



Municipality of Meaford Corporate Policy

Policy: Integrated Accessibility Standards Policy

Department: Legislative Services

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Policy Statement

The Municipality of Meaford is committed to providing quality programs, facilities and services that are accessible and in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities.

The Municipality of Meaford supports the goals for the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, S.O. 2005, C11 (AODA) and will establish policies and practices which are consistent with the accessibility standards and the four core principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity. In working towards its goals under this statement, the Municipality of Meaford is committed to meeting the requirements of existing legislation and policies related to the identification, removal and prevention of barriers to people with disabilities in order to become a barrier-free community.

Purpose

This policy provides guidance on meeting the requirements of the AODA and in accordance with the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation 191/11 in order to ensure that all persons with disabilities are provided equal opportunities.

Definitions

“Accessible Formats” – May include, but are not limited to, large print, recorded audio and electronic formats, Braille and other formats usable by persons with disabilities.

“Accommodation” – Means the special arrangement made or assistance provided so that persons with disabilities can participate in the experiences available to persons without disabilities. Accommodation will vary depending on the person’s needs.

“Assistive Devices” – Any auxiliary aid, tool, technology or other mechanism that enable person with a disability to do everyday tasks and activities such as moving, communicating or lifting; assist in accessing programs or services and helps the person maintain their independence. Examples include, but are not limited to, communication aids, cognition aids, personal mobility aids and medical aids (i.e. canes, crutches, wheelchairs, or hearing aids).

“Barrier” – Anything that stops, impedes, prevents or causes difficulty for a person to obtain use or benefit from a provider’s programs, facilities or services. A barrier can be physical, architectural, attitudinal, technological or related to information and communications.

“Communication Supports” – May include, but are not limited to, captioning, alternative and augmentative communication supports, plain language, sign language and other supports that facilitate effective communications.

“Disability” – As per the Ontario Human Rights Code, 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, 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.

“Guide Dog” – A guide dog as defined in Section 1 of the Blind Persons’ Rights Act is a dog trained as a guide for a blind person, and having qualifications prescribed by the regulations under the Blind Persons’ Rights Act.

“Municipality” – The Corporation of the Municipality of Meaford.

“Service Animal” – Means an animal is a service animal for a person with a disability if:

- (a) The animal can be readily identified as one that is being used by persons for reasons relating to the person’s disability, as a result of visual indicators such as the best or harness worn by the animal; or
- (b) The person provides documentation from one of the following regulated health professionals confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability:
 - i. A member of the College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists of Ontario
 - ii. A member of the College of Chiropractors of Ontario
 - iii. A member of the College of Nurses of Ontario.
 - iv. A member of the College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario.
 - v. A member of the College of Optometrists of Ontario.
 - vi. A member of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario.
 - vii. A member of the College of Physiotherapists of Ontario.
 - viii. A member of the College of Psychologists of Ontario.
 - ix. A member of the College of Registered Psychotherapists and Registered Mental Health Therapists of Ontario.

“Support Person” – In relation to a person with a disability, another person who accompanies him or her in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care, medical needs or with access to programs, services or facilities.

Policy Requirements

General Requirements

1. Accessibility Plan

The Municipality shall prepare a multi-year Accessibility Plan which will outline a phased-in strategy to prevent and remove barriers and address the current and future



requirements of the AODA. The Municipality will report annually on the progress and implementation of the plan, post the information on the municipal website and provide in accessible formats upon request. The plan will be reviewed and updated at least once every five years.

2. Accessible Procurement

The Municipality is committed to including accessibility criteria and features when procuring or acquiring programs, services or facilities. When it is not practicable to do so, an explanation will be provided upon request.

3. Training

The Municipality will ensure that training is provided as required by the Integrated Accessibility Standards. The content of the training will include the requirements of the accessibility standards referred to in Ontario Regulation 191/11 and the Human Rights Code as it pertains to persons with disabilities. The training provided shall be appropriate to the duties of those being trained.

Training will be provided as soon as practicable, as well as on an ongoing basis to accommodate staff changes and when changes to this policy occur. The Municipality will keep records of the training, including the date on which training is provided and the number of individuals to who it is provided. The names of individuals trained will be recorded for training administration purposes, subject to the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (“MFIPPA”).

4. Emergency Procedures

The Municipality will provide emergency procedures, plans and public safety information in an accessible format, or with communication supports, as soon as practicable, upon request pursuant to the terms of this policy.

Information and Communications

1. Providing Accessible Formats and Communication Supports

The Municipality is committed to ensuring that all publically available documents are fully accessible whenever possible. Where a person would like an alternative format they are encouraged to complete a Request for Documentation in Alternative Format form.

When providing a document to a person requesting accommodation, the Municipality will make every reasonable effort to provide the document, or the information contained in the document, in a format that takes the person’s disability into account and within a



reasonable timeframe. If the information or communications cannot be converted to an accessible format, the Municipality will provide an explanation about why the materials are not convertible along with a summary of the requested information or communications. If there is a fee normally charged for the information, the person making the request for information in an accessible format or provision of communications supports will be charged only the application fee.

All documents required by the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation, including the Municipality's policies, procedures and practices, notices of temporary disruptions, training records and written feedback processes are available upon request, subject to MFIPPA.

2. Accessible Websites and Web Content

The Municipality's internet sites and web content will conform with the World Wide Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.0) initially at Level A and increasing to Level AA according to the schedule outlined in the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation. For more information about the World Wide Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.0), see the following website:

<http://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG20/>

Employment Standard

The Municipality of Meaford is committed to fair and accessible employment practices. The Employment standards outline requirements for the accommodation of persons with disabilities during the recruitment process and throughout employment with the Municipality.

1. Accessible Formats and Communication Supports for Job Applicants and Employees with Disabilities

An employee or a job applicant with a disability may request that information generally available to employees in the workplace and information needed in order to perform the employee's job be made available in an accessible format or with communication supports. Once such a request is received, the Municipality of Meaford will consult with the person making the request to determine a suitable format that takes the person's accessibility needs into account. The Municipality will determine which accessible format and/or communication support to be provided or arranged and information shall be provided in a timely fashion.



2. Recruitment, Assessment, Selection and Hiring

The Municipality of Meaford will provide accommodations for applicants with disabilities. Employees and the public will be notified about the provision of accommodations in our job postings. During the recruitment process, the Municipality will advise applicants that accommodation for purposes of accessibility in relation to the recruitment process or materials are available upon request. Upon receipt of such a request, the Municipality will consult with the person making the request and will determine an accommodation that takes the person's accessibility needs into account.

3. Notice to Successful Job Applicants and Employees about Accommodations

Successful job applicants and employees will be advised of the Municipality's accommodation policies and will be made available to all staff.

4. Documented Individual Accommodation Plans

A written procedure for the development and maintenance of documented individual accommodation plans shall be developed for employees with disabilities. If requested, these plans shall include information regarding accessible formats and communication supports. If requested, the plans shall include individualized workplace emergency response information. The procedure shall be made available to all staff.

5. Accessible Workplace Emergency Response Plans

The Municipality, after being made aware, will provide individualized emergency response information to employees who have a disability, if the disability is such that the individualized information is necessary.

Individualized workplace emergency response information will be reviewed when:

- the employee moves to a different location in the organization;
- employee's overall accommodations needs or plans are reviewed; and
- employer reviews its general emergency response policies.

6. Return to Work Process

The Municipality is committed to providing employees who have been away from work due to a disability with the opportunity to return to work through the provision of necessary accommodations. A written procedure shall be developed to outline the steps the Municipality will take to facilitate the employee's return to work, which may lead to an individual accommodation plan.



7. Performance Management, Career Development and Advancement and Redeployment

The Municipality will take the accessibility needs and individual accommodation plans into consideration for employees with disabilities during a performance management process, or during career development and advancement or when the employee is redeployed.

Transportation Standard

The Transportation Standard will make it easier for people to travel in Ontario, including persons with disabilities, older Ontarians and families travelling with children with strollers.

The Municipality is committed to providing accessible transit services in accordance with the Integrated Accessibility Standards (Ontario Regulation 191/11) under the AODA and in particular, Part IV, Transportation Standards, of such Regulation. This will be accomplished through the development and implementation of policies, procedures, resources, equipment and training in the provisions outlined in the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation under the AODA.

Design of Public Spaces Standard

The Municipality of Meaford is committed to designing public spaces that are free from barriers and accessible to all persons. The Municipality will comply with the Design of Public Spaces Standards with respect to public spaces that are newly constructed or redeveloped, including:

- Recreation trails and beach access routes;
- Outdoor public use eating areas;
- Outdoor play spaces;
- Exterior paths of travel;
- Accessible parking; and
- Obtaining services.

Accessible Customer Service

1. Communication with Persons with Disabilities

Municipal staff will make every reasonable effort to communicate effectively, and in an appropriate manner and format, with persons with a disability (or their support person) who have made their requirements known to the Municipality. Where provisions of services under this policy would require investment of municipal staff and/or resources,



the Municipality may require that a completed Request for Documentation in Alternative Format form be submitted to the Accessibility Coordinator.

The Municipality of Meaford will train employees who communicate with customers on how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities.

2. Assistive Devices and other Measures that Assist with Accessibility

A person with a disability may provide his/her own assistive device for the purpose of obtaining, using and benefitting from the Municipality's programs, facilities and services. A person with a disability shall ensure that his or her assistive device is operated in a safe and controlled manner at all times.

Exceptions may occur in situations where the Municipality has determined that the assistive device may pose a risk to the health and safety of a person with a disability or the health and safety of others on the premises. In these situations the Municipality may offer a person with a disability other reasonable alternative measures to assist him or her in obtaining, using and benefitting from the Municipality's programs, facilities and services, where the Municipality has such other measures available.

3. Service Animal

If a person with a disability is accompanied by a service animal entering a municipal facility or portion thereof accessible to the public, the service animal may enter the premises, unless excluded by other law from the premises. If a service animal is excluded from the premises by law, the Municipality shall ensure that other measures are in place to allow the person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from municipal programs, facilities or services.

If it is not readily apparent that the animal is a service animal, the Municipality may ask the person with a disability to provide documentation from a regulated health professional confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to his or her disability. It should be noted that it is the responsibility of the person with a disability to ensure that his or her service animal is kept in control at all times.

4. Support Persons

A person with a disability may enter premises owned and/or operated by the Municipality with a support person and have access to the support person while on the premises. Where a fee is charged to gain access to an event, facility or service, and the revenue from the fee is payable directly to the Municipality of Meaford, the support person is permitted to attend at no cost.



The health and safety of the public entering municipal property is of the utmost priority for the Municipality of Meaford. Municipal employees may require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support worker if staff feels a person's health and safety could be compromised without one. Before making a decision, the Municipality shall:

- Consult with the person with a disability to understand their needs;
- Consider health and safety reasons based on available evidence;
- Determine if there is no other reasonable way to protect the health or safety of the person or others on the premises.

In situations where privacy and consent issues are applicable, a support person may be subject to the same confidentiality requirements as the person with a disability that they are assisting. A support person may be required to sign a waiver with respect to any privacy or confidentiality issues.

In order to accommodate a person with a disability and their support person at an event where attendance is by pre-arranged seating, advanced booking may be required.

5. Customer Service Training

The Municipality of Meaford will ensure that all persons to whom this policy applies receive training as required by the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation. Municipal employees, volunteers and any individual or organization that provides programs, services or facilities to the public or other third parties on behalf of the Municipality, shall receive training about the provision of the Municipality's programs, services or facilities, as the case may be, to persons with disabilities.

Training will include the following:

- 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.
- Information about the equipment or devices available on the Municipality's premises or otherwise that may help with the provision of programs or services to people with disabilities.
- What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing the Municipality of Meaford's programs, facilities and services.
- The Municipality of Meaford's policies, practices and procedures relating to the customer service standard.



Training will be provided as soon as practicable upon an individual being assigned the applicable duties as well as on an ongoing basis as changes occur to the Municipality's policies, procedures and practices.

The Municipality will keep records of the training, including the date on which the training is provided and the number of individuals to whom it is provided. The names of individuals trained will be recorded for training administration purposes subject to the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act ("MFIPPA").

6. Availability and Alternative Format of Documents

The Municipality is committed to ensuring that all publically available documents are fully accessible whenever possible. Where a person would like an alternative format they are encouraged to complete a Request for Documentation in Alternative Format form.

When providing a document to a person requesting accommodation, the Municipality will make every reasonable effort to provide the document, or the information contained in the document, in a format that takes the person's disability into account and within a reasonable timeframe. If the information or communications cannot be converted to an accessible format, the Municipality will provide an explanation about why the materials are not convertible along with a summary of the requested information or communications. If there is a fee normally charged for the information, the person making the request for information in an accessible format or provision of communications supports will be charged only the application fee.

All documents required by the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation, including the Municipality's policies, procedures and practices, notices of temporary disruptions, training records and written feedback processes are available upon request, subject to MFIPPA.

7. Notice of Temporary Disruptions in Services and Facilities

The Municipality is aware that temporary service disruptions to services or facilities can create additional barriers for people with disabilities. In an effort to minimize the impact of temporary disruptions, the Municipality will make reasonable efforts to provide notice of the disruption to the public, 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. The Municipality will make reasonable effort to provide prior notice of planned disruption, recognizing that in some circumstances such as in the situation of unplanned temporary disruption, advance notice will not be possible. In the case where the disruption is unplanned, the Municipality will provide notice as soon as possible.



When temporary disruptions occur to the Municipality's services or facilities, the Municipality will provide notice by posting the information in visible places, and/or on the municipal website (www.meaford.ca) and/or by other method that may be reasonable under the circumstances as soon as reasonably possible.

8. Feedback

The Municipality of Meaford is committed to providing high quality programs, facilities and services to all members of the public it serves. Feedback is welcomed as it may identify areas requiring change and encourage continuous service improvements.

Feedback from a member of the public about programs, services or facilities may be provided to the Accessibility Coordinator by telephone, in person, in writing or in electronic format. When providing feedback, the Accessibility Feedback form should be used. All feedback will be reviewed by the Accessibility Coordinator and may be shared with the Accessibility Advisory Committee.

Information about the feedback process will be available on the municipal website (<http://www.meaford.ca/accessibility.html>) and will be made readily available to the public.

Implications

- a. Community – Build towards an accessible, barrier-free community.

Monitoring

The Accessibility Coordinator shall be responsible for receiving feedback and/or concerns related to this policy. This policy shall be reviewed following changes to the governing legislation and at intervals of no more than five years.

Authority

This policy is established pursuant to Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) requires the development of policies, practices and procedures with respect to the areas covered hereinto.



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Change History

Policy Name	Effective Date	Significant Changes	By-law No.