



Policy Number: **2008-01**
Policy Name: **Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Policy**
Date adopted by Council: Sept. 23/08
By-law No.: **2008-58**

ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS FOR CUSTOMER SERVICE POLICY

1.0 BACKGROUND

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) was passed by the Ontario legislature with the goal of creating standards to improve accessibility across the province.

The AODA allows the government to develop specific standards of accessibility that are designed to help make Ontario more accessible.

One of the specific standards that has been developed, and made law, is the Accessible Customer Service Standard. This standard details specific requirements for all service providers.

In general, providers must deliver service in a way that preserves the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. Providers must also integrate services and equal opportunity.

2.0 PURPOSE

The purpose of this Customer Service Standards Policy is to fulfill the requirements set out in regulation 429/07 to establish a policy for the Municipality of Highlands East for governing the provision of its goods or services to persons with disabilities.

3.0 STATEMENT

The Municipality of Highlands East shall use reasonable efforts to ensure that its policies, practices and procedures are consistent with the following principles;

- The goods or services will 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, will 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 will be given an opportunity equal to that given to others to obtain, use and benefit from the goods or services.
- Persons with disabilities may use assistive devices and/or support persons in the access of goods and services.
- That the Municipality of Highlands East employees when communicating with a person with a disability shall do so in a manner that takes into account the person's disability.

4.0 APPLICATION

This policy shall apply to every person who deals with members of the public or other third parties on behalf of the Municipality of Highlands East, whether the person does so as an employee, agent, volunteer or otherwise.

5.0 DEFINITIONS

“**Accessibility Coordinator**” shall mean the person appointed by Council as Accessibility Coordinator for the Municipality of Highlands East.

“**Assistive devices**” shall mean an auxiliary aid such as communication aids, cognition aids, personal mobility aids and medical aids (i.e. canes, crutches, wheelchairs, or hearing aids).

“**Disabilities**” shall mean the same as definition of disability found in the Ontario Human Rights Code.

“**Employees**” shall mean every person who deals with members of the public or other third parties on behalf of the Municipality of Highlands East, whether the person does so as an employee, agent, volunteer or otherwise.

“**Persons with Disabilities**” shall mean those individuals that are afflicted with a disability as defined under the Ontario Human Rights Code.

“**Service Animals**” shall mean any animal individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of a person with a disability.

“**Support persons**” shall mean any person whether a paid professional, volunteer, family member, friend to who accompanies a person with a disability in order to help with communications, personal care or medical needs or with access to goods or services.

6.0 EXCLUSIONS

This Accessibility Customer Service Standards Policy shall not apply during any period where Council has declared a “State of Emergency” as defined under the **Emergency Management Act**.

7.0 DOCUMENTATION

The Municipality of Highlands East shall upon request, give a copy of the policies, practices and procedures required under the Ontario Regulation 429/07 – Accessibility Standards for Customer Service to any person.

8.0 PRACTICES AND PROCEDURES

To implement this policy, Senior management shall:

- establish practices and procedures;

- evaluate practices and procedures;
- revise practices and procedures as required.

9.0 NON-COMPLIANCE

Failure to comply with this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

10.0 REVIEW AND AMENDMENTS

The Accessibility Coordinator shall be responsible for the review process and any subsequent amendments to this policy document. Review and amendments shall take place within the **first year of each term of Council.**

11.0 ADOPTION

Adopted by Council this 23rd day of September, 2008 by By-law No. 2008-58

Reeve

Clerk