

<b>Policy Section</b> <b>Business Practices &amp; Local Team Site</b>	<b>Policy Number</b>
<b>Policy Primer</b> <b>Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities-Customer Service Standard</b>	

**Policy Primer:**

**The Impact of Accessibility 2012**

Disability impacts the lives of many Ontarians and the numbers of people with disabilities is increasing.

- In 20 years, one in five Ontarians are likely to have some kind of disability compared with approximately one in seven today.
- 10 – 20% of the general population have hearing loss; 50% of people over 65 have hearing loss.
- 600,000 Canadians have self identified as having vision loss.
- 6% of people with physical disabilities use a wheelchair.
- 70% of disabilities are hidden and often forgotten.
- Many of our veterans have disabilities. Men and women, who want to carry on their life activities with friends and family, will demand access to do so.
- It is projected that the older population will double in the next 25 years.

**The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act**

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) became law on June 13, 2005 and includes mandatory accessibility standards that identify, remove and prevent barriers for people with disabilities in key areas of daily living. The standards apply to private and public sector organizations across Ontario. The goal is for the province to be accessible by 2025.

The five standards are:

- Customer Service;
- Information and Communication;
- Employment;
- Transportation ;
- Built Environment.

The Customer Service Standard the first standard developed to become a regulation, came into force on January 1, 2008. The standard addresses business practices to provide better customer service to people with disabilities.

The Information and Communication, Employment and Transportation Standards have been combined into one standard, which was enacted in July, 2011. Compliance will be phased in by 2021.

The Built Environment Standard is combined into the Ontario Building Code.

**Policy Primer:**

**Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities-Customer Service Standard**

**The Customer Service Standard (AODA)**

Every business and organization operating in Ontario that provides goods and services to the public or other organizations and has at least one employee in Ontario must be in compliance as of January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2012. To meet the requirements of the Customer Service Standard, organizations must:

1. Establish policies and procedures on providing goods or services to children with multiple special needs and their families.
2. Provide training on how to serve children with multiple special needs and their families to staff, volunteers, contractors, and anyone else who interacts with the public or other third parties on your behalf, and those involved in developing client service policies, practices and procedures.
3. Establish a process for receiving feedback on how you provide service to children with multiple special needs and their families and how you will respond to feedback and take action on any complaints. Make information about the feedback process readily available to the public.
4. Communicate with a client with multiple special needs and their families in a manner that takes into account his or her disability.
5. Let children with multiple special needs and their families bring their service animals onto any part of your premises open to the public, except where the animal is otherwise excluded by law.
6. Let children with multiple special needs and their families bring their support person with them when accessing goods or services on parts of your premises open to the public.
7. Let the public know when facilities or services that people with disabilities usually use to access your goods or services are temporarily unavailable.
8. Document all policies, practices and procedures to providing accessible client service and notify the public that these documents are available upon request.

Effective January, 2012, organizations with 20 or more employees began to file online accessibility reports annually with the Government of Ontario, regarding their compliance with the standard. (See Appendix 1)

**PRINCIPLES of the AODA-Customer Service Standard:**

**Dignity:** Service is provided in a way that allows the person with a disability to maintain self-respect and the respect of other people.

**Independence:** Each person is allowed to do things on their own, without unnecessary help or interference from others.

**Integration and Equal Opportunity:** Service is provided in a way that allows the person with a disability to benefit from the same services, in the same place, and in the same or similar way as other customers, unless an alternate measure is necessary to enable a person with disability to access goods or services. Persons with a disability do not have to make significantly more effort to access or obtain service. They do not have to accept inconvenience or lesser quality. This may mean that CTN has to treat individuals slightly differently so that they can benefit fully from the services.

**Ontario Human Rights Commission/Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005.**

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