

ACCESSIBLE CUSTOMER SERVICE POLICY

Policy No: 04/09

Amended Date: November 25, 2009
Effective Date: May 28, 2003

1. POLICY STATEMENT

The Regional Municipality of York Police Services Board (“the Board”) is committed to providing exceptional customer service to all citizens. The Board recognizes that public confidence, trust and satisfaction in the Police Services Board and in York Regional Police are enhanced when citizens receive the highest quality customer service.

The Board embraces the Customer Service Strategy adopted by Regional Council on June 28, 2001 in the formulation of this policy. Its “Here to Serve You” motto complements the York Regional Police motto of “Deeds Speak.”

It is the Board’s policy to ensure that exceptional customer service is also provided to people with disabilities, when accessing all Board services. It is the policy of the Board to ensure that people with disabilities benefit fully from the same services, in the same place and in the same or similar manner as other customers. Board policies, procedures and practices are consistent with the core principles of independence, dignity, integration and equality of opportunity for people with disabilities.

Policy requirements set out in this document shall form part of the Police Services Board Policy Manual and the Chief of Police shall comply with these requirements in directing the York Regional Police.

2. APPLICATION

This policy applies to Board members and Board staff (the Executive Director and Administrative Assistant). This policy applies to the members of York Regional Police, volunteers, agents and other persons working on behalf of York Regional Police.

3. PURPOSE

To establish exceptional standards of service and professionalism expected of Board members, Board staff, members of York Regional Police, volunteers, agents and others persons working on behalf of York Regional Police.

To ensure that persons with disabilities have access to all services provided by the Board in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities and that is offered in the same manner as other customers unless a different way of offering the service is necessary, either on a temporary or permanent basis, and gives everyone the same chance to obtain, use and benefit from the goods and services and communicates with a person with a disability in way that takes the person’s disability into account.

The Board will ensure that all its public meetings, functions, workshops and community events are held in locations that are accessible for people with disabilities.

This policy meets the compliance requirements of Ontario Regulation 429/07 under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* as required by January 1, 2010.

The Chief of Police shall ensure that York Regional Police policies, practices and procedures are compliant with the requirements of Ontario Regulation 429/07 under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* as required by January 1, 2010.

4. DEFINITIONS

Assistive Devices:

Assistive devices means technical aids, communication devices, or medical aids modified or customized that are used to increase, maintain or improve how a person with a disability can function. An assistive device may be as simple as a pen and paper used to assist a person to communicate. Other examples may include, but are not limited to, wheelchairs, walkers, white canes used by people who are blind or have low vision, note taking devices, portable magnifiers, recording machines, assistive listening devices, personal oxygen tanks and devices for grasping.

Customer service

Customer service refers to the service provided to citizens who contact the Board or the York Regional Police seeking information or assistance, to access services or to initiate a complaint.

Dignity

Dignity means service is provided in a way that allows the person with a disability to maintain self-respect and is provided respect from other people.

Disability

The definition of *disability* under the AODA is the same as the definition of disability in the *Ontario Human Rights Code*. This definition of disability applies to this policy:

- 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*.

Equal Opportunity

Equal opportunity means service is provided to a person with a disability in such a way that they can access goods and services equal to that given to others.

Independence

Independence means when a person with a disability is able to do things on their own without unnecessary help or interference from others with the exception of a support person.

Integration

Integration means service is provided in a way that allows the person with a disability to benefit from the same services, in the same place, and in the same or similar manner as other customers,

unless an alternate measure is necessary to enable a person with a disability to access goods or services.

Policies, Practices and Procedures:

Policies – what you intend to do, including any rules for staff

Procedures – how you will go about it or the steps staff is expected to take

Practices – what you actually do on a day-to-day basis, including how your staff actually offers or delivers your services.

Service Animal:

An animal is a “service animal” for a person with a disability if it is obvious that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to help with his or her disability; or if the person provides a letter from a doctor or nurse that says that the person needs the animal to help with his or her disability (*Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, Ontario Regulation 429/07, Accessibility Standards for Customer Service*).

Support Person:

A “support person” means another person that goes with a person with a disability to help with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs or to get goods or services.

Temporary Disruption:

A “temporary disruption” means a short term planned or unplanned disruption to facilities or services that people with disabilities usually use to obtain goods and services.

Potential temporary disruptions may include, but are not limited to meetings moved or cancelled and failure of telephone or technology equipment.

5. CUSTOMER SERVICE GUIDELINES

It is the policy of the Board that Board members, Board staff, members of York Regional Police, volunteers, agents and persons working on behalf of York Regional Police shall comply with the following requirements:

- 5.1 All public inquiries made by telephone, email, mail, fax or in-person shall be dealt with in a timely, courteous, competent and fair manner.
- 5.2 Board members, Board staff, members of York Regional Police, volunteers, agents and persons working on behalf of York Regional Police shall comply with the minimum performance standards established by the Region of York (Appendix A).
- 5.3 The Chief of Police shall ensure that minimum customer service standards are developed for the York Regional Police.
- 5.4 Members of York Regional Police, volunteers, agents and persons working on behalf of York Regional Police shall receive training in customer service.
- 5.5 The Chief of Police shall ensure that quality customer service is formally acknowledged and commended and that non-compliance with customer service standards receives corrective action.
- 5.6 The Chief of Police shall monitor community satisfaction through a variety of means, including quality service surveys and shall report the results annually to the Board.

6. ACCESSIBILITY POLICY FOR CUSTOMER SERVICE

It is the policy of the Board to ensure that exceptional customer service is also provided to people with disabilities. The requirements set out in this policy will allow people with disabilities to access Board services in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities and that is offered in the same manner as other customers unless a different way of offering the service is necessary, either on a temporary or permanent basis, and gives everyone the same chance to obtain, use and benefit from the goods and services and communicates with a person with a disability in way that takes the person's disability into account.

6.1 USE OF ASSISTIVE DEVICES

People with disabilities may use their own devices or those offered by the Board when attending public Board meetings, functions, workshops and community events or when visiting the Board office for meetings or appointments or when accessing other Board services.

Where the person's device is not allowed by law, Board staff will provide a reason and look for other ways for the person to obtain the goods or services.

The Board conducts its public meetings at the Region of York's Administrative Building at 17250 Yonge Street in Newmarket. The Board office is also located in the building. The following devices are available to persons with disabilities:

- Amplification systems
- Elevator
- Fold down grab bars in washrooms
- Monitor
- Portable Ramp
- Power Door
- TTY
- Walker
- Wheelchair

If a person with a disability uses an assistive device provided by the Board, the Board staff will be trained on how to use the assistive device in order to better serve their customer. Assistive devices made available by the Board will be posted on the Board's website.

Upon request, the Board will obtain and pay for sign language interpreter services to facilitate the participation of people with disabilities at public meetings, functions, workshops and community events or when visiting the Board office for meetings or appointments or when accessing other Board services.

The Chief of Police shall set a policy on allowing people to use their personal assistive devices to access services and on assistive devices provided by York Regional Police.

6.2 SERVICE ANIMALS AND SUPPORT PERSONS

People with disabilities may be accompanied by their service animal when attending public meetings, functions, workshops and community events or when visiting the Board office for meetings or appointments or when accessing other Board services, except where animals are prohibited by law.

Where an animal is not allowed by law, other ways will be explored in order to provide the service to a person with a disability. Board staff will be aware in advance of the Board function if animals

are not allowed at the venue and, if possible, will notify participant/attendee with a disability prior to the event.

Support persons are allowed to go with a person with a disability to all public Board meetings, functions, workshops and community events or when visiting the Board office for meetings or appointments or when accessing other Board services.

The Board may determine that a support person is needed to go with a person with a disability to protect the health and safety of the person with a disability and/or the health and safety of others on the premises.

If support persons are charged a participant fee, advance notice will be given about the amount the support person must pay. Notice about fees for support persons will be posted on a brochure or website.

The Chief of Police shall set a policy on allowing people with disabilities to be accompanied by their guide dog or service animal in areas of the premises open to the public that are owned or operated by York Regional Police, unless the animal is excluded by another law. If an animal is excluded by another law, other measures shall be taken to provide services to the person with a disability.

The Chief of policy shall set a policy on allowing people with disabilities to be bring a support person when accessing services provided by York Regional Police in premises open to the public.

6.3 NOTICE OF TEMPORARY DISRUPTIONS

When there is a temporary disruption to facilities or services used by people with disabilities, notice will be provided on the Board's website and/or by voicemail, email or text messaging, if practicable and by posted signs on the premises. The notice will include the reason for the disruption, the duration of the disruption and details about other facilities or services if they are available.

The Executive Director will consider which people with disabilities will be most affected by the disruption and ensure that the notice is communicated in a way that matches their needs. The Executive Director will identify other methods of service delivery, if appropriate.

The Chief of Police shall set a policy or practice which ensures a notice of temporary disruption to facilities or services used by people with disabilities.

6.4 CUSTOMER SERVICE TRAINING

Board members, the Executive Director and Administrative Assistant will be trained on the *Accessibility Standards for Customer Service*.

Training will include a review of the purpose of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* and the requirements of the *Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07* and teach about the following issues:

- How to communicate with persons with different disabilities.
- How to interact with persons with disabilities who use an assistive device or who need the help of a service animal or a support person.
- How to use equipment or assistive devices that are available on the premises that relate to the job they do.
- What to do if a person with a disability is having a difficult time accessing the Board's goods and services.

A record of the training and the persons trained will be kept in the minutes of the public meeting.

The Executive Director will ensure that the Board's Accessible Customer Service Policy is reviewed as part of the orientation and training of new Board Members and new Board staff. The Board will ensure that parties involved in Board meetings, functions, workshops and community events are trained in all relevant components of the Board's Accessible Customer Service Policy.

The Board is committed to providing excellent customer service to all persons including people with disabilities. Included in this policy (Appendix B) is the Region of York's *Accessible Customer Service at York Region: Tips for Serving People with Disabilities*. The tips assist in ensuring that people are served in ways that take their disability into consideration including tips on communicating with a person with a specific disability.

The Chief of Police shall ensure that all members of York Regional Police, volunteers, agents and other persons working on behalf of York Regional Police are trained in the *Accessibility Standards for Customer Service*. The Chief of Police shall ensure that the training includes information on how to serve people with disabilities in ways that take their disability into consideration.

6.5 PUBLIC FEEDBACK PROCESS

The Board will collect and respond to feedback on how it provides services to people with disabilities. Feedback from the public can be submitted to the Board by email, by telephone, in person (the Executive Director is available to meet with people with disabilities to receive feedback on the quality of services provided), by mail, by fax, and by the Board's online form. The Executive Director will record this feedback and prepare a report to the Board. The Board's response and action will be determined at the public Board meeting and will be included in its record of minutes and posted on the Board's website.

The Board also receives feedback at focus groups during the Business Planning process and will incorporate feedback from the public when developing goals and strategies for the Business Plan.

The Chief of Police shall report to the Board annually on the Public Feedback process including the response and actions taken.

6.6 NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY OF DOCUMENTS AND DOCUMENT FORMAT

The Board's Accessibility Policy for Customer Service will be available on the Board's website or can be emailed or mailed upon request. If the Board receives a request for this policy or other Board policies and documentation available to the public, the documents will be provided in a format that both parties agree with and that takes into consideration the person's disability.

The Executive Director is available to respond to inquiries related to the Board policies, public meeting minutes and public Board Agendas.

The Chief of Police shall provide notice of the availability of its policy on Accessibility Standards for Customer Service. The document shall be available in a format that both parties agree with and that takes into consideration the person's disability.