



ACCESSIBILITY FOR ONTARIANS WITH DISABILITIES POLICY HUMAN RESOURCES

Policy No: VRH-HRD-001-v00

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the Township of Val Rita-Harty is in compliance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), 2005. The Township of Val Rita-Harty is committed to providing quality goods and services that are accessible to all persons served by the Municipality.

DEFINITIONS

Accessible Formats:

May include, but are not limited to, large print, plain language, recorded audio, or electronic, such as Word, PDF, Rich Text, or HTML formats, Braille, and other formats usable by persons with disabilities.

Assistive Device:

A device used to assist persons with disabilities in carrying out activities or in accessing the services of persons or organizations covered by the Customer Service Standard.

Barrier(s):

Obstacles that keep people with disabilities from fully participating in all aspects of society because of their disability. Examples include attitude, technology, architectural/structural, information and communication, and systemic.

The Township of Val Rita-Harty, excluding boards and commissions.

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.

Disability:

- (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.

Employment Life Cycle:

Processes involved in designing a job, identifying the essential duties, recruiting, and hiring a person to do the job, retention of the employee and termination.

Guide Dog:

A guide dog as defined in 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.

Mobility Aid:

A device used to facilitate the transport, in a seated posture, of a person with a disability. Examples include, but are not limited to, wheelchairs, scooters, and walkers.

Mobility Assistive Aid:

A cane, walker, or similar aid.

Municipal Goods, Services or Facilities:

Goods, services, or facilities provided by the Township or an agent on behalf of the Township.

Service Animal:

Any animal used by a person with a disability for reasons relating to the disability where it is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to **their** disability; or where the person provides a letter from a qualified medical professional confirming that he or she requires the animal for reasons relating to **their** disability; or a valid identification card signed by the Attorney General of Canada or a certificate of training from a recognized guide dog or service animal training school.

Third Party:

A representative of a business or organization who is receiving municipal goods or services or acting in an official capacity. Examples include, but are not limited to, Provincial inspectors, vendors, or contractors.

Support Person:

A person who accompanies a person with a disability in order to assist **them** with communication, mobility, personal care, or medical needs or with access to goods or services

SCOPE

This policy applies to all persons who deal with members of the public or other third parties on behalf of the Township, whether the person does so as an employee, member of Council, agent, volunteer, student on placement, or otherwise and all persons who participate in developing the Township's policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of goods and services to members of the public or other third parties.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Employees shall adhere to the provisions of this policy.

Supervisors/Managers shall adhere to and ensure that they and their employees are aware and trained in the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Policy.

The Clerk's Department, will be responsible for the overall administration of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Policy.

The Chief Administrative Officer's responsibility is to ensure that the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Policy is adhered to at all times.

PROCEDURE

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (the "AODA") is a Provincial Act with the purpose of developing, implementing and enforcing accessibility standards in order to achieve accessibility for persons with disabilities with respect to goods, services, facilities, accommodation, employment, buildings, structures and premises. There are four Standards Development regulations. They include: 1) Customer Service 2) Information and Communications 3) Built Environment and 4) Employment. At the present time, this policy will cover the Customer Services component as well as the Integrated Accessibility Standards which includes Information and Communications and Employment Standards. This document will be revised as the Built Environment Standard and other applicable Provincial policy directives related to the AODA are released and approved into Regulation.

It should be noted that there may be additional Standard Operating Procedures, Practices, or Policies specific to various municipal Departments currently in effect, or to be instituted in the future, that may support this policy, or effect how this particular policy affects the Townships' obligation's under this policy.

1. ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS FOR CUSTOMER SERVICE

Under the AODA, Ontario Regulation 429/07 entitled "Accessibility Standards for Customer Service" came into force on January 1, 2008. That Regulation establishes accessibility standards specific to customer service for public sector organizations and other persons or organizations that provide goods and services to members of the public or other third parties.

The Accessibility Standards for Customer Service apply to the designated public sector organizations on and after January 1, 2010 and to other providers of goods or services on and after January 1, 2012.

This policy is drafted in accordance with the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service (Ontario Regulation 429/07) 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.

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, where possible, to ensure its policies, practices and procedures are consistent with the following principles:

- The Township's goods and services are provided, and communicated, 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 i.e. Health Protection and Promotion Act, R.S.O. 1990, CHAPTER H.7. 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 professional; or a certificate of training; or a valid identification card.

You should also never touch a service animal without asking the handler first, even when it is not working. Always remember to:

- Ask for permission to pet the service animal
- Talk to the person first and not the animal
- Do not distract the animal
- Do not pet, call to or feed the service animal
- Do not hit, kick, or bother the service animal in any way
- Be respectful of the animal's space and know that the animal has a job to do

It should be noted it is the responsibility of the person with a disability to ensure **their** 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.

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 person with a disability to facilities are advertised or promoted by the Township, unless otherwise communicated in advance, there will be no fee charged to a support person accompanying the person with a disability. The Township may ask, at the time of purchase, the person with the disability for a letter from a qualified medical professional confirming the person requires a support person for reasons related to **their** disability. If documentation is required, the Township will take all necessary precautions to keep the information private and confidential.

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's 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, which 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 any method that may be reasonable under the circumstances as soon as reasonably possible, including, but not limited to: Township website (www.valharty.ca), site specific postings, radio, social media, telephone messaging, etc...

e) Feedback Process:

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
P0L 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.

Availability and Format of Documents Required by the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service (Ontario Regulation 429/07).

2. INTEGRATED ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS

a) Information and Communications

Accessible Formats and Communication Supports

Upon request, the Township of Val Rita-Harty will provide, or arrange for the provision of, accessible formats or communication supports for persons with disabilities.

These accessible formats and communication supports will be provided in a timely manner and in a way that takes into account the individual's accessibility needs due to disability. The Township of Val Rita-Harty will consult with the person making the request to determine the suitability of an accessible format or communication support. Such accessible documents and

communication supports will be provided at a cost no greater than the regular cost charged to others.

The Township of Val Rita-Harty will notify the public about the availability of accessible formats and communication supports, upon request, by including a notice on its website and on many of the documents produced by the Township. If a document, or portions of a document, cannot be converted into an accessible format, the Township will provide an explanation or summary of such information in an accessible format.

Emergency Procedure, Plan or Public Safety Information

The Township of Val Rita-Harty will, upon request, provide emergency procedure, plan and public safety information in an accessible format or with communication support, as soon as practicable.

Accessible Websites and Web Content

The Township of Val Rita-Harty **conforms** to the World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0, **at** Level AA, except where it is not practicable. This applies to websites, web content and web-based applications that the Township controls directly or through a contractual relationship that allows for modification.

To comply with the Information and Communication Standard requirements of the IASR, with compliance dates from 2012 to 2021, the Township will create, provide and receive information and communications in ways that are accessible for people with disabilities.

b) Employment

Recruitment, Assessment and Selection

The Township of Val Rita-Harty is committed to equal consideration of candidates during the recruitment, assessment, and selection process. Job applicants, including the public and current Township employees, will be notified of the availability of accommodations for persons with disabilities in its application process.

Individuals selected to participate in assessment or selection processes, such as an interview or testing, will be notified of the availability of accommodations, upon request, during such an assessment or selection process. In cases where accommodations due to disability are requested, the Township of Val Rita-Harty will consult with the individual and provide or arrange for suitable accommodations in a manner that takes into account the applicant's disability needs. Accommodations will be provided with respect to the materials or processes used in recruitment.

When making offers of employment, the Township of Val Rita-Harty will notify the successful applicant of its policies for accommodating employees with disabilities.

Informing Employees of Supports

The Township of Val Rita-Harty will inform employees of its policies, and any updates to such policies, used to support employees with disabilities. The Township will provide this information to new employees as soon as practicable after commencing employment. This includes policies on providing job accommodations that take into account the employee's accessibility needs due to disability.

Accessible Formats and Communication Supports for Employees

The Township of Val Rita-Harty will, when requested by an employee with a disability, consult with the employee to provide or arrange for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports for information that is required in order to perform the job, as well as information that is generally available to employees in the workplace. The Township of Val Rita-Harty will consult with the employee making the request in determining the suitability of an accessible format or communication support.

Workplace Emergency Response Information

The Township of Val Rita-Harty is committed to ensuring the safety of its employees. Individualized workplace emergency response information will be provided to employees who have a disability, if the disability is such that the individualized information is necessary, and the employer is aware of the employee's need. This information will be provided as soon as practicable after the Township becomes aware of the need for accommodation.

When an employee requires assistance in an emergency, the Township of Val Rita-Harty will, with the employee's consent, provide such information to the person designated by the Township to provide assistance.

The Township of Val Rita-Harty will review the individualized workplace emergency response information when the employee moves to a different location in the organization, when the employee's overall accommodation needs and plans are reviewed, and when the Township previews its general emergency policies.

Documented Individual Accommodation Plans

The Township of Val Rita-Harty will develop a written process for the development of documented individual accommodation plans for employees with disabilities. The individual accommodation plan will include:

- If requested, any information regarding accessible formats and communication

- supports provided to the employee;
- If required, individualized workplace emergency response information; and
- Any other accommodations that are to be provided.

Return to Work Process

The Township of Val Rita-Harty will maintain its documented return to work process for employees with a disability and who require disability-related accommodation in order to return to work.

The Township's return to work process will outline the steps the Township will take to facilitate the return to work and will include documented individual accommodation plans as part of the process.

This return-to-work process will not replace or override any other return to work process created by or under any other statute (i.e., the Workplace Safety Insurance Act, 1997)

Performance Management, Career Development and Advancement, and Redeployment

The Township of Val Rita-Harty will take into account the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities and any individual accommodation plans when providing any performance management, career development, and advancement. When redeploying employees (reassigning employees to other departments or jobs within the Township of Val Rita-Harty as an alternative to layoff when a particular job or department has been eliminated), the Township will also take into account the employee's accessibility needs due to disability and any individual accommodation plan.

To comply with the Employment Standard requirements of the IASR, with compliance dates from 2012 to 2014, the Township will identify, prevent, and remove barriers across the employment life cycle for people with disabilities.

DOCUMENTS

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005
Blind Persons' Rights Act, 1990
Code of Conduct Policy
Communication Policy
Customer Service Policy
Documents Required by the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service (Ontario Regulation 429/07)
Early and Safe Return to Work Policy
Emergency Response Policy
Food Safety and Quality Act, 2001

Hiring Policy
Health Protection and Promotion Act, 1990
Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA)
Ontario Human Rights Code
Other Accessibility Standards as approved into Regulation
Other relevant Municipal By-Laws
Reasonable Accommodation Policy
Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997.
Accessibility Documentation on the Z: Drive

FORMS

SUMMARY INFORMATION

Policy Name: ACCESSIBILITY FOR ONTARIANS WITH DISABILITIES

Issue Date:

May 16, 2023

Last Revision Date:

Next Review Date: Annually in January of every year

Approved By:

Approval Date:

Chief Administrative Officer
