



Accessibility Act Policy

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this policy is to address the accessibility requirements of Regulation 429/07 Accessibility Standards for Customer Service under the ***Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act***.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all employees and all facilities of Duplium in Ontario. Our commitment is to strive at all times to provide our goods and services in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. We are also committed to giving people with disabilities the same opportunity to access our goods and services and allowing them to benefit from the same services, in the same place and in a similar way as other customers.

RESPONSIBILITIES

It is the responsibility of the managers and/or immediate supervisors and/or department heads to ensure that all employees follow the guidelines set out in this policy.

Each manager and/or immediate supervisor and/or department head is responsible to ensure all employees are trained under Accessibility Standards for Customer Service and this policy, practices and procedures.

DEFINITIONS

“Assistive Devices” are auxiliary aids such as communication aids, cognition aids, personal mobility aids and medical aids (e.g., canes, crutches, wheelchairs or hearing aids).

“Disability”, as per the Ontario **Human Rights Code**, means:

- 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 coordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device;
- b) A condition of mental impairment or a development disability;
- c) A learning disability or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language;
- d) A mental disorder; or
- e) An injury of disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the **Workplace Safety and Insurance Act**.

“Employees” means every person who deals with members of the public or other third parties on behalf of Duplium, whether the person does so as an employee, agent, volunteer or otherwise.

“Persons with Disabilities” are individuals who have a disability as defined under the Ontario Human Rights Code (and above).

“Service Animals” are animals individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of a person with a disability.

“Support Persons” are any persons, whether a paid professional, volunteer, family member, or friend, who accompany a person with a disability in order to help with communications, personal care or medical needs, or with access to goods or services.

PROCEDURES

Communication

- We will communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability.
- We will train staff who communicate with customers on how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities.

Telephone Services

- We are committed to providing fully accessible telephone service to our customers. We will train staff to communicate with customers over the telephone in clear and plain language and to speak clearly and slowly.
- We will offer to communicate with customers by email if telephone communication is not suitable to their communication needs or is not available.

Assistive Devices

- We are committed to serving people with disabilities, who use assistive devices to obtain, use or benefit from our goods and services. We will ensure that our staff is trained and familiar with various assistive devices that may be used by customers with disabilities while accessing our goods and services.

Billing

- We are committed to providing accessible invoices to all of our customers. For this reason, invoices will be provided in the following formats upon requests: hard copy, email, etc.
- We will answer any questions customers may have about the content of the invoice in person, by telephone or email.

Use of service animals and support persons

- We are committed to welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal on the parts of our premises that are open to the public and other third parties.
- We are committed to welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person. Any person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person will be allowed to Duplium’s premise with his or her support person. At no time will a person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person be prevented from having access to his or her support person while on premises.

Disruption of services

Duplium will make reasonable efforts to provide notice in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in the facility. If a disruption in service is planned and expected, Duplium will provide notice as far in advance of the disruption as possible as individuals may require considerable time to make alternative arrangements.

If a disruption is unexpected, Duplium will provide notice as soon as possible after the disruption has been identified.

Training for staff

Duplium will provide training to all employees, volunteers and others who deal with the public.

Feedback process

The ultimate goal of Duplium 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.

Complaints will be addressed and investigated with the appropriate personnel and a written response will be provided within thirty (30) days.

TRAINING

Training includes the following elements:

- Review of the purposes of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act and the requirements of the customer service standard;
- How to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities;
- How to interact with people with disabilities who use an assistive device, service animal or support person;
- How to use the equipment or assistive devices available at Duplium, if applicable;
- What to do if a person with a particular type of disability is having difficulty accessing our goods and services;
- Information regarding Duplium policies, practices and procedures relating to the customer service standards.

Communicating with people with disabilities

All oral and written communication should seek to be inclusive of and positive toward people with a disability. Avoid phrases that demean people with disabilities (such as unfit, defective or incapacitated), avoid words such as “handicapped,” “crippled” and “wheelchair-bound”. Do not refer to people by categories such as “the blind” or “the disabled”.

Terminology

- The words “disability” and “disabled” are more appropriate than “handicap” or “handicapped”.
- It is preferable to say “person with a disability” instead of “disabled person”.

To assist people with disabilities, employees are to utilize the following guidelines:

- a) Treat people with disabilities with the same respect and consideration you offer everyone else.

- b) If you're not sure what to do, ask the individual, "May I help you?"
- c) Ask before you offer to help; don't just jump in. People often have their own way of doing things. Individuals with disabilities know if they need help and how you can provide it.
- d) If you don't know someone, or if you are unfamiliar with the disability, it's better to wait until the individual describes his or her situation to you, rather than to make your own assumptions. Many types of disabilities have similar characteristics and your assumptions may be wrong.
- e) Some disabilities are not visible. Take the time to get to know the individual's needs.
- f) Speak normally, clearly and directly. Speak directly to a person with a disability, not to their interpreter or someone who is with them.
- g) Be patient; give the individual time to explain him or herself.

Use of assistive devices

- Any devices used by persons with disabilities to help with daily living and tasks such as auxiliary aids, communication aids, cognition aids, personal mobility aids and medical aids.
- Employees must not touch or move a person's assistive device without the person's permission. If you do have their permission, do not move the device out of the user's reach.
- Practice consideration and safety. Do not leave the person in an awkward, dangerous or undignified position such as facing a wall or in the path of opening doors.

Use of service animals

- "Service animal" is an animal that a person with a disability uses for support. Such use is either readily apparent or is supported by a letter from a physician or nurse.
- Unless otherwise excluded by law, the customer service standard requires that a person be permitted to be accompanied by his or her guide dog or other service animal in the areas that are open to the public.
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Support persons

"Support persons" assist people with disabilities in a variety of ways, by aiding with communication such as a sign language interpreter or a personal support worker providing physical assistance.

A person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person will be welcomed at Duplium' premise with his or her support person.

Access will be in accordance with normal security procedures.

It is important to direct all communications directly to the individual not the support person.

In some cases a support person may have to agree to rules or requirements that are specific to the kinds of goods or services provided. It may also be necessary to first obtain consent of disclosure from the individual prior to discussing or releasing confidential personal information in the presence of a support person.

Notice of temporary disruption

- Duplium 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 service counters on our premises.

Sample notice of disruption of services

Dear Valued customers,

The _____ is temporarily out of service. We apologize for any inconvenience. We expect the _____ to be open to the public by _____. In the interim, you may use _____. We apologize for any inconvenience.

Thank you,
Management

Customer feedback form

Duplium will implement a process for individuals to provide feedback on how it provides goods and services to people with disabilities, responds to any feedback and takes action on any complaints/suggestions, as required by the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service.

Sample customer feedback form

Dear Valued _____,

We strive to improve accessibility for our customers with disabilities. We would like to hear your comments, questions and suggestions about the provision of our goods or services to people with disabilities.

Please tell us the date and time of your visit:

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 and services?

- No
- Yes (Please explain below)
- Somewhat (Please explain below)

Please add any other comments you may have:

Thank you,
Management