

 Rainy River District Social Services Administration Board	SECTION: Human Resources
	POLICY TITLE: Accessibility Standards for Customer Service
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Purpose

Under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, the Rainy River District Social Services Administration Board (RRDSSAB) must meet requirements of accessibility standards established by regulation. This policy establishes the accessibility standards for customer service for the RRDSSAB, in accordance with *Ontario Regulation 429/07*, and applies to all RRDSSAB employees, agents, volunteers and contracted service staff.

Definitions

Accessible means that service to customers is easily understood or appreciated; easy to get at; capable of being reached, or entered; and obtainable.

Disability means:

- a) any degree of physical 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 impairment, 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; and/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*.

Persons with Disabilities means individuals who are afflicted with a disability, as defined under the *Ontario Human Rights Code*.

Assistive Devices means any auxiliary aid such as communication aids, cognition aids, personal mobility aids, and medical aids such as canes, crutches, wheelchairs, or hearing aids.

Service Animal means any animal individually trained to work or perform tasks for the benefit of a person with a disability.

Support Person means any person whether paid or professional, volunteer, family member or friend who accompanies a person with a disability, in order to help with communication, personal care or medical needs, or with access to goods or services.

Disruption in Service means a disruption in facilities or services that people with disabilities require to access goods and services, including, but not limited to, elevator maintenance/break down, limited or no access to entrances or exits, office closure, and/or technology break down.

Policy

The RRDSSAB ensures that goods and services are provided in a manner which respects and maintains the dignity and independence of all clients, including those with a disability.

Wherever possible, services will be integrated and, at all times, persons with disabilities will be provided with the same opportunity as others to obtain, use or benefit from the goods and services provided by or on behalf of the RRDSSAB.

When communicating with a person with a disability, RRDSSAB employees do so in a manner that accommodates the person's disability.

Designation of Accessibility Coordinator

1. The Human Resources Officer serves as the Accessibility Coordinator for the services and physical locations of the RRDSSAB. All matters relating to accessibility are coordinated through Human Resources.

Use of Service Animals, Support Persons and Assistive Devices

1. Employees use reasonable efforts to allow persons with disabilities to use their own assistive devices to access goods and/or services.
2. Employees allow a support person to accompany a person with a disability. If a fee for service is applicable, the support person is not required to pay fees.

3. Unless excluded by law, persons with disabilities may be accompanied by a service animal, as follows:
 - a) the service animal must stay in the care and control of the owner at all times;
 - b) employees will not talk to, pet or interact with a service animal while they are on duty; and
 - c) should the service animal dirty the premises, the employee assisting the client at the time ensures that clean-up is completed.
4. Where an animal cannot be allowed on the premises by law, the reason for exclusion is explained to the person with a disability, and other reasonable arrangements to provide goods and services are developed, with the assistance of the person with a disability.
5. When a service animal is unruly or disruptive, an employee may ask the person with a disability to remove the service animal from the area or refuse access to goods or services. In this event, other reasonable arrangements for provision of goods and services are explored, with the assistance of the person with a disability.
6. In extreme circumstances, documentation from a medical practitioner may be requested, if there is question as to the legitimacy of the service animal.

Notice of Temporary Disruptions

1. The RRDSSAB provides notice of a temporary disruption in services, including information about the reason for the disruption, the anticipated duration, a description of any available, alternative service, and a contact name and number. The notice is displayed in a conspicuous manner at the location of the disruption, on the website, in a mailing and/or in a pamphlet. In the event of a temporary disruption in service, the following steps will be taken:
 - a) The Accessibility Coordinator is advised of all disruptions in service.
 - b) The Accessibility Coordinator ensures that designated staff post a notice of all scheduled and unexpected disruption in services, as follows:
 - i) A notice for a scheduled disruption in service is posted at the affected facility and on the RRDSSAB website at least five (5) days in advance, if possible.
 - ii) A notice for an unexpected disruption in service is posted at the affected facility as soon as possible and on the RRDSSAB website, if possible.

- c) The Accessibility Coordinator ensures that the following staff post and remove notices regarding disruption in services:
 - i) Customer Service Representative or designate: 450 Scott Street & Rawn Road Centre;
 - ii) Network Administrator or designate: RRDSSAB Website; and
 - iii) Housing Clerk or designate: RRDSSAB Housing properties.
- d) The designated staff member ensures that the notice is forwarded to the Accessibility Coordinator for filing in a centralized file, once service is reinstated.

Training Requirements

1. Every person who participates in the development of RRDSSAB policies and procedures governing the provision of goods and services to the public receives training regarding the provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities.
2. Every person who deals with members of the public, on behalf of the RRDSSAB, receives training regarding the provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities, including employees, volunteers, agents, and contractors.
3. Training is provided to each person according to his/her needs and duties, and as soon as is practicable after he/she is assigned the applicable duties.
4. Training is provided on an ongoing basis in connection with changes to policies and procedures and/or legislation governing the provision of goods or services to persons with disabilities.
5. A record of the training dates and participant names is maintained by the Accessibility Coordinator, and retained within the parameters of relevant legislation.

Feedback

1. The RRDSSAB recognizes the rights of clients to register a complaint, compliment or offer recommendations on ways to improve our services. People with disabilities are encouraged to provide feedback on the goods and services they receive, in order to assist the RRDSSAB in improving the delivery of goods and services to people with disabilities.

2. The Accessibility Coordinator gathers feedback through interviews in person or by mail, electronic mail, telephone, fax, or otherwise, utilizing a structured format.
3. The Accessibility Coordinator acknowledges the receipt of client feedback in person, writing, email, or telephone and develops methods to address any complaints, in consultation with relevant RRDSSAB staff.
4. The feedback process is promoted on the website and through printed materials.

Availability and Format of Documents

1. The RRDSSAB provides the client with a copy of the policies, practices and procedures required by the *Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, (O. Reg 429/07)*, if requested. The Accessibility Coordinator ensures that the availability of such materials is advertised on the RRDSSAB web site and is noted on other printed methods.
2. When required to provide materials, under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, the Accessibility Coordinator ensures that RRDSSAB staff recognize the person's ability to access the information and provide information in a format that meets the identified needs in a mutually acceptable fashion.

Non-Compliance

1. Failure to comply with this policy may result in disciplinary action, per Policy *HR-3.3: Employee Conduct and Performance*.