



## Town of Atikokan

**Policy Title:** Accessible Customer Service Policy  
**Date Issued:** November 23, 2009  
**Resolution #:** 307/09

### 1. Purpose

The Town of Atikokan recognizes that persons with disabilities must be provided with an equal opportunity to access goods and services in a manner consistent with the principles of independence, dignity, integration and equality of opportunity as stated in the regulations of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA).

The AODA provides for the establishment of accessibility standards. Accordingly, Ontario Regulation 429/07 Accessible Standards for Customer Service was enacted. Under this Regulation municipalities must establish policies, procedures and practices governing the provision of its goods or services to persons with disabilities. In addition, the Town must use all reasonable efforts to ensure that goods and services are provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.

The purpose of this policy is to fulfill certain requirements as set out in Ontario Regulation 429/07 made under the AODA and other relevant sections of that Act as well as the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001. In support of this policy, corresponding Procedures and Practices will be set out to support the policy and may be amended from time to time.

### 2. Definitions

- 2.1. “**Agents**” shall mean a person or business providing goods or services on behalf of the Town of Atikokan through a contract or agreement.
- 2.2. “**Assistive Devices**” shall mean an auxiliary aid such as communication aids, cognition aids, personal mobility aids, and medical aids (i.e. canes, crutches, wheelchairs, or hearing aids etc.) to access and benefit from the goods and services of the Town of Atikokan.

### 2.3. “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*;

Disability	Example of Disability
<b>Physical</b>	Include a range of functional limitation from minor difficulties in moving or coordinating one body part or through muscle weakness. This disability can be congenital or acquired. A physical disability may affect an individual’s ability to perform manual tasks, move independently, control movements, reach, pull/push and have the strength or endurance.
<b>Hearing</b>	Includes difficulties distinguishing certain frequencies, sounds or words; this may be a person that is deaf, deafened or hard of hearing.
<b>Deaf - Blind</b>	Is a combination of hearing and vision loss. This disability interferes with communication, learning, orientation and mobility; assistance through Braille, telephone devices, communication boards, etc.
<b>Vision</b>	In some cases may be difficult to tell if the person has a vision disability - some are more notable i.e., guide dog and/or white cane.
<b>Intellectual</b>	This disability affects a person’s ability to think and reason. May be caused by genetic factors, exposure to environmental toxins, and/or psychiatric disorders.
<b>Speech</b>	Disabilities may involve the partial or total loss of the ability to speak.

<b>Learning</b>	This includes a range of disorders that affect verbal and non verbal information acquisition, retention, understanding and processing.
<b>Mental Health</b>	These disabilities include a range of disorders and are broken down into three types: anxiety, mood and behavioural. Some people may act edgy or irritated, act aggressively and be seen as pushy or abrupt.

**Disabilities are not always visible or easy to distinguish.**

- 2.4. **“Employee”** shall mean an employee, agent, volunteer, board or otherwise who, on behalf of the Town of Atikokan, provides or oversees the provision of Municipal goods or services to members of the public or other third parties.
- 2.5. **“Persons with Disabilities”** shall be defined as in the Ontario Human Rights Code.
- 2.6. **“Service Animal”** shall mean any animal individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of a person with a disability.
- 2.7. **“Support Person”** shall mean any person whether a paid professional, volunteer, family member or friend who accompanies a person with a disability to aid him or her with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs, or with access to goods and services.

### **3. Service Animals and Support Persons**

The Town of Atikokan shall allow persons with disabilities, who require to be accompanied by a support person, into all Municipal premises that are owned and operated public facilities. Both persons are permitted to enter the premises together and the person with a disability will have access to their support person.

The Town of Atikokan allows a person with a disability to be accompanied by a service animal onto all facilities that are owned and operated by the Town for public use and will ensure that the person is permitted to keep the animal with him or her unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law. The service animal must stay in the care and control of the owner at all times.

In the event that admission fees are charged, the individual accompanying the person with a disability to the event is entitled to free admission.

If the service animal is excluded by law from the facility, the Town will make every effort to ensure that other measures are available to enable the person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the Town’s goods and services.

In extreme circumstances, documentation from a medical practitioner may be requested if there is question as to the legitimacy of the service animal.

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. In this event other reasonable arrangements for provision of good and services are explored with the assistance of the person with a disability.

#### **4. Notice of Temporary Disruption**

Notice of Service Disruptions must be provided when facilities or services that people with disabilities may use to access Town of Atikokan goods or services are temporarily unavailable or if the goods or service are expected in the near future to be temporarily unavailable.

The Notice must include the following information:

- a) The reason and information for disruption
- b) Anticipated duration
- c) Description of alternate facilities or services, if available
- d) Contact information.

In the case of an unscheduled disruption, the Notice will be posted at the location of the service disruption as soon as practically possible.

In the case of a scheduled disruption the Town will post the Notice prior to the disruption, at the physical location, on its website and if appropriate will advertise the disruption with local media.

#### **5. Documentation and Feedback**

The Town of Atikokan shall upon request give a copy of the policies, practices and procedures required under the Ontario Regulation 429/07 - Accessibility Standards for Customer Service to any person. Policies, practices and procedures will also be posted on the Town website.

The Town will have a mechanism to allow the public to provide feedback on the accessibility of the provision of goods and services i.e., email, form, verbally. The feedback process will be promoted on the website and through printed material.

## **6. Training**

The Town of Atikokan will provide training to its employees about the provision of its goods and services to persons with disabilities. All employees who deal with the public or other third parties will receive Accessible Customer Services training as soon as practicable after beginning their employment. The amount and format of training given will be tailored to suit each person's interaction with the public and his or her involvement in the development of policies, procedures and practices pertaining to the provision of good and services. The Town will also provide ongoing training with respect to changes in its policies, practices and procedures to those individuals who require such training as soon as practicable. The Town will keep records of the training provided.

## **Additions to the Accessible Customer Service Policy**

### **A. Assistive Devices**

The Town of Atikokan is committed to and will use reasonable effort to serve persons with disabilities who use assistive devices to obtain, use or benefit from our goods and services.

# Schedule A



## Town of Atikokan Accessible Services for Persons with Disabilities Feedback Form

Thank you for taking the time to share your feedback with the Town of Atikokan. Your comments are important because we want to make your experience with the Town of Atikokan the best it can be.

Please submit this form to any Town facility, or mail it to the Town of Atikokan Clerk's Department.

Town of Atikokan location visited: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of visit: \_\_\_\_\_ Time of visit: \_\_\_\_\_

What services were you looking for?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Was our customer service provided to you in an accessible manner?

Yes \_\_\_\_ Somewhat \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

Comments:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What could the Town of Atikokan do to make it easier for you to access our goods and services?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Would you like to be contacted? No \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ (Please provide your contact information.)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

The Town of Atikokan is collecting the personal information you provide on this form so we can respond to your feedback.

Mail this form to: Clerk's Department, Town of Atikokan, Box 1330, Atikokan, Ontario P0T 1C0