



MUNICIPALITY OF VAL RITA-HARTY

POLICY ON ACCESSIBILITY CUSTOMER SERVICE

#881-10

BEING A BY-LAW TO ADOPT A POLICY ON ACCESSIBLE CUSTOMER SERVICE FOR THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF VAL RITA-HARTY

WHEREAS the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2005 (AODA) became law on June 13th 2005, the Municipalities are required to comply with the Standard on January 1st 2010, and report on compliance by March 31st 2010.

NOW THEREFORE, the Council of the Corporation of the Township of Val Rita-Harty enacts as follows:

1. That schedule “A” and “B” form part of this by-law
2. That this by-law be in effect as March 17th, 2010

READ A FIRST AND SECOND TIME THIS 17TH DAY OF MARCH, 2010

Mayor: Laurier Bourgeois

Clerk: Christiane Potvin

READ A THIRD AND PASSED THIS 17TH DAY OF MARCH , 2010

Mayor: Laurier Bourgeois

Clerk: Christiane Potvin

SCHEDULE “A”

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to recognize the Township of Val Rita-Harty’s obligation to facilitate the implementation of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2005* (AODA), and Ontario Regulation 429/07 (Accessibility Standards for Customer Service) and addresses the following:

- ⇒ The provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities;
- ⇒ The use of assistive devices by persons with disabilities;
- ⇒ The use of service animals by persons with disabilities;
- ⇒ The use of support persons by persons with disabilities;
- ⇒ Notice of temporary disruptions in services and facilities;
- ⇒ Training;
- ⇒ Customer feedback regarding the provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities; and
- ⇒ Notice of availability and format of documents.

Definitions

“Accessibility standard” means an accessibility standard made by regulation under section 6 of the AODA.

“Barrier” means 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, information or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy or a practice.

“Blind person” means a person who because of blindness is dependent on a guide dog or white cane.

“Disability” 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 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.
- (b) a condition of mental impairment or a developmental 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 or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997*; (“handicap”).

“Guide dog” means a dog trained as a guide for a blind person and having the qualifications prescribed by the regulations under the *Blind Persons Rights’ Act*.

“Service Animal” – an animal is a service animal for a person with a disability, if

- (a) it is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to his or her disability; or
- (b) the person provides a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to a disability.

“Support Person” means, 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.

Policy Statement

The Corporation of the Township of Val Rita-Harty is committed to providing quality goods and services that are accessible to all persons served by the Municipality.

General Principles and Implementation

a) The Provision of Goods and Services to Persons with Disabilities:

The Township of Val Rita-Harty will use reasonable efforts to ensure its policies, practices and procedures are consistent with the following principles:

- The Township’s goods and services are provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.
- The provision of the Township’s goods and services to persons with disabilities are integrated with those provided to persons who do not have disabilities unless an alternative measure is necessary to enable a person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the Township’s goods or services and,
- Persons with disabilities are given an opportunity equal to that of persons without disabilities to obtain, use or benefit from the Township’s goods and services.

b) Service Animals

Persons with a disability may enter premises owned and operated by the Township accompanied by a service animal and keep the animal with them if the public has access to such premises and the animal is not otherwise excluded by law. If the service animal is excluded by law from the premises, the Township will look to other available measures to enable the person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the Township's goods and services. The safety, care and protection of the community at large will take priority over any individual.

If it is not readily apparent the animal is a service animal, the Township may ask the person with a disability for a letter from a qualified medical physician confirming the person requires the animal for reasons relating to his/her disability. The Township may also, or instead, ask for a certificate of training from a recognized guide dog or service animal training school.

It should be noted it is the responsibility of the person with a disability to ensure his/her service animal is kept in control at all times.

c) Support Persons

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.

If it is not readily apparent the support person is required, the Township may ask the person with a disability for a letter from a qualified medical physician confirming the person requires a support person for reasons relating to his/her disability.

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 to protect the health or safety of the person with a disability or the health or safety of others on the premises.

Where fees for services requiring access by the disabled person to Township facilities are advertised or promoted by the Township, unless otherwise communicated in advance, the fee charged to a support person accompanying the disabled person will be fifty (50) percent of the value charged to the disabled person. The Township may ask, at the time of purchase, the person with the disability for a letter from a qualified medical physician confirming the person requires a support person for reasons related to his/her disability.

d) Notice of Temporary Disruptions in Services and Facilities

Temporary disruptions in Township services or facilities may occur due to reasons that may or may not be within the Township control or knowledge.

The Township 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 facilities or services, if any, that may be available.

If the disruption is anticipated, the Township will provide a reasonable amount of advance notice of the disruption.

The Township will provide notice by posting the information in visible places or by any other method that may be reasonable under the circumstances as soon as reasonably possible.

e) Feedback Process (Appendix B)

Feedback from the public is welcomed as it may identify areas that require change and encourage continuous service improvement.

The public can provide feedback to the Township on the delivery of goods and services to persons with disabilities;

- (a) by mail addressed to: Township of Val Rita-Harty
2 Ave de l'Église
P.O. Box 100
Val Rita, Ontario
POL 2G0
- (b) by telephone: (705) 335-6146
- (c) in person at: Municipal Office
- (d) or by email to: administration@valharty.ca

Feedback will not be acted upon unless the person providing same includes his or her name, mailing address and daytime telephone number. E-mail addresses are not sufficient.

The Township will strive to provide responses to feedback within ten (10) business days from its receipt. Information about the feedback process will be posted in appropriate locations. (municipal office)

f) Assistive Devices

A person with a disability may provide their own assistive device for the purpose of obtaining, using and benefiting from the Township's goods and services. Exceptions may occur in situations where the Township has determined the assistive device may pose a risk to the health and safety of a person with a disability or the health and

safety of others on the premises. In these situations and others, the Township may offer a person with a disability other reasonable measures of assistance in obtaining, using and benefiting from the Township's goods and services, where the Township has such other measures available.

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.

g) Training

All Township employees, volunteers, agents, contractors and others who deal with the public on behalf of the Township and those involved in developing customer service policies, practices, and procedures, will receive Accessibility Awareness Training within six months of beginning their duties.

The amount and format of training given will be tailored to suit each person's interactions with the public and his/her involvement in the development of policies, procedures and practices pertaining to the provision of goods and services.

Contractors and agents providing services on behalf of the Township to the public will be required to ensure staff has received the appropriate training.

Training will be provided as soon as practicable upon the individual being assigned the applicable duties as well as on an ongoing basis as changes occur to the Township's policies, procedures and practices governing the provision of goods or services to persons with disabilities.

The Township will keep records of the training provided, including dates training is provided and the number of persons trained.

Accessibility Awareness Training will include the following:

- (a) How to provide goods and services in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities;
- (b) How to interact and communicate with persons in a manner that takes into account their disabilities;
- (c) The process for people to provide feedback to the Township about its provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities, and how the Township responds to the feedback and takes action on any complaint;
- (d) How to interact with persons with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or a support person to access goods and services;
- (e) Information on other Township's policies, practices, and procedures dealing with the AODA;

- (f) A review of the purposes of the AODA and the requirements of the customer service standard;
- (g) How to use equipment or devices available on Township premises or provided by the Township that may help with the provision of goods and services; and
- (h) What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing Township's goods and services.

Effective Date

This policy comes into effect on March 17th, 2010 .



Corporation of the Township of Val Rita-Harty

NOTICE OF SERVICE DISRUPTION

There will be a scheduled service disruption at the

on _____

from _____ until _____

The service disruption will involve:

Thank you for your patience in this matter.



Corporation de la Municipalité de Val Rita-Harty

AVIS D'INTERRUPTION DE SERVICE

Il y aura une interruption de service régulier à:

sur _____

de _____ jusqu'à _____

L'interruption de service impliquera:

Merci de votre patience.



Corporation de la Municipalité de Val Rita-Harty

APPENDIX "B"

CUSTOMER FEEDBACK FORM

At the Municipality of Val Rita-Harty we value our customers and strive to meet everyone's needs.

This completed form will assist us in determining if there are areas where we need to improve in order to serve you better.

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?

YES (please explain below) **SOMEWHAT** **NO (please explain below)**

Please add any other comments you may have: _____

Your contact information (optional): _____

Thank you for taking the time to complete this form. Your comments are appreciated.

THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF VAL RITA-HARTY

Date Received: _____ Date Action Taken: _____

Action Taken: _____

INFORMATIONS

How should I provide services to persons with disabilities?

In any interaction, you must deal with the person's service needs, rather than focusing on the person's disability. Start off by asking how you may help the person. If need be, offer alternate methods of communication. Understand the nature and scope of the service that you offer. The key to providing good customer service is to be polite. The tables on the next few pages identify specific categories of disabilities and provide suggestions to help you better serve customers:

Hearing Disabilities

Description	Tips for better customer service
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of hearing 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 places; and/or pronounce words clearly enough to be understood by strangers 	<p>Attract customer's attention before speaking with a gentle touch on the shoulder or by waving your hand</p> <p>Look directly at the person</p> <p>Face the person, speak clearly and keep your hands away from your face – don't shout</p> <p>Use a pen and paper to write on</p> <p>Reduce background noise</p> <p>If a sign language interpreter is used to communicate, direct your attention to the deaf person, not the interpreter</p> <p>Discuss personal matters in private</p> <p>Be clear and precise when giving directions, repeat or rephrase if necessary and make sure that you are understood</p>

Deaf-blindness Disabilities

Description	Tips for better customer service
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Combination of hearing and vision loss, resulting in significant difficulty accessing information and performing daily activities • May interfere with communication, learning, orientation and mobility • People who are deaf-blind may use various sign language systems, Braille, telephone devices, communication boards or any combination thereof • Many use an intervener to relay information and facilitate auditory and visual information or to act as sighted 	<p>Do not assume what a person can or can't do – some people who are deaf-blind have some sight or hearing capabilities</p> <p>A customer who is deaf-blind will usually explain to you how to communicate or give you an assistance card or note explaining how to communicate</p> <p>Never touch the customer suddenly or without permission, unless it is an emergency</p> <p>Understand that communication may take some time – be patient</p> <p>Direct your attention to your customer,</p>

guide	not to the intervener
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Vision Disabilities

Description	Tips for better customer service
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in ability to see clearly • Very few are totally blind, most people have limited vision e.g. tunnel vision (loss of peripheral or side vision) or lack of central vision (cannot see straight ahead), some can see the outline of objects or the direction of light • May interfere with ability to read; see faces; manoeuvre in unfamiliar places; differentiate colours or distances; see hazards • People who are blind may use Braille, magnifier, or intervener to relay and facilitate visual information or to act as sighted guide 	<p>Verbally identify yourself before making physical contact</p> <p>Verbally describe the setting, form, location as necessary</p> <p>Offer your arm to guide the person – do not grab or pull</p> <p>Never touch your customer without asking permission, unless it is an emergency</p> <p>Don't leave your customer in the middle of a room, guide them to a chair or comfortable location</p> <p>Don't walk away without saying good-bye</p> <p>Direct your attention to your customer, not to the intervener</p>

Speech Disabilities

Description	Tips for better customer service
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May involve a partial or total loss of the ability to speak, resulting in difficulties with communication • Problems may be associated with pronunciation; pitch or loudness of voice; hoarseness or breathiness; stuttering or slurring words • May also prevent the customer from being able to express him or herself or to understand written or spoken language • Some may use a communication board or other assistive device 	<p>If possible, communicate in a quiet place</p> <p>Give the customer your full attention and don't interrupt or finish his or her sentences</p> <p>Ask them to repeat as necessary or to write the message on paper</p> <p>Give whatever time is necessary for the customer to get his or her point across – be patient</p> <p>Try to ask questions that can be answered with a "yes" or "no" as much as possible</p> <p>Verify your understanding</p>

Physical Disabilities

Description	Tips for better customer service
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include a range of functional limitations from minor difficulties in moving or coordinating part of the body, through muscle weakness, tremors, and paralysis • Could be congenital (e.g. Muscular Dystrophy) or acquired (e.g. bone fracture) • May interfere with ability to perform manual tasks such as holding a pen, turning a key or door knob; to move around independently; to control the speed or coordination of movements; to reach, pull or manipulate objects; to have strength or endurance; to have balance; to sit or stand for prolonged periods of time 	<p>Speak normally and directly to your customer, not to someone accompanying him or her</p> <p>People with physical disabilities often have their own way of doing things – ask first before you help</p> <p>Provide your customer with information or guide them to accessible features of the facility e.g. accessible washrooms, automatic doors, etc.</p> <p>Keep ramps and corridors free of clutter</p> <p>If counter is too high, step around it to provide the service</p> <p>Provide a chair for a customer who cannot stand in line or stand to receive service</p> <p>Respect the customer’s personal space</p> <p>Don’t leave your customer in an awkward, dangerous or undignified position</p>

Developmental Disabilities

Description	Tips for better customer service
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affect a person’s ability to think and reason • Can mildly or profoundly affect the ability to learn, communicate, do everyday activities and live independently • Difficulties may be experienced in understanding spoken and written language; understanding conceptual information; perceiving sensory information; memory • Can be invisible, you may not recognize that a customer has a developmental disability unless you are told 	<p>Treat your customer with respect, he or she may understand more than you think</p> <p>Don’t assume what a person can or cannot do</p> <p>Use clear and plain language, simplify concepts</p> <p>Take your time and be patient – be prepared to explain and provide examples regarding information</p> <p>Verify that the customer understands what you are saying</p> <p>Remember that adults can make their own decisions, unless you are informed otherwise</p> <p>Provide one piece of information at a time – give instructions step-by-step</p> <p>Speak directly to your customer, not to the companion or attendant</p>

Learning Disabilities

Description	Tips for better customer service
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include a range of disorders that affect verbal and non-verbal information acquisition, retention, understanding and processing • People with learning disabilities have average or above average intelligence, but take in and process information and express knowledge in different ways • Difficulties may be experienced with reading, problem solving, time management, way finding, understanding information 	<p>Learning disabilities are generally invisible and the ability to function can vary greatly – be patient and take the necessary time</p> <p>Be courteous and willing to assist e.g. in filling in forms, providing information verbally, etc.</p> <p>Speak normally, clearly and directly to your customer</p> <p>Provide information in a way that works for your customer e.g. read out written instructions, etc.</p> <p>Allow extra time to complete tasks</p>

Mental Health Disabilities

Description	Tips for better customer service
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defined as the absence of psychological well-being and satisfactory adjustment to society • Include a range of disabilities, however there are three (3) main types: anxiety; mood; and behavioral disorders • People with mental health disabilities may appear edgy or irritated; may act aggressively; may be pushy or abrupt; may be unable to make a decision; may start laughing or get angry for no apparent reason 	<p>Treat the customer as an individual with respect and consideration</p> <p>Be confident and reassuring</p> <p>Try to reduce stress and anxiety in situations – do not be confrontational</p> <p>Stay calm and courteous, even if the customer exhibits unusual behavior</p> <p>Focus on the service the customer needs and how you can help</p> <p>Take the customer seriously, don't take things personally</p> <p>If the customer is in crisis, ask how you may best help</p>

You may also encounter other disabilities that have not been mentioned here. For example disabilities associated with the loss of:

Smell, which may cause a hypersensitivity to odours, allergy to certain types of odours or chemicals and may prevent an individual from identifying harmful gases, smoke, fumes or spoiled food

Touch, which can affect the ability to sense texture, temperature, vibration or pressure and may cause someone to scald his or herself unknowingly

Taste, which can limit the four primary taste sensations and prevent a person from identifying, spoiled food or noxious substances.

When serving customers with disabilities, recognize your nervousness and relax. People with disabilities are generally aware that they may need some accommodations and will usually work with you. Just remember to ask how you can help.

How should I interact with persons who use assistive devices, a service animal or a support person?

Assistive devices, service animals and support persons (interpreters, interveners and companions) offer independence and security to individuals with disabilities. It is illegal to prevent a person with a disability from using an assistive device, or bringing a service animal or support person into a facility for the express purpose of enabling that person to benefit from the use of the facility or the services offered therein as others benefit. The sole exception is when the presence of a service animal is specifically prohibited by law, such as in a commercial kitchen. It is also important to note that an individual with disabilities may use several different devices simultaneously, for example a wheelchair and a service animal.

The following definitions apply to these aids in relation to people with disabilities:

“assistive device” means an auxiliary aid such as communication aids, cognition aids, personal mobility aids and medical aids, for example canes, wheelchairs, hearing aids, recording machines, portable magnifiers, personal oxygen tanks, devices for grasping, etc.

“service animal” means an animal that provides a service, does work or performs tasks for a person with a disability, whether that animal is specifically trained or not, and includes guide dogs as defined under the *Blind Persons Rights’ Act*

“support person” means a person who accompanies a person with a disability in order to help such person with communications, mobility, personal care, medical needs and/or access to goods and services, whether or not said support person is a paid professional, volunteer, family member or friend.

These tips will assist you in serving customers who have disabilities and who use various devices:

Assistive Devices
<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Wheel chairs and other mobility devices are part of a person’s personal space – don’t touch, move or lean on them.✓ As much as possible, allow individuals to use their own assistive devices when participating in activities or obtaining information.✓ If assistive devices are available in the facility, offer the use of the devices to customers with disabilities.✓ If assistive devices are available for public use in a facility, know where they are and how to use them, and provide assistance to customers in their use.

Choosing the Right Words: Preferred words and phrases for addressing or referring to persons with disabilities

Instead of ...	Please use ...
Afflicted by cerebral palsy, multiple sclerosis, arthritis, etc.	A person who has cerebral palsy. A person who has multiple sclerosis. A person who has arthritis, etc. A person with a disability.
Aged (the)	Seniors or senior citizens
Autistic	A person with autism. A person who has autism.
Birth defect, congenital defect, deformity	A person who has a congenital disability. A person with a disability since birth.
Blind (the), visually impaired (the)	A person who is blind. A person with a vision disability. A person with vision loss. A person with a visual impairment. A person with low vision.
Brain damaged	A person with a brain injury. A person with a head injury.
Confined to a wheelchair, wheelchair bound	A person who uses a wheelchair.
Crazy, insane, lunatic, psycho, mental, mental patient, maniac, neurotic, psychotic, unsound mind, schizophrenic	A person with a mental health disability. A person who has depression. A person with schizophrenia.
Cripple, crippled, lame	A person with a disability. A person with a mobility impairment, or more specifically – a person who walks with crutches, etc. A person who uses a walker or a mobility aid. A person with arthritis, etc.
Deaf (the), hearing impaired (the)	A person who is deaf (person with profound hearing loss who communicates using sign language). A person who is deafened (deaf later in life). A person who is hard of hearing (person with hearing loss who communicates primarily by speech). A person with a hearing loss. When referring to the deaf community and their culture (whose preferred mode of communication is sign language), it is acceptable to use “the Deaf”.
Deaf and dumb, deaf mute	A person who is deaf without speech.
Deaf-blind (the)	A person who is deaf-blind (person who has any combination of visual and auditory impairment).
Differently abled	A person with a disability.
Disabled (the)	People with disabilities.
Elderly (the)	Seniors, older adults, senior citizens.
Epileptic	A person who has epilepsy.
Fits, spells, attacks	Seizures.

Handicapped (the)	A person with a disability or people with disabilities. The term “handicapped” may be used when referring to an environmental or attitudinal barrier as in “a person who is handicapped by a set of stairs leading to the entrance”.
Hidden disability	Non-visible disability.
Invalid	A person with a disability.
Learning disabled, learning disordered, dyslexic (the)	A person with a learning disability or people with learning disabilities.
Mentally retarded, idiot, simple, retarded, feeble minded	A person with an intellectual disability. A person with a developmental disability.
Midget, dwarf	A person of short stature. A person who has a form of dwarfism. A little person. A person with a form of dwarfism, or the specific diagnostic name if known e.g. SED, achondroplasia, etc.
Mongoloid, mongolism	A person with Down Syndrome – only if this is directly relevant and known. A person with an intellectual disability. A person with a developmental disability.
Normal	A person who is not disabled. A person who is able bodied. Specifically, a person who is sighted, a hearing person, a person who is ambulatory.
Patient	A person with a disability. The word “patient” is to be used <u>only</u> when referring to the relationship between a medical professional and a client.
Physically challenged	A person with a physical disability.
Spastic	A person who has muscle spasms.
Stutterer	A person with a speech impediment or impairment.
Victim of/suffers from/stricken with ... cerebral palsy, multiple sclerosis, etc.	A person who has cerebral palsy or multiple sclerosis, etc. A person with a disability.
Visually impaired (the)	A person with a visual impairment. A person with low vision. A person with vision loss. A person with a vision disability or people with vision disabilities.