

SUBJECT: CUSTOMER SERVICE POLICY – PROVIDING GOODS AND SERVICES TO PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES	SECTION: GENERAL GOVERNMENT SUBSECTION: ADMINISTRATION
POLICY NO.:	DATE APPROVED BY COUNCIL: Nov.30, 2009

PURPOSE:

This policy is intended to meet the requirements of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (the 'AODA') and Ontario Regulation 429/07 entitled "Accessibility Standards for Customer Service" which came into effect January 1, 2008.

It is the policy of the Municipality of North Middlesex that citizens with disabilities achieve accessibility to the provision of goods and services, provided by the Municipality to this community, consistent with the principles of independence, dignity, integration, and equality of opportunity as set out in the regulation of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005.

DEFINITIONS:

1. **Assistive Devices** – as defined in the *Guide to the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service*, is a technical aide, communication device, or medical aid modified or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional abilities of people with disabilities. Examples include, but are not limited to walkers, canes, wheelchairs, hearing aids or oxygen tanks.
2. **Barrier** – as defined in the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* is anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of his or her disability, including a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, an information or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy or a practice.
3. **Disability** – as defined in the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* and the *Human Rights Code* is:
 - 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,
 - a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,
 - a mental disorder, or

- an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997;
4. **Guide Dog** – as defined in *Ontario Regulation 429/07* and section 1 of the *Blind Persons Rights Act* is a dog trained as a guide for a blind person and having qualifications prescribed by the regulations under the *Blind Persons Rights Act*.
 5. **Municipality** – the Municipality of North Middlesex
 6. **Service Animal** – as defined in *Ontario Regulation 429/07* is a service animal for a person with a disability,
 - if it is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to his or her disability; or
 - if the person provides a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability.
 7. **Support Person** – as defined in *Ontario Regulation 429/07* in relation to a person with a disability, another person who accompanies him or her in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs or with access to goods or services.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES AND PROCEDURES:

1. **Providing Goods and Services to People with Disabilities**

The Municipality of North Middlesex is committed to excellence in serving all people with disabilities and will carry out municipal functions and responsibilities in the following areas:

- The goods or services must be provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.
- 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.
- Persons with disabilities must be given an opportunity equal to that given to others to obtain, use and benefit from the goods or services.

2. Communication with Persons with Disabilities

When communicating with people with disabilities, the Municipality will do so in a manner that will take into account their disability.

3. Assistive Devices

The use of assistive devices by persons with disabilities to obtain, use or benefit from the Municipality's goods or services is recognized unless otherwise prohibited due to health and safety or privacy issues. In these situations, the Municipality may offer a person with a disability other reasonable measures to assist him or her in obtaining and using the Municipality's goods and services where applicable.

It is the responsibility of the person with a disability to ensure that his or her assistive device is operated in a safe and controlled manner at all times.

4. Use of Guide Dogs, Services Animals and Support Persons

The Municipality is committed to welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by a guide dog or service animal on the parts of our premises that are open to the public and other third parties. The Municipality will ensure that all employees and volunteers dealing with the public are properly trained in how to interact with people with disabilities who are accompanied by a guide dog or service animal.

The Municipality is 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 enter the Municipality of North Middlesex's premises 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 our premises.

Fees will not be charged for the support person for admission to recreation programs such as public skating or the summer recreation program. Where admissions fees for the support person are applicable the Municipality will provide advance notice of the fee.

The Municipality of North Middlesex may deem it necessary to require a support person for a person with a disability in order to protect the health and safety of that person or of others on the premises. This will only occur after consultation with the person with a disability and when it's the only means to allow the person with a disability to access the Municipality's goods or services.

5. Service Disruptions

The Municipality of North Middlesex 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, on the municipal website, service counters in applicable premises or by such other method as is reasonable under the circumstances. In the event of an unexpected disruption, notice will be provided as soon as possible.

An example of a Notice of Disruption is attached as Appendix "A" to this policy.

6. **Feedback Process**

The goal of the Municipality of North Middlesex is to meet customer expectations while serving customers with disabilities. Comments on municipal services regarding how well those expectations are being met are welcomed and appreciated. Feedback from the public may identify areas that require change and encourage continuous service improvements.

Feedback from a member of the public regarding the provision of goods and services to people with disabilities can be made in person, by phone, email, in writing or through the mail. All feedback will be directed to the Clerk's Department. The Municipality of North Middlesex will take action within five (5) business days of its receipt by the Municipality.

A copy of the Feedback Form is attached as Appendix "B" to this policy.

7. **Training for Staff**

The Municipality of North Middlesex will provide training to all employees and volunteers who deal with the public or other third parties on their behalf, and all those who are involved in the development and approvals of customer service policies, practices and procedures.

This training will be provided during the three month probationary period for permanent employees and during orientation for seasonal or part time employees. It will be the responsibility of the Director and/or Manager of the Department to ensure that employees are familiar with the Customer Service Standard following the initial staff training October 2009.

Training will include the following:

- The purposes of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 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 or require the assistance of a service animal or a support person.
- How to use the equipment or devices available on the Municipality's premises or otherwise that may help with the provision of goods or services to people with disabilities.
- What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing the Municipality's goods and services.
- The Municipality of North Middlesex's policies, practices and procedures relating to the customer service standard.

Applicable staff will be trained on policies, practices and procedures that affect the way goods and services are provided to people with disabilities.

Following the training there will be a short review of the material in the form of a quiz and an acknowledgement of the training provided by the employee, trainer, and Director or Manager.

8. **Questions Regarding the Policy**

This policy exists to achieve service excellence to customers with disabilities. If anyone has a question about the policy, or if the purpose of the policy is not understood, an explanation will be provided upon request to the Clerk's Department.

The Municipality of North Middlesex shall provide notice that upon request, it will provide a copy of the policies, practices and procedures required under Ontario Regulation 429/07 – Accessibility Standards for Customer Service to any person. A copy of this policy is available upon request by contacting the Clerk's Department and a copy is also available on the municipal website www.northmiddlesex.on.ca

If the Municipality is requested to provide a person with a disability a document or information, the Municipality will take into consideration the communication needs of the person with a disability and endeavour to provide the information to the person in a format that takes into account the person's disability.



Municipality of North Middlesex
329 Parkhill Main St
P.O. Box 9 Parkhill, ON N0M 2K0
Phone 519 294-8244 Fax 519 294-0573
www.northmiddlesex.on.ca



Notice of Disruption in Service

Type of Disruption: _____

Reason for Disruption: _____

SUBJECT
COMMENTS

Duration of Disruption: _____

Alternative Facilities/Services: _____

First Name	
Last Name	
Phone Number	
Telephone	
Fax	
E-mail	
Regular Mail	

Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection to Privacy Act
Personal information on this form is collected under the authority of Ontario Regulation 429/07.
Accessibly for Customer Standards for Customer Service. The information will be used to
provide services to the Municipality's customer service policies and procedures. Questions about this form should be directed to
the Clerk's Office at 329 Parkhill Main Street, Parkhill, ON N0M 2K0. 519 294-8244



Appendix "B"

Municipality of North Middlesex
229 Parkhill Main St.
P.O. Box 9 Parkhill, ON N0M 2K0
Phone: 519 294-6244 Fax: 519 294-0573
www.northmiddlesex.on.ca

Accessibility Feedback or Suggestions for Municipal Programs and Services

This document is available in alternative formats upon request.

The Municipality of North Middlesex welcomes your comments, suggestions and feedback on accessibility of municipal programs and services for people with disabilities. Please fill in the following and make sure to include appropriate contact information. Once we receive the form, we will respond to your feedback within five (5) business days.

This form or any other feedback regarding services can be submitted by the following methods:

- In person at the Municipal Office – 229 Parkhill Main Street
- Online at www.northmiddlesex.on.ca
- Telephone: 519 294-6244
- Fax: 519 294-0573
- By mail to the Municipality of North Middlesex, 229 Parkhill Main St., Parkhill, ON N0M 2K0

SUBJECT:	
COMMENTS:	
First Name:	
Last Name:	
Would you like a response? If yes, please choose from the list below:	
<input type="checkbox"/> Telephone <input type="checkbox"/> Fax <input type="checkbox"/> E-mail <input type="checkbox"/> Regular Mail	
Phone Number:	Mailing Address:
Fax Number:	
E-mail:	

Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection to Privacy Act

Personal information on this form is collected under the authority of Ontario Regulation 429/07, Accessibility for Customer Standards for Customer Service. The information will be used to process this form, and will be kept on file to facilitate improvements to the Municipality's customer service policies, practices and procedures. Questions about this collection should be directed to the Clerk's Office at 229 Parkhill Main Street, Parkhill ON N0M 2K0, 519 294-6244.