



Municipality of Chatham-Kent Accessibility Policy

June 7, 2021
Integrated Accessibility Standards Committee

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Organizational Commitment

The goods and services provided by the Municipality of Chatham-Kent shall be provided to persons of all abilities and all customers in accordance with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA) and Ontario's accessibility laws. The Municipality of Chatham-Kent is committed to meeting the current and ongoing obligations under the Ontario Human Rights Code respecting non-discrimination.

The Municipality of Chatham-Kent understands that obligations under the AODA and its accessibility standards do not substitute or limit its obligations under the Ontario Human Rights Code or obligations to people with disabilities under any other law.

The Municipality of Chatham-Kent is committed to excellence in serving and providing goods, services or facilities to all customers including people with disabilities.

Our accessible customer service policies are consistent with the following core principles including independence, dignity, integration and equality of opportunity for people with disabilities:

Independence: Services for persons of all abilities shall support their independence while respecting their right to safety and personal privacy

Dignity: Service is provided in a respectful manner consistent with the needs of the individual

Integrated: Services allow people of all abilities to fully benefit from the same services in the same place and in the same or similar way

Equity/Equality of Outcome: Service outcome is the same for all persons of all abilities

Sensitive: Service is provided in a manner that is respectful to an individual's needs

Responsive: Service is delivered in a timely manner, considering the nature of the service and the accommodation required

Training

We are committed to training all staff and volunteers in accessible customer service, other Ontario's accessibility standards and aspects of the Ontario Human Rights Code that relate to persons with disabilities. In addition, we will train:

- a) all persons who participate in developing the organization's policies; and
- b) all other persons who provide goods, services or facilities on behalf of the organization

Training of our employees and volunteers on accessibility relates to their specific roles.

Training includes:

- the purpose of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* and the requirements of the Customer Service Standards
- our policies related to the Customer Service Standards
- how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities
- how to interact with people with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or a support person
- how to use the equipment or devices available on-site or otherwise that may help with providing goods, services or facilities to people with disabilities.
- what to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing the Municipality of Chatham-Kent's goods, services or facilities.

We train every person as soon as practicable after being hired and provide training in respect of any changes to the policies.

We maintain records of the training provided including the dates on which the training was provided and the number of individuals to whom it was provided.

Assistive Devices

A person may provide their own assistive device for the purpose of obtaining, using and benefiting from Chatham-Kent goods and services. Exceptions may occur in situations where the Municipality has determined that the assistive device may pose a risk to the person or others on the premises.

We ensure that our staff are trained and familiar with various assistive devices we have on site or that we provide that may be used by customers with disabilities while accessing our goods, services or facilities. This includes regular training on the operation of devices such as accessibility lifts at public pools and assistive devices at our public libraries.

Communication

We communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability. This may include providing information in alternative formats, providing a real time or recorded captioning service or sign language interpreter for verbal communications.

We will work with the person with disabilities to determine what method of communication works for them.

Service Animals

We welcome people with disabilities and their service animals. Service animals are allowed on the parts of our premises that are open to the public and third parties.

When we cannot easily identify that an animal is a service animal, our staff may ask for documentation (template, letter or form) from a regulated health professional that confirms the person needs the service animal for reasons relating to their disability.

A service animal can be easily identified through visual indicators, such as when it wears a harness or a vest, or when it helps the person perform certain tasks.

A regulated health professional is defined as a member of one of the following colleges:

- College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists of Ontario
- College of Chiropractors of Ontario
- College of Nurses of Ontario
- College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario
- College of Optometrists of Ontario
- College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario
- College of Physiotherapists of Ontario
- College of Psychologists of Ontario
- College of Registered Psychotherapists and Registered Mental Health Therapists of Ontario

If service animals are prohibited by another law, we will do the following to ensure people with disabilities can access our goods, services or facilities:

- explain why the animal is excluded
- discuss with the customer another way of providing goods, services or facilities

Support Persons

A person may enter premises operated by Chatham-Kent with a support person and have access to the support person while on the premises.

Chatham-Kent may require a person to be accompanied by a support person while on Chatham-Kent premises in situations where it is necessary to protect the health or safety of the person or others on the premises.

If an amount is payable by a person for admission to the premises or in connection with a person's presence at the premises, Chatham-Kent shall ensure that notice is given in advance identifying the amount, if any, payable in respect of the support person.

In certain cases, the Municipality of Chatham-Kent might require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person for the health or safety reasons of:

- the person with a disability
- others on the premises

Before making a decision, the Municipality of Chatham-Kent will:

- consult with the person with a disability to understand their needs
- consider health or safety reasons based on available evidence
- determine if there is no other reasonable way to protect the health or safety of the person or others on the premises

If the Municipality of Chatham-Kent determines that a support person is required, we will waive the admission fee or fare (if applicable) for the support person.

Notice of Temporary Disruptions in Services and Facilities

In the event of temporary disruptions in services and facilities, Chatham-Kent will make reasonable effort to provide notice of the disruption to the public, including information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative services or facilities, if any, that may be available. Chatham-Kent will make reasonable effort to provide prior notice of planned disruption if possible. In an unplanned temporary disruption, Chatham-Kent shall provide notice as soon as possible.

When temporary disruptions occur, Chatham-Kent will provide notice by posting in a visible place or on the Chatham-Kent web site or by any other method that may be reasonable under the circumstances.

Feedback Process

Feedback from a member of the public about the delivery of goods and services to persons with varying abilities may be given by telephone, in person, in writing, in electronic format or through other methods.

Feedback may be provided to the service provider or:

Chatham-Kent Municipal Clerk.

315 King St. W.

P.O. Box 640

Chatham, ON

N7M 5K8

Telephone: (519) 360-1998

Fax: (519) 436-3237

Email: ck311@chatham-kent.ca

The feedback will be responded to in a timely manner in a format that takes the individual's needs into account and detailing the outcome.

Notice of Availability of Documents

All documents required in accordance with the regulation are available by request and notice to that effect shall be posted in a conspicuous place or on the Chatham-Kent website or by any other such method as is reasonable in the circumstances.

Self-Service Kiosks

We will incorporate accessibility features/consider accessibility for people with disabilities when designing, procuring or acquiring self-service kiosks.

Procurement

We incorporate accessibility criteria and features when procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities, including self-service kiosks. If it is not possible and practical to do so, we will provide an explanation upon request.

Information and Communication

We have a process for receiving and responding to feedback and the process is accessible to persons with disabilities upon request.

We communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability. When asked, we will provide information about the Municipality of Chatham-Kent and its services, including public safety information, in accessible formats or with communication supports:

- a) in a timely manner, taking into account the person's accessibility needs due to disability; and
- b) at a cost that is no more than the regular cost charged to other persons.

We notify the public about the availability of accessible formats and communication supports by publishing this information on our website.

We will also meet internationally recognized Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level AA website requirements in accordance with Ontario's accessibility laws.

Employment

We notify employees, job applicants and the public that accommodations can be made during recruitment and hiring. We notify job applicants when they are individually selected to participate in an assessment or selection process that accommodations are available upon request. We consult with the applicants and provide or arrange for suitable accommodation.

We notify successful applicants of policies for accommodating employees with disabilities when making offers of employment.

We notify staff that supports are available for those with disabilities as soon as practicable after they begin their employment. We provide updated information to employees whenever there is a change to existing policies on the provision of job accommodation that take into account an employee's accessibility needs due to a disability.

We will consult with employees when arranging for the provision of suitable accommodation in a manner that takes into account the accessibility needs due to disability. We will consult with the person making the request in determining the suitability of an accessible format or communication supports specifically for:

- a) information that is needed in order to perform the employee's job; and
- b) information that is generally available to employees in the workplace

Where needed, we will also provide customized emergency information to help an employee with a disability during an emergency. With the employee's consent, we will provide workplace emergency information to a designated person who is providing assistance to that employee during an emergency.

We will provide the information as soon as practicable after we become aware of the need for accommodation due to the employee's disability.

We will review the individualized workplace emergency response information:

- a) when the employee moves to a different location in the organization;
- b) when the employee's overall accommodations needs or plans are reviewed; and
- c) when the employer reviews its general emergency response policies.

We have a written process to develop individual accommodation plans for employees.

We have a written process for employees who have been absent from work due to a disability and require disability-related accommodations in order to return to work.

Our performance management, career development and redeployment processes take into account the accessibility needs of all employees.

Design of Public Spaces

We will meet accessibility laws when building or making major changes to public spaces. Our public spaces include:

- Recreational trails/beach access routes
- Splash Pads
- Outdoor public eating areas like picnic areas
- Outdoor play spaces, like playgrounds in our municipality
- Accessible off-street parking
- Accessible on-street parking
- Service-related elements like service counters, provincial offences court, fixed queueing lines and waiting areas

We put procedures in place to prevent service disruptions to the accessible parts of our public spaces.

Transportation

We meet accessibility laws when making our transportation services accessible. Our accessible transportation services include conventional and accessible transit services as well as taxicab licensing.

Changes to Existing Policies

Any policies of the Municipality of Chatham-Kent that do not respect and promote the principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity for people with disabilities will be modified or removed.

This document is publicly available. Accessible formats are available upon request.