

Customer Service Policy: Providing Goods and Services to People with Disabilities

Purpose

To ensure all Ontario Mutual Insurance Association programs and services are accessible to everyone in the community in accordance with *Customer Service Regulation 429/07* under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*.

Policy Overview

These policies and procedures apply to all goods and services that are delivered by Ontario Mutual Insurance Association, by any means including in person, by telephone, electronically, by mail, visually, orally or by written means.

This policy applies to all Ontario Mutual Insurance Association staff, contract workers, volunteers and third parties who deal with the public, on behalf of the Ontario Mutual Insurance Association.

Our Mission Statement

To enable our member companies to achieve and maintain a high level of excellence by providing leadership through education, training and support services.

Our Commitment

In fulfilling our mission, Ontario Mutual Insurance Association strives at all times to provide its goods and services in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. Ontario Mutual Insurance Association is also committed to giving people with disabilities equal opportunity to access our goods and services and allowing them to benefit from the same services, in the same place and in a similar way as other customers. Ontario Mutual Insurance Association will promote accessibility through the development of policies, procedures and practices and by ensuring the needs and requirements of people with disabilities are considered.

Principles

Reasonable efforts will be made to ensure the following:

- That goods and services offered by Ontario Mutual Insurance Association be provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.

- Persons with disabilities will be given equal opportunity (as those given to others) to obtain, use and benefit from goods and services offered by Ontario Mutual Insurance Association.
- The provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities, and others, will be integrated unless alternate measures are required, to enable a person with a disability to obtain, use and benefit from the goods and services provided by Ontario Mutual Insurance Association.

Key Practices

Procedures adhered to by Ontario Mutual Insurance Association will strive to reflect or achieve the following:

- Provide full access to the goods and services offered by Ontario Mutual Insurance Association to persons with disabilities.
- Communication (verbal, written, electronic etc.) will be considered, in a manner that takes into account a person's disability.
- Ontario Mutual Insurance Association will allow persons with disabilities to use their own personal assistive devices to obtain, use and/or benefit from the goods and services offered by Ontario Mutual Insurance Association.
- Persons with disabilities accompanied by a guide dog or service animal will be permitted in those areas of the premises owned and operated by Ontario Mutual Insurance Association that are open to the public or other third parties.
- Persons with disabilities accompanied by a support person will be permitted to be accompanied by that support person in premises open to the public or other third parties.
- Notice will be provided when facilities or services that people with disabilities may rely on to access the goods and services of Ontario Mutual Insurance Association services are temporarily disrupted.
- Staff will receive appropriate training.
- Ontario Mutual Insurance Association will establish a feedback process to allow people to provide feedback on how they are providing services to persons with disabilities.
- Access to required documents will be given upon request in various formats.

Definitions

The following definitions will be found throughout this policy.

Alternate Format – Any other ways of publishing information beyond traditional printing (i.e. large print, electronically).

Assistive Devices – An auxiliary aid such as communication aids, cognition aids, personal mobility aids (i.e. canes, crutches, wheelchairs, hearing aids etc.).

Customers – Any person who receives goods and services.

Disabilities – The same as the definition of disability found in the *Ontario 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

Employees – Every person who deals with members of the public or other third parties on behalf of Ontario Mutual Insurance Association, whether the person does so as an employee, agent, volunteer or otherwise.

Persons with Disabilities – Individuals who have a disability as defined under the Ontario Human Rights Code (see above).

Service Animals – A “guide dog” as defined in section 1 of the *Blind Persons Rights’ Act*; or any animal individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of a person with a disability.

Support Persons – Any person, whether a paid professional, volunteer, family member or friend, 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.

Provision of Goods and Services

Ontario Mutual Insurance Association is committed to excellence in serving all customers including persons with disabilities and will carry out its functions and responsibilities to ensure that policies, practices and procedures are consistent with the following principles:

- a) Ontario Mutual Insurance Association’s goods and services are provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities;
- b) The provision of Ontario Mutual Insurance Association’s goods and services to persons with disabilities is integrated with those provided to persons who do not have disabilities unless an alternative measure is necessary to enable a person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from Ontario Mutual Insurance Association’s goods or services;
- c) Persons with disabilities are given an opportunity equal to that of persons without disabilities to obtain use or benefit from Ontario Mutual Insurance Association’s goods and services.
- d) Ontario Mutual Insurance Association will take into account individual needs when providing goods and services.

Specific Policies, Practices and Procedures

1. Staff will assist any customer with a disability who requests assistance when accessing the washrooms which are not “open door style”.
2. In the event that a customer with a disability who has an opposite gender support person requires the use of a washroom, they will be directed to the “universal style” washrooms located before the boardroom.
3. The following doors which do not have accessible door openers on them will be propped open between the hours of 8:30 – 4:30
 - a. OMIA Entrance
 - b. Staff Kitchen Entrance
 - c. Training Area Entrance

Communication

Ontario Mutual Insurance Association will communicate with customers in a way that takes into account the customer’s disability.

- a) Ontario Mutual Insurance Association staff will be trained in how to interact and communicate with customers with disabilities guided by the principles of dignity, independence and equality;
- b) Customers with disabilities will be offered alternate communication formats that will meet the needs of the customer as promptly as feasible;
- c) Documents will be provided to customers in an alternate format (i.e. large font, electronic) that will meet the needs of the customer in a timely fashion or if not available, alternative arrangements will be made, and
- d) If telephone communication is not suitable for customer’s needs, alternate forms of communication will be offered as required (i.e. email, written).

Assistive Devices

Persons with disabilities shall be permitted to obtain, use or benefit from goods or services offered by Ontario Mutual Insurance Association through the use of their own assistive devices.

Ontario Mutual Insurance Association will ensure that their staff is trained and familiar with the location of and use of various assistive devices that may be used by customers with disabilities while accessing their goods or services. These assistive devices include the following:

- Accessible Parking Spots
- Accessible Door Openers
- Accessible Washrooms
- Elevator
- Wheelchair located in Health Room (downstairs)

Service Animals

For the purpose of this policy, an animal is a service animal for a person with a disability,

1. If it is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for the reasons relating to the disability; or

2. If the person provides a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animals for reasons relating to the disability.

Service Animals must be;

- In the direct care of the handler at all times.
- Handlers of the service animal will ensure the safety and wellbeing of other patrons and customers of Ontario Mutual Insurance Association as well as all staff and third parties.
- In the event that the presence of the service animal presents a problem for staff and/or other patrons of Ontario Mutual Insurance Association, the handler will work with staff to explore alternatives to accommodate the needs of all parties involved, to the greatest extent possible.

Ontario Mutual Insurance Association is committed to welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal on the parts of their premises that are open to the public and other third parties. They will also ensure that all staff, volunteers and others dealing with the public are properly trained in how to interact with people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal.

Support Persons

Ontario Mutual Insurance Association 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 will be allowed to enter Ontario Mutual Insurance Association's 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 the premises.

Due to the confidential nature of many of the conversations between staff and customers at Ontario Mutual Insurance Association, consent from the customer with a disability as well as signing of a confidentiality agreement by the support person, will have to take place before any confidential conversations occur.

In the event that a customer with a learning disability or a cognitive disability is having difficulty understanding any documents relating to the goods and services offered by Ontario Mutual Insurance Association, a trustee or intervener may be utilized, at the customer's expense, for their protection to aid in them in their understanding of these documents.

Disruption of Service

Ontario Mutual Insurance Association will provide customers with notice in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in the facilities or services usually used by people with disabilities. These facilities and services include (but are not limited to);

- Accessible Parking Spots
- Accessible Door Openers
- Accessible Washrooms
- Elevator
- Wheelchair located in Health Room (downstairs)

This notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available.

Notice of the disruption will be given by;

- Posting the information at a conspicuous place on the premises of Ontario Mutual Insurance Association (including the location of the disruption)
- Verbally notifying customers when they are booking an appointment
- Contacting affected customers who have appointments booked during the time period of expected disruption
- Leaving a notice on the voicemail message.

Training

Ontario Mutual Insurance Association will provide Accessible Customer Service and Disability Awareness training to all employees, volunteers and others who deal with the public or other third parties on their behalf, and all those who are involved in the development and approvals of customer service policies, practices and procedures. This training will be provided as a condition of employment to all new staff and on an ongoing basis (every 5 years) for staff to ensure all staff stays current with any policy or procedural changes as it relates to the Customer Service Standard.

The training will include:

- 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/services available on the premises that may assist with the provision of goods or services to people with disabilities
- What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing goods and services at Ontario Mutual Insurance Association
- Current policies, practices and procedures relating to the customer service standard

Training will take place in one of the following formats;

1. Face to face classroom instruction
2. Online E-Learning Module
3. Required Reading of Training Materials

Ontario Mutual Insurance Association will keep a record of all staff that undergoes training including the number of staff who receives the training and the date the training took place.

Feedback

The ultimate goal of Ontario Mutual Insurance Association is to meet the needs of customers, while paying attention to the unique requirements of customers with disabilities. Comments on services regarding how well those expectations are being met are welcomed and appreciated.

Feedback may be given in the following formats;

1. Verbally; in person or on the phone
2. Electronically via email or via website
3. In writing via feedback form located at front desk or written mail. Feedback in person, by telephone, via written mail or through email should be directed to:

Human Resources

Ontario Mutual Insurance Association

350 Pinebush Road

Cambridge, Ontario

N1T 1Z6

Tel.: (519) 622-9220

Email: benefits@omia.com

Website: www.omia.com

Feedback will be used to improve customer service. In addition, the author of the feedback will be provided with a response in the format in which the feedback was received within 7 days. The feedback may outline actions deemed appropriate, if any.

Policy Updates

Ontario Mutual Insurance Association develops and updates policies, procedures and practices in such a manner as to respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities, as well as integration and equality of opportunity. Therefore, no changes will be made to this policy before considering the impact on people with disabilities. Any policy of Ontario Mutual Insurance Association that does not respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities will be modified or removed.

Documentation Requirements

Ontario Mutual Insurance Association will notify customers, by posting a notice in a conspicuous place, that all documents relating to the *Customer Service Regulation 429/07* under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* are available upon request. Ontario Mutual Insurance Association will provide policy and procedure documents in an alternate format upon request, within a reasonable amount of time. Alternate formats will include availability on Ontario Mutual Insurance Association's web-site, large print versions of the document and a text only electronic file (word document).

Reporting Requirements

As is required under the Customer Service Regulation, Ontario Mutual Insurance Association will complete the Compliancy Reporting annually through the Accessibility Compliance Reporting System (ACR) using the Service Ontario One-Key System.

Questions About This Policy

This policy exists to achieve service excellence to customers with disabilities. Questions about this policy can be directed to:

Human Resources

Ontario Mutual Insurance Association
350 Pinebush Road
Cambridge, Ontario
N1T 1Z6
Tel.: (519) 622-9220
Email: benefits@omia.com