



THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF ADJALA – TOSORONTIO

Accessible Customer Service Best Practices and Procedures

Dated: July 17, 2017

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 This Procedure implements, in part, the Township's Accessibility Standards Policy ADM # 2017-02.
- 1.2 This Procedure affords direction to Township employees on how to provide services to people with disabilities within the Township of Adjala – Tosorontio in a manner that:
 - Respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.
 - Provides for the use of assistive devices by persons with disabilities.
 - Provides an equal opportunity to obtain, use or benefit from the Township's goods and services.
 - Provides notice of temporary or emergency disruption of services to persons with disabilities.

2.0 Application

- 2.1 This Procedure applies to all paid employees and volunteers and all other people who provide goods, services or facilities on behalf of the Township.

3.0 Definitions / Acronyms (as required)

- 3.1 "Assistive devices" – means devices used to assist persons with disabilities in carrying out activities or in accessing the services provided by the Township of Township of Adjala-Tosorontio.
- 3.2 "Accessible formats" – may include, but not limited to, large print, recorded audio and electronic formats, Braille, and other formats usable by people with disabilities.
- 3.3 "Barrier" - means anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of his or her disability. This

includes physical, architectural, information or communications barrier, attitudinal or technological barrier, a policy or a practice; (“obstacle”).

- 3.4 “Communication Support” - may include, but is not limited to captioning, alternative and augmentative communication supports, plain language, sign language, and other supports that facilitate effective communications.
- 3.5 “Disability” - means, as per the Human Rights Code:
- 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
A condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability
 - b) A learning disability or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language
 - c) A mental disorder; or
 - d) An injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997.
- 3.6 “Service Animal” – means:
- a) a guide dog as defined under section 1 of the Blind Persons’ Rights Act
 - b) an animal that is readily apparent that it is used by a person with a disability for reason relating to his or her disability
 - c) an animal for which a person with a disability can provide a letter from a regulated health professional confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability.
- 3.7 “Support Person” – means a person who accompanies a person with a disability in order to assist the person with communication, mobility, personal care, medical needs or with access to goods and services.
- 3.8 “Township” shall mean The Corporation of the Township of Adjala-Tosorontio.

4.0 Methods of Communication

The Township of Adjala – Tosorontio’s approach to communicating with customers with disabilities will be as follows:

- Maintain eye contact without staring and try to be at eye level.

- Listen to the customer.
- Make the customer feel comfortable.
- Treat the customer with dignity, respect and courtesy.
- When offering assistance to a person, wait until the person has accepted your offer or has given instructions on the best way to help, before you help. If unsure, we always ask.
- Deal with unfamiliar situations in a calm, professional and relaxed manner.
- Allow for extra time if necessary.
- Speak directly to the person rather than through a companion or personal assistant who might be present.

The Township of Adjala – Tosorontio's general principles to the following disabilities are as follows:

Deaf or hearing-impaired

Hearing loss can cause problems in distinguishing certain frequencies, sounds or words. A person who is deaf, deafened or hard of hearing may be unable to use a public telephone, understand speech in noisy environments or pronounce words clearly enough to be understood by a stranger.

Here are some tips on providing service to people who are deaf or hard of hearing:

- Always keep the person in your line of vision.
- Attract a deaf person's attention, wave your hand or tap them on the shoulder or elbow while they are in our line of vision.
- Speak clearly, slowly and in a normal tone of voice, as exaggerated speech can distort lip movements.
- Face the light source and reduce any background noise if possible (i.e. meet in a separate room).
- Use written notes if needed.

Hearing assistive devices are available within the Council Chambers. These devices can be used during council meetings and public hearings etc. in conjunction with the audio system. The devices are stored within the audio cabinet in the Council Chambers. If you need assistance with the devices, please contact the Clerk's department.

Blind or visually impaired

Vision disabilities reduce one's ability to see clearly. A person with vision loss can result in difficulty reading or seeing faces, maneuvering in unfamiliar places.

Here are some tips on providing service to people who are visually impaired:

- Always identify yourself and others by name when you greet the customer.

- Speak in a normal tone of voice and identify your movements when you move from one place to another.
- When offering assistance, wait for verbal response and/or head nod acknowledgement and then allow them to take your arm rather than taking theirs.
- When offering assistance, place the person's hand on the back or arm of the seat.
- Describe anything you point to.
- Offer the use of a magnifying device.

Speech disabilities

Speech disabilities involve the partial or total loss of the ability to speak. A person with a speech disability can result in problems with pronunciation, pitch and loudness, stuttering or slurring.

Here are some tips on providing service to people with a speech or language impairment:

- Allow extra time for communicating and be patient to allow the person to understand. It may take a little longer for the person to respond so be patient and allow them to finish their sentence.
- Encourage rather than correcting and do not speak for the person.
- Use notes where necessary and never pretend to understand something when you do not understand it.
- Use clear and simple words.
- Give exact instructions.

Physical disabilities

Physical disabilities include a range of functional limitations from minor difficulties in moving or coordinating one part of the body, through muscle weakness, tremors and paralysis. A person with a physical disability may have problems performing manual tasks, moving around independently, reaching, pulling or manipulating objects.

Here are some tips on providing service to people with a physical disability.

- Try to be at eye level for those in wheelchairs.
- If you must stand, step back slightly so the person does not have to strain their neck to look at you.
- When offering assistance, first wait for the person to accept the offer of assistance prior to helping.
- Offer assistance if the individual appears to have difficulty opening a door.
- Offer a place to sit if the individual appears to have difficulty standing.
- When offering assistance, allow them to take your arm rather than taking theirs.
- When calling an individual, allow the phone to ring longer than usual to allow extra time for the person to reach the phone.

Support Persons

Persons with disabilities may be accompanied by their support person while accessing good and/or services.

If a person with a disability is accompanied by a support person, they are permitted to enter the premises together and are not prevented from having access to each other while on the premises.

The Township may require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person while on its premises, but only if a support person is necessary for health and safety reasons.

- Before making a decision, an employee must:
- Consult with the person with a disability to understand their needs
- Consider the health or safety reasons based on available evidence
- Determine if there is no other reasonable way to protect the health or safety for the person or other persons on the premises.

Here are some tips on providing service to people accompanied by a support person:

- Speak directly to the person, not their companion or attendant

Service animals

Service animals, such as guide dogs, offer independence and security to many people with various disabilities. It should be noted, that service animals are not pets and are considered to be working animals. Some laws generally prohibit animals in certain areas – such as food preparation areas; however services animals are permitted in all public situations.

If you cannot easily identify that the animal is a service animal, you can ask the person to provide documentation from a regulated health professional. The documentation must confirm that the person needs the service animal for reasons relating to their disability.

Every employee shall use reasonable efforts to allow persons with disabilities to be accompanied by their guide dog or service animal unless the animal is excluded by law. Where an animal is excluded by law from the premises, the reason why the animal is excluded shall be explained to the person with disabilities. Other reasonable arrangements to provide goods and services shall be explored with the assistance of the person with disability.

When a service animal is unruly or disruptive (jumping on people, biting, or other harmful behaviour) an employee may ask the person with disability to remove the animal from the area and explore other reasonable arrangements to provide goods and services with the assistance of the person with disability.

Here are some tips on providing service to people accompanied by a service animal:

- Do not touch or speak to the service animal.
- Do not feed or deliberately startle a service animal.
- Do not separate or attempt to separate a person from his/her service animal.
- Do not initiate conversation about service animals.

Assistive Devices

Assistive devices are used by people with disabilities to help with daily living.

Persons using assistive devices will be allowed to use their own devices to access our services. However, it should be noted, it is the responsibility of the person with a disability to ensure his/her assistive device is operated in a safe and controlled manner at all times.

Staff will be trained with various assistive devices that may be used by customers with disabilities while accessing our goods and services. The Township of Adjala – Tosorontio will also ensure that staff is aware on how to use the assistive devices which are available on our premises.

For those residents who require a higher table to sit at during a meeting or a deputation to Council, lifts are available for installation on the end each table leg to increase the height of the table from 6” to 8”. The lifts are located within the audio cabinet in the Council Chambers.

A designated area and seating has been made available in the front row within the Council Chambers on the right side for those with a disability.

5.0 Feedback

Feedback from our customers gives the Township of Adjala-Tosorontio opportunities to learn and improve. The Township recognizes that it is the right of our customers to make a complaint, compliment or make suggestions on ways to improve our services.

To assist the Township of Adjala-Tosorontio in ensuring that the delivery of goods and services to those with disabilities is provided in an effective and timely manner, the customer is invited to provide their feedback as follows:

In writing, in person, e-mail, disk, or telephone, addressed to:

Township Clerk
Township of Adjala-Tosorontio
7855 Sideroad 30, R.R. #1
Alliston, Ontario L9R 1V1
Phone: 705-434-5055 Ext. 226
e-mail: bkane@adjtos.ca

In order to assist in a proper response, customers will be asked to provide their name, address, phone number and any other contact information necessary.

The comments provided will be reviewed by staff and the Clerk will respond either in writing, in person, e-mail or telephone acknowledging receipt of the feedback and will set out the actions to be taken in response to any complaint or suggestion.

6.0 Temporary Notice of Service Disruption

It is possible that from time to time there will be disruptions in service, such as an accessible washroom or an automatic door that is under repair. If a disruption in service is planned, and expected, it is important to provide reasonable notice.

Whether a planned or unplanned disruption, notice of the disruption will be posted on the affected door or doors.

EMPLOYEE SIGN OFF FORM

**Accessible Customer Service
Best Practices and Procedures**

Please detach and return the completed sign-off sheet to the Township Clerk:

I _____ have read and understand the contents of the Township of Adjala – Tosorontio Accessible Customer Service Best Practices and Procedures.

Name (Print): _____

Department: _____

Date: _____ Signature: _____

Please return this sign off sheet to:
Barbara Kane, Township Clerk
7855 Sideroad 30, Alliston, Ontario L9R 1V1
705-434-5055
705-434-5051
bkane@adjtos.ca