

A woman with long dark hair, wearing a red top and a headset, smiling warmly. The background is plain white.

**Customer Service**

Ontario  
College of  
Teachers  
Policies,  
Practices and  
Procedures

**In Accordance with the  
Accessibility Standards for Customer Service**



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# Customer Service Policies, Practices and Procedures

## Introduction

### ***The Accessibility For Ontarians With Disabilities Act***

The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA) became law in Ontario in June, 2005. Its purpose is to make Ontario barrier-free by 2025 by developing, implementing and enforcing standards for accessibility related to goods, services, facilities, employment, accommodation, and buildings.

- The organizations subject to the AODA include “any agency, board, commission, authority, corporation or other entity established under an Act.” As a result, the AODA and its subsequent regulations apply to the Ontario College of Teachers (established by the *Ontario College of Teachers Act*).

### ***Regulation 429/07, Accessibility Standards for Customer Service***

- Regulation 429/07 outlines compliance requirements under seven broad areas of activity:
  1. Establishment of policies, practices and procedures and notice of availability of documents
  2. Communication
  3. Use of assistive devices
  4. Use of service animals and support persons
  5. Notice of temporary disruptions
  6. Notice of availability of documents
  7. A feedback process
  8. Training for employees
- This document outlines the College’s policies, practices and procedures to ensure compliance with the customer service regulation. The policies are intended to benefit the full range of persons with disabilities. Whether an individual has a disability or not, all persons are treated with courtesy and respect when they interact with the College.
- This policy is available in alternate formats upon request.

## **The College Commitment**

- The Ontario College of Teachers supports the full integration and inclusion of persons with disabilities as outlined in the AODA and supports the Ontario government's overall goal to make the province barrier-free by 2025.
- The College is committed to full compliance with the regulations established under the AODA, including Regulation 429/07, *Accessibility Standards for Customer Service*.
- The Ontario College of Teachers is a professional organization committed to providing high quality service to its members and to the public. The College treats every person with courtesy and respect.
- College employees deliver service in a manner that acknowledges the nature of an individual's disability and respects a person's desire for independence, dignity, and equal opportunity.

## 1. Establishment of Policies, Practices and Procedures and Notice of Availability of Documents

### Regulatory Requirements:

- Regulation 429/07, *Accessibility Standards for Customer Service* (the regulation) requires organizations to establish and document its accessibility policies, practices and procedures and, upon request, to provide a copy of the documentation to members of the public.
- Every provider that has at least 20 employees is required to notify persons to whom it provides goods or services that the documents required by the regulation (policies, practices, procedures) are available upon request.

### Compliance Measures:

- The College is committed to ensuring that its customer service policies, practices and procedures promote the dignity and independence of all persons with disabilities. The College makes this document available to its members and to the public by:
  - posting its accessibility measures in an accessibility section of the College's web site
  - providing copies of the accessibility policies, practices, procedures for distribution at the College information desk
  - producing the documents in large print or other formats upon request.
- The College includes a notice regarding the regulation and its compliance measures in the College magazine, *Professionally Speaking/Pour parler profession*.
- The College reviews its accessibility policies, practices and procedures on an annual basis and makes adjustments when necessary.
- Any College accessibility policy, practice or procedure that does not respect the needs of persons with disabilities is modified or revoked.

## 2. Communication

### Regulatory Requirements:

- The regulation indicates that when communicating with a person with a disability, an organization shall do so in a manner that takes into account the person's disability.

### Compliance Measures:

- The College communicates with its clients with disabilities in a variety of ways. For example, the College's Membership Services Department receives and responds to enquiries from members and from the public in person, on the telephone, using TTY services (see Assistive Devices below), and through e-mail. As well, the College provides an extensive amount of information available through its external web site.
- In the interest of the environment, the College is moving away from a paper-based application process and currently only accepts applications on-line. However, the College provides one-on-one assistance, either over the phone or in person, to access information or to complete College forms.
  - For example, should an applicant with a disability require assistance to complete an application form to the College, a member of the Client Services Unit will help by completing the application form for the applicant over the phone or by assisting the applicant in person at the Welcome Centre.
- Other measures undertaken by the College include:
  - the creation of an accessibility section of College's web site to house information related to the AODA and the College's commitments under the various regulations
  - updates to the College's web site to include copies of College documents in a format that can be read by screen reader software (see Assistive Devices below)
  - the purchase of screen reader software and headphones for use at the computers in public areas.
- In addition, the College invites participants in College conferences, consultations, meetings, interviews, etc. to identify any accommodation needs before their arrival so that the College can better meet the service needs of all individuals. All requests for interaction with the College include the following statement:

*The College is committed to providing service that is accessible to all individuals. Please identify any accommodation needs you may have prior to your scheduled interaction with the College.*

### 3. Assistive Devices

#### Regulatory Requirements:

- The regulation stipulates that organizations must enable the use of assistive devices by persons with disabilities to obtain, use or benefit from the provider's goods or services.

#### Compliance Measures:

- The College permits and encourages persons with disabilities to use assistive devices while interacting with the College. The College maximizes the services it provides by using its own assistive devices. For example, the College:
  - has a **TeleTY**pewriter (**TTY**) or Text Telephone for use in the Membership Services Department. The TTY is a device that lets people who are deaf, hard of hearing, or speech-impaired to use the telephone to communicate by allowing them to type messages back and forth to one another instead of talking and listening.
  - has installed screen reader software on public computers in the College library, at the Client Services Welcome Centre, and in the Human Resources test facility (for use during interviews). A screen reader is a software application that helps to identify and interpret what is being displayed on a computer screen. This interpretation is then represented to the user as speech. Screen readers are useful to persons who are blind, or who have significant vision impairments, and can be helpful to persons who are illiterate or learning disabled.
  - formatted its Accessibility section of the College web site to be easily interpreted using screen reader software. The College is committed to ensuring that documents that are added to the College's web site on a go forward basis can also be read using screen reader technology.
  - has purchased assistive hearing devices for individuals who are hard of hearing to use during meeting, consultations, hearings, etc.
  - designed its public spaces with accessibility needs in mind. For example, meeting rooms have wide aisles to accommodate persons using a wheelchair, the College has a wheelchair accessible washroom on every floor, there is elevator access to all floors of the College and each elevator has audible messaging, there are no additional entrance doors to maneuver once an individual leaves the elevator as the College has been designed with an open floor plan.



## **4. Use of Service Animals and Support Persons**

### **Regulatory Requirements:**

- The regulation requires that organizations permit the use of service animals and support persons when providing customer service to a person with a disability. Organizations are to allow service animals in those areas of the premises open to the public, unless the animal is excluded by another law.

### **Compliance Measures:**

- The College welcomes individuals using guide dogs or service animals in all public locations of the College and at all College-sponsored public events.
- As well, individuals requiring the assistance of a support person are permitted to do so.
- All reasonable requests for the College to provide support persons to assist during interactions with the College are accommodated where possible, for example providing a sign language interpreter during a College-sponsored event or hearing.
- When support persons are required, the College pays support persons directly for their time and reasonable travel expenses.
- College employees were trained in how to relate appropriately with clients who are accompanied by service animals or support persons when interacting with the College.

## **5. Use of Service Animals and Support Persons**

### **Regulatory Requirements:**

- The regulation requires that a notice of any temporary disruption in service that would specifically affect a person with a disability (for example, elevator out of order, TTY system temporarily not operating) be posted in a conspicuous area when one occurs. The notice must include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration and a description of alternative facilities or services, if any, that are available.

### **Compliance Measures:**

- The College has a section on its web site that provides information about the College's policies, practices and procedures regarding the regulation. This section also includes notices about any temporary disruptions in services.
- Notices are also placed at the Welcome Centre on the College's premises. Depending on the nature of the disruption, notices are provided through outgoing TTY messages, on the College's telephone greeting, or through push e-mail.

## 6. A Feedback Process

### Regulatory Requirements:

- The regulation requires that a process for individuals to provide feedback about the organization's goods or services to people with disabilities be developed. The organization is to indicate how it will respond to any feedback. As well, information regarding this feedback process must be readily available to the public.

### Compliance Measures:

- As the goal of this policy is to meet service delivery expectations while serving customers with disabilities, the College welcomes feedback regarding how well those expectations are being met.
- The Accessibility section of the College's web site includes a feedback area with a 'comments box' so that suggestions or concerns regarding the College's service delivery. As well, the College records any feedback regarding its accessibility policies, practices and procedures by e-mail, phone or in person.
- Feedback that requires follow-up action is assigned to the appropriate College Unit to respond to the individual concerned.
- When a response is required, a person can expect an acknowledgement of their feedback, within five business days, and a response within 15 business days. If a question/concern cannot be responded to within 15 business days an interim acknowledgement is sent to the person. The second acknowledgement indicates the timeframe for when the person can expect a reply. The College will make its best efforts to respond to the person in an accessible format, for example, telephone, e-mail, letter, TTY, etc.
- A record of any concerns regarding the College's accessibility policies, processes or practices is maintained and is reviewed annually to ensure that the College is continuing to meet the spirit and compliance requirements of the customer service regulation.

## 7. Training for College Employees

### Regulatory Requirements:

- The regulation requires training for all employees who have interaction with its members or the public, and for all employees who are involved in the development and approval of customer service policies, practices and procedures.

### Compliance Measures:

- The College is committed to ensuring that all employees have the skills and knowledge to deliver customer service to persons with disabilities with sensitivity and respect.
- The College provided training to all College employees regarding the regulation.
- College employees with regular interaction with College members and/or the public received a facilitated training session by an external training consultant.
- The remaining College employees received a web-based training session accessible on-line.
- New employees who commence new duties after December 2011 will undertake the web-based training as part of their orientation to the College.
- As required, the training includes the following topics:
  - a review of the purpose of the *AODA* and the requirements of Regulation 429/07, *Accessibility Standards for Customer Service*
  - how to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disability
  - how to interact with persons with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a guide dog or other service animal, or the assistance of a support person
  - how to use equipment or devices available on the College's premises or otherwise provided by the College that may help with the provision of goods or services to a person with a disability
  - what to do if a person with a particular type of disability is having difficulty accessing the College's goods or services.
- As well, the College provided training about its own customer service policies, practices and procedures relating to the provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities.
- College employees will be updated on an ongoing basis about any changes to these policies, practices and procedures, and any future compliance activities for this and the other regulations introduced under the *AODA* primarily through electronic medium such as the College's intranet, webcasts, and/or videos.

## Questions About This Policy?

Questions regarding this policy can be directed to the College's Client Services Unit:

**E-mail:**

[info@oct.ca](mailto:info@oct.ca)

**Telephone:**

416-961-8800

**Toll-free telephone  
(in Ontario):**

1-888-534-2222

**TTY Access:**

416-961-6331

**Mailing Address:**

101 Bloor Street West  
Toronto ON M5S 0A1

**Fax:**

416-961-8822



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Ordre des  
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des enseignants  
de l'Ontario

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