



Township of Macdonald, Meredith and Aberdeen Additional

Accessible Customer Service Policy

Effective Date: August 22, 2023

Clerk Administrator: Lacey Kastikainen

Adopted by Council: Resolution #23-284 August 22, 2023



Policy Statement

The Township of Macdonald, Meredith and Aberdeen Additional is committed to exceptional and accessible service for its customers.

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2005 (AODA) sets out standards and regulations to promote accessibility and inclusion for individuals with disabilities in Ontario. The AODA Customer Service Standard provides guidelines for organizations to follow when providing customer service to people with disabilities. Here are the general principles of accessibility standards for customer service in compliance with the AODA:

Dignity – services are provided in a respectful manner consistent with the needs of the individual.

Independence – services for persons with disabilities shall support their independence while respecting their right to safety and personal privacy.

Integration – allow people with disabilities to fully benefit from the same service, in the same place and in a similar way.

Equal Opportunity – persons with disabilities are given the same opportunity to benefit from the services provided as other clients.

Purpose

This policy is in accordance with the AODA's Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Ontario Regulation 429/07 and addresses the following:

- The provision of goods and services to individuals with disabilities;
- Communicating with persons with disabilities;
- The use of service animals, support persons and assistive devices by persons with disabilities;
- Notice of temporary disruptions in services and facilities;
- Staff training on customer service;
- Accessibility of meetings;
- Customer feedback regarding the provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities; and
- Format of Township documents and notice of their availability



Scope

- This policy applies to all Township employees.
- Any individual or group responsible for decisions on behalf of the Township must support compliance with the AODA.
- Any individual or third-party organization that provides goods, services, and facilities on behalf of the Township is also required to demonstrate compliance with the AODA.

General Principles

The Township of Macdonald, Meredith and Aberdeen Additional is dedicated to providing exceptional service to all customers, including individuals with disabilities. The Township's policies, practices, and procedures will adhere to the following fundamental principles:

Providing Goods and Services to People with Disabilities

- Treat individuals with disabilities with dignity, respect, and equality when providing goods and services.
- Ensure that their needs and preferences are valued and accommodated.
- Ensure that individuals with disabilities have equal access to goods and services, without any barriers or discrimination. Make reasonable accommodation to remove accessibility barriers and provide alternative methods for access when necessary.

Communication

- The Township will communicate effectively with individuals while considering their disability. Be patient, listen attentively, and use clear and concise language.
- Customers will be offered alternative communication support or assistive devices as needed.
- Township staff will be trained in accessible customer service and how to interact and communicate with customers with various types of disabilities.
- Documents will be provided to customers in an alternative format that will meet their needs in a timely fashion.



Service Animals

- Persons with a disability, accompanied by a service animal are welcome at the Township of Macdonald, Meredith & Aberdeen Additional.
- If in an unusual circumstance at an event outside of Township of Macdonald, Meredith & Aberdeen Additional's business office, a service animal is excluded by law, Township of Macdonald, Meredith & Aberdeen Additional will ensure that alternate means are available to enable the person with a disability to obtain, use, or benefit from the services of Township of Macdonald, Meredith & Aberdeen Additional.
- If a service animal cannot be easily identified as a service animal, Township of Macdonald, Meredith & Aberdeen Additional staff may ask the individual requiring assistance to provide documentation from a regulated health professional, indicating that they require the assistance of a service animal. The documentation must confirm that the person needs the service animal for reasons relating to their disability.
- A regulated health professional is defined as a member of one of the following colleges:
 - College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists of Ontario
 - College of Chiropractors of Ontario
 - College of Nurses of Ontario
 - College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario
 - College of Optometrists of Ontario
 - College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario
 - College of Physiotherapists of Ontario
 - College of Psychologists of Ontario
 - College of Registered Psychotherapists and Registered Mental Health Therapists of Ontario
- Individuals requiring the assistance of a service animal are responsible for the behavior and cleanliness of their service animal at all times. In the event that a service animal becomes disruptive, aggressive or displays unwanted behavior, the Township has the right to request that the individual removes their service animal from Township property.
- The Township will also ensure that all staff, volunteers and others dealing with the public on behalf of the Township are properly trained on how to interact with people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal.



Support Person

- We are 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 Township of Macdonald, Meredith, and Aberdeen Additional's premises with their support person. At no time will a person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person be prevented from having access to their support person while on the Township's premises.
- Fees are normally associated with the nature of our business however should a situation or event arise support persons may not be charged any admission fees. Please contact the event organizer for further details.
- The Township may require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person when receiving goods or service or participating in a program offered by the Township in situations where it is necessary to protect the health or safety of the person with a disability or others on the premises. Before determining that a person with a disability must be accompanied by a support person when receiving goods or services or participating in a program offered by the Township, staff will consult with the person with the disability or the individual's legal guardian to understand their support needs. In such cases all fees for the support person will be waived.

Assistive Devices

- Persons with disabilities shall be permitted to obtain, use, or benefit from goods or services by use of their own assistive devices.
- Exceptions may occur in situations where Township of Macdonald, Meredith & Aberdeen Additional has determined that 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 to assist them in obtaining, using, and benefiting from the services of Township of Macdonald, Meredith & Aberdeen Additional where other measures are available.
- It should be noted that it is the responsibility of the person with a disability to ensure that their assistive device is at all times operated in a safe and controlled manner.
- The Township will also ensure that the staff are trained to use the following assistive devices for customers with disabilities; walkers, wheelchairs, Bell Relay System, hearing devices/electronic communication devices, interpretive devices, and cloud-based interpreting services if required.



Notice of Service Disruptions

- Township of Macdonald, Meredith & Aberdeen Additional is aware that the operation of its services and facilities is important to the public. However, temporary disruptions in our services and facilities may occur due to reasons that may be beyond the Township's control.
- Township of Macdonald, Meredith & Aberdeen Additional will make reasonable efforts to provide notice of the disruption to the public, including:
 - a) The name of the event/service
 - b) The normal service location being impacted
 - c) Alternate service locations or service methods
 - d) Hours of service availability
 - e) Contact information
 - f) Any other information deemed appropriate to deliver our service
- Township of Macdonald, Meredith & Aberdeen Additional will make reasonable efforts to provide prior notice of planned disruption if possible, recognizing that in some circumstances, such as in the situation of unplanned temporary disruption (snow storms), advance notice will not be possible. In such cases, Township of Macdonald, Meredith & Aberdeen Additional will provide notice as soon as possible.
- In the event of a temporary service disruption that would limit a person with a disability from gaining access to our office, goods, or service, Township of Macdonald, Meredith & Aberdeen Additional will provide notice by posting the information in visible places and on the Township's website (www.echobay.ca) or by any other method that may be reasonable under the circumstances.

Staff Training on Customer Service

- The Township of Macdonald, Meredith and Aberdeen Additional will provide training in accordance with the Ontario Regulation 429/07, including Ontario Regulation 191/11: the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation and all updates to the legislation.
- Training will be provided to all new employees through new employee orientation. Staff will be advised of policy updates or legislative changes through internal communication notification.



Township of Macdonald, Meredith and Aberdeen Additional Accessible Customer Service Policy

Training will include the following:

- a) Understanding the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and the requirements of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation, as well as Accessible Customer Service Standards and the Human Rights Code.
 - b) How to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities;
 - c) How to interact with people with disabilities who use an assistive device, service animal and/or a support person;
 - d) How to use assistive devices that are provided by the Township;
 - e) What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing the Township's goods or services.
- Records of training will be maintained by the Township of Macdonald, Meredith and Aberdeen Additional containing the names, date of training and training type for each employee.

Accessibility of Meetings

The Township of Macdonald, Meredith and Aberdeen Additional will ensure that public meetings will be held in a meeting space that is physically accessible and will provide alternate formats to meeting content upon request.

Feedback Process

The Township of Macdonald, Meredith and Aberdeen Additional is committed to providing high quality services to all members of the public it serves. This policy is a mechanism for customers to provide their suggestions, comments and complaints.

Feedback regarding the way that The Township of Macdonald, Meredith and Aberdeen Additional provides goods and services to its customers and to customers with disabilities can be made by:

- a) Visiting the Townships website www.echobay.ca under Contact "Report an Issue" tab, or by filling out an Accessible Customer Service Questionnaire provided on the website;
- b) By contacting our office via email twpmacd@onlink.net, by calling 705-248-2441 or by writing: Township of Macdonald, Meredith and Aberdeen Additional, P.O. BOX 10. 208 Church St, Echo Bay, ON, P0S 1C0
- c) In person, at the Township office 208 Church St, Echo Bay, Ontario.



Format of Township Documents and Availability

- The Township of Macdonald, Meredith and Aberdeen Additional will provide an alternate format to any document that was produced by the Township, unless it is not technically feasible or contravenes with the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.
- Township staff will consult with customers requesting alternate formats in order to best meet their accessibility needs.
- Requests for information in an alternate format are to be provided to the customer in a reasonable amount of time.
- The Township of Macdonald, Meredith and Aberdeen Additional will provide this policy, available to the public, on the Township's website www.echobay.ca and in writing upon request.
- Upon request this policy will be made available in an alternate accessible format or with communication support.



The Township of Macdonald, Meredith and Aberdeen Additional

AODA Customer Feedback Form

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) is provincial legislation that aims to achieve a fully accessible Ontario.

At the Township of Macdonald, Meredith and Aberdeen Additional is committed to exceptional and accessible service for its customers.

Your feedback is important in helping us improve the accessibility of our services. Please take a moment to complete this feedback form and let us know how we are doing.

Location of Visit: _____ **Date of Visit:** _____

Purpose of Visit: _____

1) Please provide in detail the nature of your feedback.

2) Were all documents provided to you in an accessible manner or format?

☐

YES

☐

NO*

☐

N/A

*If no, please explain:

3) Did we respond appropriately to your customer service needs?

☐

YES

☐

NO*

*If no, please explain:



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4) Would you like to provide any additional details? If so, respond below

Please provide us with your contact information below (optional):

(Any personal information is collected pursuant to Ontario Regulation 429/07, the Accessible Standards for Customer Service and will be used strictly for the purpose of responding to your feedback)

Full Name: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email Address: _____

How would you like to be contacted?

☐ Phone ☐ Email ☐ I don't want to be contacted

THANK YOU – we appreciate your feedback!

Township of Macdonald, Meredith and Aberdeen Additional

208 Church St.
Echo Bay, ON, P0S 1C0
Telephone: 705-248-2441
Fax: 705-248-3091
E-mail: twpmacd@onlink.net



The Township of Macdonald, Meredith and Aberdeen Additional

NOTICE OF PLANNED SERVICE DISRUPTION

There will be a scheduled service disruption at (address)(indicate reason) impacting the delivery of goods and services for customers on (date).

The goods and services unavailable during this service disruption are:

- | | |
|-------------------------|------------|
| 1. (Service/Event Name) | (Location) |
| 2. (Service/Event Name) | (Location) |
| 3. (Service/Event/Name) | (Location) |

The services listed above can be accessed at the following time, date, location, or method:

- | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. (Service/ Event Name) | (Location,Date,Time) |
| 2. (Service/Event Name) | (Location,Date,Time) |
| 3. (Service/Event Name) | (Location, Date,Time) |

We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause and appreciate your understanding and cooperation. We are committed to providing accessible services, and we will do our utmost to minimize any disruptions during this period.

Should you require additional information on the delivery of this service, please call our office at 705-248-2441 or email twpmacd@onlink.net

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Township of Macdonald, Meredith and Aberdeen Additional



The Township of Macdonald, Meredith and Aberdeen Additional

NOTICE OF UNPLANNED SERVICE DISRUPTION

Due to unforeseen circumstances, (*indicate reason*) there is a service disruption at (*address*) impacting the delivery of goods and services for customers from (*time*).

The goods and services unavailable during this service disruption are:

1. (*Service*)
2. (*Service*)
3. (*Service*)

The services listed above can be accessed at the following time, date, location, or method:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. (<i>Service/Event Name</i>) | (<i>Location, Date, Time</i>) |
| 2. (<i>Service/Event Name</i>) | (<i>Location, Date, Time</i>) |
| 3. (<i>Service/Event Name</i>) | (<i>Location, Date, Time</i>) |

We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause and appreciate your understanding and cooperation. We are committed to providing accessible services, and we will do our utmost to minimize any disruptions during this period.

Should you require additional information on the delivery of this service, please call our office at 705-248-2441 or email twpmacd@onlink.net

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Township of Macdonald, Meredith and Aberdeen Additional



DEFINITIONS

"Assistive device" - Is a technical aid, communication device or medical aid that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional abilities of people with disabilities, in seeing, hearing, speaking, mobility, walking, breathing, performing manual tasks, learning, working, or self-care.

"Disability" - For the purposes of this policy "disability" is defined according to Sec 10 (1) of the Human Rights Code

- 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*

"Service animal" - An animal is a service animal for a person with a disability,

- a) if it is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to his or her disability; or
- b) if the person provides a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability. O. Reg. 429/07, s. 4 (9).

Service animals include but are not limited to "guide dogs": a guide dog as defined in Sec 1 of the Blind Persons' Rights Act; ("chien-guide") 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. ('chien d'aveugle") R.S.O. 1990, c. B.7, s. 1 (1).

"Support person" means, in relation to a person with a disability, another person who accompanies them in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs or with access to goods or services. ("personne de soutien") O. Reg. 429/07, s. 4 (8).



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REFERENCES AND RELATED DOCUMENTS

- a) Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)
- b) Ontario Human Rights Code
- c) Ontario Regulation 429/07-Accessibility Standards for Customer Service
- d) Blind Persons Rights Act, 1990
- e) Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act
- f) Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation Policy
- g) Ontarians with Disabilities Act (ODA)



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LOG OF CHANGES

(This document should include any and all changes to the procedure and be kept separately from the procedure itself for document management purposes).

DATE	SPECIFIC CHANGE	EDITOR'S NAME	REASON FOR CHANGE