

OPTRUST
ACCESSIBILITY
STANDARDS
FOR CUSTOMER
SERVICE

ACCESSIBLE CUSTOMER SERVICE P O L I C Y



- 1** Introduction
- 1** Our mandate
- 2** Training for staff
- 2** Assistive devices
- 2** Use of service animals and support people
- 3** Communication
- 3** Feedback process
- 4** Notice of temporary disruptions
- 4** Modifications to this or other policies
- 4** Questions about this policy

INTRODUCTION

In 2005 the Government of Ontario passed the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA). Its goal was to make Ontario accessible and barrier free by 2025 by creating and enforcing accessibility standards. All accessibility standards, including accessible customer service standards, are now part of one regulation – the *Integrated Accessibility Standards* regulation.

Accessibility standards will set requirements in a number of other key areas and will be reviewed at least every five years. New requirements may be added over time. Whenever new or revised standards are developed under the AODA, this policy will be reviewed and updated as necessary to ensure consistency. Updated information about the AODA and accessibility standards is available at: www.accesson.ca or by calling the AODA Contact Centre at **1 866 515-2025** (TTY **416 325-3408**) or **1 800 268-7095** (toll-free).

This policy has been prepared to outline what OPTrust must do to comply with the law and what our customers may expect from us.

The policy is intended to benefit the full range of people with disabilities, as defined in the *Ontario Human Rights Code*. Whether a person's disability is apparent or not, everyone should be treated with courtesy, made to feel welcome, and have their need for accommodation respected whenever they interact with OPTrust.

This policy is available in alternative formats upon request.

OUR MANDATE

OPTrust was launched in 1995 to provide service and security to the OPSEU Pension Plan's members, pensioners and their survivors. Since the Plan's inception, OPTrust has had three key objectives to:

- generate the long-term rate of return on investments needed to support the pension promise
- deliver the finest service and communications to our members and pensioners
- ensure that our membership has a real voice in the Plan through joint trusteeship.

OPTrust strives at all times to provide services in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities, by ensuring that customers with disabilities receive accessible services with the same quality and timeliness as others do.

TRAINING FOR STAFF

OPTrust will provide training on customer service to all employees. New staff will undertake training as part of their orientation.

OPTrust will provide staff with training that includes:

- a review of the purposes of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* and the requirements of the *Accessibility Standards for Customer Service*
- 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 OPTrust's premises, or otherwise, that may assist with the provision of services to people with disabilities
- what to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing OPTrust's services and
- OPTrust's policies, practices and procedures relating to the provision of services to people with disabilities.

Staff will be trained on policies, practices and procedures that affect the way services are provided to people with disabilities. Staff will also be trained on an ongoing basis when changes are made to these policies, practices and procedures.

OPTrust will ensure that organizations providing services on behalf of OPTrust undertake training in accessible customer service, as outlined above.

ASSISTIVE DEVICES

OPTrust is committed to serving people with disabilities who use assistive devices to obtain, use or benefit from our services and will ensure that staff knows how to use assistive devices available on the premises for customers, and inform customers of the assistive devices that are available.

USE OF SERVICE ANIMALS AND SUPPORT PEOPLE

People with disabilities may bring their service animal on to parts of our premises that are open to the public or other third parties. OPTrust will ensure that all staff are trained on how to interact with people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal.

On rare occasions, a manager may determine that a support person is required, or that a service animal cannot enter an area of the premises consistent with other laws.

In these instances, managers will suggest appropriate alternatives and provide assistance. Before making the decision regarding the use of a support person, OPTrust will consult with the person with a disability to understand their needs.

Any person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person will be allowed to enter OPTrust's premises that are open to the public or other third parties 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.

When support people are required (e.g., sign language interpreters, real-time captioners, attendants) for OPTrust-sponsored meetings, consultations or events, OPTrust will arrange to pay support people directly for their time and reasonable travel expenses upon request, in accordance with OPTrust's travel and hospitality guidelines.

COMMUNICATION

OPTrust is committed to meeting the communication needs of people with disabilities, and will work with an individual to provide information in an accessible format and with suitable communication supports, as and where necessary.

OPTrust will train all staff on how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities.

FEEDBACK PROCESS

The ultimate goal of this policy is to meet service delivery expectations while serving customers with disabilities. Comments on our services regarding how well those expectations are being met are welcome and appreciated.

OPTrust will let customers know what methods are available for giving feedback. If a method is not suitable, customers may request another method. OPTrust is committed to providing accessible formats and communication supports on request. Privacy will be respected and all feedback will be reviewed for possible action that can be taken to improve our services. Feedback received by OPTrust will be directed to the manager responsible for the area that provided the service.

Where possible, complaints will be addressed immediately. However, some complaints may require more effort to address, and must be reviewed for action, possibly at a higher level. Accordingly, customers can expect acknowledgement of verbal/telephone feedback, or feedback within two (2) business days, and within fifteen (15) business days of the receipt of a mailed/e-mailed complaint. The acknowledgement must indicate when the matter will be addressed and when the customer will be notified, and OPTrust will follow up with any required action within the timeframe noted in the acknowledgement. Feedback/response will endeavour to be in a format that is accessible to the complainant.

NOTICE OF **TEMPORARY DISRUPTIONS**

OPTrust will provide customers with notice in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in the facilities or services used by people with disabilities. This notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, how long the disruption is expected to last, and a description of any alternative facilities or services available (if any).

The notice will be placed at all public entrances on OPTrust's premises. Depending on the nature of the disruption, notice will also be provided on outgoing telephone messages and on OPTrust's public website. This notice will be provided in accessible formats.

MODIFICATIONS TO THIS OR OTHER POLICIES

OPTrust is committed to ensuring that the customer service policies, practices and procedures respect and promote the dignity and independence of all people with disabilities. Therefore, no changes will be made to this policy before considering the impact on people with disabilities.

Any OPTrust operational policy affecting customer service that does not respect and promote the dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity of people with disabilities will be modified or revoked when it's appropriate and reasonable to do so.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS POLICY

This policy exists to achieve service excellence for customers with disabilities. If anyone has a question about the policy, if the purpose of this policy is not understood, or to receive a copy of this policy, please contact us.

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