unless it is an emergency. • Don't leave the person in an awkward, dangerous or undignified position.

Intellectual of Developmental Disabilities:

Definition:	Tips For Serving Customers:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intellectual development and capacity that is below average. • Can mildly or profoundly limit ability to learn, communicate, do everyday activities and live independently. • May be an invisible disability. • They may understand you more than you know. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't assume what a person can or cannot do. • Use plain language. • Take your time, be patient • Ask: "Do you understand this?" • Provide one piece of information at a time. • If you can't understand what is being said, don't pretend. Just ask again.

Learning Disabilities:

Definition:	Tips For Serving Customers:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People with learning disabilities have average or above-average intelligence, but take in information, retain it, and express knowledge in different ways. • May affect language based learning, mathematics, and/or writing, fine motor skills. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take your time, be patient it may take a little more time for the person to understand and respond. • Provide information in a way that works for your customer (i.e. pen and paper) • Speak normally, clearly and directly to your customer. • Be prepared to explain the information you provide.

Mental Health Disabilities:

Definition:	Tips For Serving Customers:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mental health disabilities include a range of disorders however there are three main types of mental health disabilities – anxiety, mood, behavioural.• A person with a mental health disability can look like anyone else; you may not know that a person has a mental health disability unless you are informed of it.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Treat the customer with the same level of respect and consideration.• Be confident and reassuring.• If the customer is in crisis, ask how best to help.• Take the customer seriously.• Don't take things personally.

Speech or Language Disabilities:

Definition:	Tips For Serving Customers:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• May have problems communicating.• May be difficult to pronounce words, slurring or stuttering.• May use communication boards or other assistive devices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Don't make assumptions.• Give whatever time they need to get their point across.• Ask questions that can be answered 'yes' or 'no', if possible.• Don't interrupt or finish your customer's sentences.• Say: " I don't understand, can you please repeat that?"

Deafblind Disability:

Definition:	Tips For Serving Customers:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cannot see or hear to some extent, this results in greater difficulties in accessing information and managing daily activities.• Many will be accompanied by an Intervenor, a professional who helps with communicating.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Speak directly to your customer, not to the intervenor.• Identify yourself to the intervenor.• A customer who is deafblind may have a card or note explaining how to communicate with them.

Support Persons

The Town of Newmarket shall permit a person with a disability, who requires, to be accompanied by a support person, into all Town premises that are owned or operated public facilities. Both persons are permitted to enter the premises together and the person with a disability will have access to their support person.

Staff will direct all communication to the person directly and not the support person, unless instructed to do so.

Any confidential information such as tax information, personal information etc. that is discussed in the presence of a support person will be identified as such prior to the information being released and the person with the disability will determine if the information can be released in the presence of the support person.

In some incidences where confidentiality is important because of the nature of the information being discussed, the support person may be required to sign a confidentiality agreement.

The Town of Newmarket may require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person when accessing goods and services, but only if a support person is necessary to protect the health or safety of the person with a disability or the health and safety of others on the premises. Persons with a disability are free to accept a reasonable risk of injury to them just as others do.

A support person, when assisting a person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the Town's goods and/or services, will be permitted to attend at no charge where an admission fee is applicable.

Service Animals

The Town of Newmarket shall permit a person with a disability to be accompanied by a guide dog or other service animal into all Town of Newmarket owned and operated public facilities and will ensure that the person is permitted to keep the animal with him or her unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law.

For the purpose of these Guidelines and in support of the Corporate Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Policy 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) the person provides a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability.

If the service animal is excluded by law, i.e. where food is prepared, the Town of Newmarket will ensure that other measures are available to enable the person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the Town of Newmarket's goods and services.

Where a service animal is excluded by law from the premises, the reason why the animal is excluded shall be explained to the person with a disability.

Town of Newmarket staff may request a letter from a physician or nurse confirming the person who requires the assistance of a service animal or guide dog to validate that the animal is as defined above by producing a certificate.

The guide dog or service animal must be in the care and control of the person with a disability while accessing goods and services at the Town of Newmarket.

Staff will not touch, handle, feed or speak to the guide dog or service animal.

If the Town of Newmarket is providing ongoing services to a person with a service animal or in other special circumstances the Town of Newmarket may request to maintain a copy of the letter. A copy of the letter should only be kept when necessary and only for as long as necessary. Collection of this information must adhere to all privacy and protection acts.

Notice of Service Disruption

Public Notice of Service Disruptions as per Appendix A or B shall be provided when facilities or services that people with disabilities usually use to access Town of Newmarket goods or services are temporarily unavailable or if the goods or service are expected in the near future to be temporarily unavailable, in whole or in part.

The Notice must include the following information:

- a) The reason for and information about the disruption
- b) Anticipated duration
- c) Description of alternative facilities or services, if available
- d) Contact information

When a disruption is known in advance or planned, a Notice of Disruption of Service will be posted 2 weeks prior to a service disruption whenever possible. Unexpected disruptions in service shall be posted as soon as possible.

Notices may be given by posting the information in a conspicuous place on the premises, on the Town's website or any other such method as is reasonable in the circumstances, for example:

- a) On the Town of Newmarket owned, leased or operated buildings or property, on the front doors.
- b) In the local newspaper
- c) After hours service line
- d) LED Display Boards where appropriate
- e) Voicemail where appropriate
- f) Or by other method as appropriate

Each department will appoint a designated person and back up person to be responsible for posting and maintaining the notice of service disruption.

Notices and signages that are written will take into consideration the Clear Print Accessibility Guidelines from the CNIB available at: <http://www.cnib.ca/en/services/accessibilities/resources/clearprint/Default.aspx>

All service disruption notifications will be logged and recorded with the details of the service disruption and when the disruption was rectified. The department appointed person and/or backup person shall be responsible for maintaining the record.

Refer to Appendix A and B for sample Notice of Service Disruption Forms.

Training

The Town of Newmarket shall ensure that the following persons will or have received training regarding the provision of its goods and services to persons with disabilities.

- 1) Every person who deals with members of the public or other third parties on behalf of the Town of Newmarket, whether the person does so as an employee, agent, volunteer or otherwise.
- 2) Every person who participates in developing the Town of Newmarket's policies practices and procedures governing the provision of goods or services to members of the public or other third parties.

The training shall include but is not limited to the following:

- 1) Review of the purpose of the *Accessibility for Ontarians Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA) and requirements of the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Ontario Regulation 429/07;
- 2) Instructions on how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities;
- 3) Instruction on how to interact with people with disabilities who use assistive devices or require the assistance of a guide dog, other service animal or support person;

- 4) Instruction on how to use equipment or devices available at Town premises or that you otherwise provide, that may help people with disabilities access our services, such as TTY telephones, elevators, lifts, accessible interactive kiosks, listening devices or other technology; and
- 5) Instruction on what to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing the Town of Newmarket's services.

Training shall be provided to each person as soon as practicable and training records shall be maintained as appropriate to ensure compliance with the legislation.

Training shall be provided on an ongoing basis in connection with changes to the policy and supporting procedures and practices governing the provision of goods or services to a person with a disability.

The Human Resources Department will record the content of the training provided, the name of the person, number of persons trained, location and date the training was completed for all employees.

Departments utilizing the services of volunteers or other third parties are responsible for ensuring they have received training according to the legislation and for maintaining training records unless the services are secured through Purchasing and/or Office Services.

Third parties or contractors upon award of an RFP or tender process must verify training has been received as it relates to the legislation prior to commencement of work.

New employees will be trained on the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service as indicated in the AODA as part of their orientation package or as soon as practicable in the case of a new employee or if an employee changes positions.

Training must be provided as soon as practicable, to affected individuals if the Town of Newmarket's policies, procedures or practices change in connection with the provision of goods or services to people with disabilities.

Feedback Process

The Town of Newmarket has a process for receiving and responding to feedback regarding the manner in which the Town of Newmarket provides goods or services to persons with disabilities and shall make information about the process readily available to the public.

The feedback process will permit persons to provide feedback in person, by telephone, in writing, by email, online, on disk or by other method. Feedback will also be received on the Comment Cards provided within each Commission.

Comment cards are to be posted in conspicuous locations throughout the organization. The comment cards are directed to the appropriate Commissioner and accessibility issues are forwarded to the Manager of Customer Services for follow-up.

Under the following conditions staff will complete the form for the person who is providing the feedback:

- 1) Feedback is from a person who is unable to provide written information due to their disability.
- 2) Feedback is received over the telephone.

Staff will repeat back the information taken to the person providing the feedback to ensure it has been accurately recorded.

When a complaint regarding the accessibility of goods or services within the Town of Newmarket is received for response the complaint will be forwarded to the Manager of Customer Services.

The Manager of Customer Services will respond within 14 business days to the person and will include what actions will be taken to address and or improve the area of concern. The response could be in written format such as a letter or email or verbal such as in person or over the telephone or alternative method as appropriate.

Notice of Availability

The Town shall provide notice that upon request the Town will provide a copy of this policy and supporting procedures and practices required under Ontario Regulation 429/07 Accessibility Standards for Customer Service to any person.

- Town policies, procedures and practices on the provision of goods or services to persons with disabilities – this includes the use of personal assistive devices by persons with disabilities to access Town goods or services.
- Service animals and support persons – this refers to the entry of service animals and support persons to those areas of the premises that are owned or operated by the Town, where such are open to the public.
- Notice of temporary disruption – this includes the steps that will be taken in connection with a temporary planned or unexpected disruption to facilities or services that persons with disabilities usually use to access Town goods or services.
- Training – provides description of the Town's training on accessible customer service.
- Feedback Process– includes a description of the process for receiving and responding to feedback on the manner in which the Town provides goods or services to people with disabilities

Format of Documents

Should the Town of Newmarket be required to provide a person with a disability with a document, or information contained in the document, the Town will give the person the document or information contained in the document, in a format that takes into account the person's disability.

If the document is required in a different format, staff will discuss what options are available to the individual and then agree upon the format the Town will provide

The timeframe attached to the conversion process varies depending on the media chosen, the size, complexity and quantity of documents to be converted. Documents shall be returned in a timely manner depending on the factors previously noted.

Conversion shall be processed in-house whenever possible. When a member of the public requests a piece of Town documentation in an alternate format the department of origin shall be responsible for the cost of the conversion, materials and distribution, not the public requestor.

Contact:

For more information about this policy, procedures and practices or questions related to accessibility at the Town of Newmarket, please contact:

Town Clerk
395 Mulock Drive
Newmarket, ON
L3Y 4X7
905-895-5193-ext. 2202

Cross-References:

Guide to the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07

Compliance Manual: Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07

AccessOn: www.accesson.ca

Town of Newmarket Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Policy

Town of Newmarket Accessibility Plan

Notice Policy



Appendix A (1)

Town of Newmarket Notice of Service Disruption

There will be a scheduled service disruption at the _____.

The disruption will be from _____ until _____.

The disruption includes:

- _____ (ex. repairs to showers, automatic doors out of order, computer systems down, sold out of green bins etc.)
- (List reason for the disruption in service)

The following facilities or alternative services are able to assist you with the above: (list alternative facilities or access to service)

On behalf of the Town of Newmarket, thank you for your patience in this matter.

Name

Position

Contact Information



Appendix A (2) by hand

Town of Newmarket
Notice of Service Disruption

There will be a scheduled service disruption at the

_____.

The disruption will be from _____ until _____.

The disruption includes:

- _____
- _____

The following facilities or alternative services are able to assist you with the above:

On behalf of the Town of Newmarket, thank you for your patience in this matter.

Name:

Contact Information:



Appendix B (1)

Town of Newmarket Notice of Service Disruption

There is currently an unexpected service disruption at the _____ . The estimated disruption will be from _____ until _____ .

The disruption includes:

- _____ (ex. repairs to showers, automatic doors out of order, computer systems down, sold out of green bins etc.)
- (List reason for disruption)

The following facilities or alternative services are able to assist you with the above: (list alternative facilities or access to service)

On behalf of the Town of Newmarket, thank you for your patience in this matter.

Name

Position

Contact Information



Newmarket

Appendix B (2) by hand

Town of Newmarket
Notice of Service Disruption

There is currently an unexpected service disruption at the

_____.

The estimated disruption will be from _____ until

_____.

The disruption includes:

- _____
- _____

The following facilities or alternative services are able to assist you with the above:

On behalf of the Town of Newmarket, thank you for your patience in this matter.

Name:

Contact Information: