

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)



Introduction

Building on a foundation of commitment to accessibility, Hatch continues to work with customers, staff, and the community to identify, prevent and remove barriers to participation to ensure compliance with the Customer Service Standard.

Definition of Disability

“Disability” means,

- (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*; (“handicap”).

Ontario Human Rights Commission/Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005.

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) became law on June 13, 2005. Under this landmark legislation, the government of Ontario is developing mandatory accessibility standards that identify, remove and prevent barriers for people with

disabilities in key areas of daily living. The standards apply to private and public sector organizations across Ontario. The goal is for the province to be accessible by 2025.

The five key areas of focus are:

- Customer Service;
- Information and Communication;
- Employment;
- Transportation;
- Built Environment.

The Customer Service Standard is the first standard developed to become a regulation and came into force on January 1, 2008. Compliance is required by January 1, 2012. The standard addresses business practices to provide better customer service to people with disabilities.

Information and Communication, Employment and Transportation have been combined into one Integrated Standard, which was enacted in July, 2011.

The Built Environment public comments are being integrated into the Ontario Building Code, so only one piece of legislation will provide the standard.

The Customer Service Standard (AODA)

Every business and organization operating in Ontario that provides goods and services to the public or other organizations and has at least one employee in Ontario has to comply by January 1st, 2012. To meet the requirements of the Customer Service Standard, organizations must:

1. Establish policies and procedures on providing goods or services to customers with disabilities.
2. Provide training on how to serve customers with disabilities to staff, volunteers, contractors, and anyone else who interacts with the public or other third parties on your behalf, and those involved in developing customer service policies, practices and procedures.



3. Establish a process for receiving feedback on how you provide service to customers with disabilities and how you will respond to feedback and take action on any complaints. Make information about the feedback process readily available to the public.
4. Communicate with a customer with a disability in a manner that takes into account his or her disability.
5. Let customers with disabilities bring their service animals onto any part of your premises open to the public, except where the animal is otherwise excluded by law.
6. Let customers with disabilities bring their support person with them when accessing goods or services on parts of your premises open to the public.
7. Let the public know when facilities or services that people with disabilities usually use to access your goods or services are temporarily unavailable.
8. Document all policies, practices and procedures to providing accessible customer service and notify the public that these documents are available upon request.

Customer Service Standard

Hatch has made reasonable efforts to ensure that its policies and procedures are consistent with the following principles, as defined by the Customer Service Standard, AODA:

- All goods and services at Hatch will be provided in a manner that respects the dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity of people with disabilities.
- Dignity: service is provided in a way that allows the person with a disability to maintain self-respect and the respect of other people.
- Independence: when a person with a disability is allowed to do things on their own, without unnecessary help or interference from others.
- Integration and Equal Opportunity: 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 way as other customers, unless an alternate measure is necessary to enable a person with disability to access goods or services. They should not have to make significantly more effort to access or obtain

service. They should also not have to accept inconvenience or lesser quality. Sometimes this may mean that Hatch has to treat individuals slightly differently so that they can benefit fully from the services.

Assistive Devices

Hatch is committed to serving people with disabilities, and ensuring that those who use assistive devices will benefit from enjoying a fulfilling experience.

Hatch will ensure that:

- Our employees are aware of the various assistive devices provided by the Hatch that may be used by customers with disabilities while accessing our programs, products and services.
- Designated staff are trained in the use of the assistive devices available at their office location.

Communicating with a Customer with a Disability

Hatch's policies and procedures take a person's disability into account when communicating with the individual. Where possible, Hatch employees will ask the customer directly the best way to communicate with him/her.

Hatch uses a variety of ways, wherever possible, to make communications more accessible by:

- Considering the needs of people with disabilities during the planning stage of services and communication development.
- Using plain language to make a document easier to read for people with certain learning disabilities and offering information in alternate formats, as needed.

Service Animals

Hatch is committed to welcoming customers with disabilities who are accompanied by a trained, accredited service animal. A service animal may accompany a customer or any third party with a disability to all parts of our premises that are open to the public. Hatch employees, volunteers and others dealing with the public are trained in how to interact with people with disabilities, who are accompanied by a service animal.

To be considered a service animal under this standard, it must either be readily apparent that the animal is being used because of a person's disability



or the person with a disability may be asked to provide a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that it is required because of his or her disability.

If the service animal is causing a disturbance for other customers, the customer and accompanying service dog may be required to leave the area or Hatch premises.

Support Persons

Hatch is 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 is allowed to enter the premises 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 Hatch premises.

Temporary Disruption of Service

Hatch is aware that temporary disruptions of services (elevators, physical operations) and programs may occur due to reasons that may or may not be within Hatch's control or knowledge. Hatch makes a reasonable effort to provide advance notice of the disruption to customers, including information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration and a description of alternative facilities or services, if any, that may be available. Notification may also be done through the building services, if the building is leased.

The notices may be made available through telephone recordings, Intranet for staff and/or temporary signage. In the event of an unexpected disruption, advance notice is not possible. In such cases, Hatch or the building will provide notice, as soon as possible.

Process to Receive and Respond to Feedback

Hatch has a process in place for receiving and responding to feedback about how goods and services are provided to customers with disabilities.

Customers with disabilities can offer their feedback in the following ways:

- On-line at Hatch web site;
- E-mail and telephone, (re-directed, as required, to the appropriate response employee);

- In writing where correspondence is re-directed to the appropriate response employee;
- In person with an appointment to the appropriate response employee.

The customer is requested to provide their name and contact information (phone, e-mail).

Once feedback is received, the following actions are taken to respond:

- The feedback is directed to the appropriate person for action.
- The feedback is assessed for appropriate action. (Note: the customer service standard does not require a response to be provided for all feedback).
- Customers who require feedback can expect an answer within 72 hours.

Should a complaint be received, the same process and actions outlined in the section above entitled "Process to Receive and Respond to Feedback" would apply.

The feedback process is readily available to the public through:

- A notice on the Hatch web site;
- A sign in the reception area;
- Other communication networks, as appropriate.

Customer Service Training

Hatch provides training to all employees and all those who are involved in the development and approvals of customer service policies and procedures on providing goods and services to customers with disabilities. Hatch ensures that third parties and others, who deal with the public on Hatch's behalf, have the required AODA training.

A variety of methods and time frames are used including formal and informal training sessions, presentations, Ministry of Community and Social Services web sites, BrainShark e-training, dependent on need and functions. Training is provided within a reasonable and practicable period.

The training content, required by the Customer Service Standard, includes the following:

- The history of the legislation and the purposes of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and the requirements of the customer service standard.



- 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 assistive devices available on Hatch's premises or otherwise that may help with the provision of goods or services to people with disabilities.
- What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing Hatch's goods and services.
- Hatch's policy and procedure relating to the customer service standard.

Additional training will be conducted, should significant changes be made to the AODA policy.

Posting of Documents

Notices are posted, informing the public that the documents required by the Customer Service Standard are available upon request and will be provided in a format that takes a person's disability into account.

Documents are available through the following networks, as appropriate.

- Company Website
- Intranet
- Office signage

Related Documents:

- Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001
- Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005
- Ontario Regulation 429/07 – Accessibility Standards for Customer Service
- Ontario Regulation 31/05 under the Food Safety and Quality Act, 2011
- Dog Owner's Liability Act