

# Accessibility training booklet for staff and volunteers

June 2020

## **Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR)**

Under the Accessibility for  
Ontarians with Disabilities  
Act, 2005 (AODA)



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## Accessibility

Did you know that 2.62 million people in Ontario have a disability?

This equals 24.1 per cent of the population and as people in our community get older, that number will increase.

Disabilities can take many forms. They may be permanent or temporary; severe or mild; for the young or old; or a combination of disabilities. A person can be born with a disability or could become ill or injured resulting in a temporary or permanent disability. Some disabilities are visible, and some you cannot see at all. Many people have disabilities such as difficulty walking, seeing and hearing, or learning, processing and remembering information.

## What is Accessibility?

Accessibility means giving people of all abilities opportunities to participate fully in everyday life.

The City of Burlington is committed to ensuring that people of all ages and abilities enjoy the same opportunities as they live, work, play, visit and invest in our city. The city recognizes that enhanced accessibility provides increased opportunities for everyone, both now and in the future.

We promote a caring, inclusive and respectful community where city programs, services and facilities are available to everyone, including people living with disabilities. Our goal is to provide accessibility for the public we serve and our employees.

## The AODA and its regulations

In 2005, the Government of Ontario passed the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA). Its goal is to make Ontario accessible for people living with disabilities by creating, implementing and enforcing accessibility standards.

These standards are rules that businesses and organizations in Ontario must follow to identify, remove and prevent barriers so that people living with disabilities will have more opportunities to participate in everyday life.

The standards are contained in one regulation called the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation, also known as the IASR. The requirements of the regulation apply to the city's business in the following areas:

- Customer Service
- Information and Communication
- Employment
- Transportation
- Design of Public Spaces

Through the IASR, the city is required to train all its employees and volunteers on the Regulation and the Ontario Human Rights Code, as it relates to persons with disabilities.

## The AODA and the Ontario Human Rights Code

The Ontario Human Rights Code [the Code] and the AODA work together to promote equality and accessibility. The Code states that people living with disabilities must be free from discrimination where they work, live and receive services, and that their needs must be accommodated.

Under the Code, the City of Burlington has a legal obligation to accommodate a person with a disability, regardless of whether they are an employee, volunteer or community member. The duty to accommodate means that wherever unequal treatment or discrimination exists, it must be remedied unless the remedy would cause undue hardship. Even when facilities and services are designed as inclusively as possible, you still may need to accommodate the individual needs of a person with a disability. The Code has primacy over the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act and its regulations.

It is important to provide any request for accommodation in a timely manner upon request.

## Barriers to Accessibility

What is a barrier to accessibility? Barriers can prevent a person with a disability from fully participating in society. Some examples of barriers are:

**Information and Communication** – Print that is too small or in a font that is difficult to read

**Attitudinal** – Assuming that a person who has a speech impairment cannot understand you

**Technological** – A website that does not support screen reading software

**Policy or practice** – A hiring process that does not offer accommodations for interviews

**Architectural** – Sidewalks and doorways that are too narrow for a person using a wheelchair, medical scooter or walker to access

## **AODA Training**

Thank you for taking the time to read and understand this important information about the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act and its regulations. Your effort will help us better serve all citizens of Burlington, including people with disabilities.

The city is required by law to train all employees and volunteers on the IASR and the Ontario Human Rights Code.



## General Requirements of the IASR

### Establishment of accessibility policy

Our Corporate Accessibility Policy provides direction and guidance to staff on how the city will comply with the AODA and its regulations. The policy can be found on the Accessibility page of the city's website.

### Accessibility plans and annual reports

The city's Municipal Accessibility Plan is created in consultation with people with disabilities and provides an overview of how the city will continue its work to meet the AODA compliance obligations. The plan is a living document and is updated each year to highlight our progress. The plan and annual reports can be found on the Accessibility page of the city's website.

### Procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities

To ensure that we are receiving goods and services that are accessible to people with disabilities, criteria has been incorporated into the general terms and conditions that accompany any Request for Proposal, bid or tender published by the city. This practice will make a significant impact on preventing new barriers and addressing existing ones.

For example, when procuring new computer software, the software will accommodate the needs of people with vision loss.

### Self-service kiosks

Any future self-service kiosk, including point-of-sale devices, offered by the city must incorporate accessibility features such as tactile number pad, high colour contrasting buttons, an earphone plug-in for audio commands and adequate clearance space for a person using a personal mobility device.



## **Customer Service**

Accessible customer service can mean many things. It is not about making assumptions about what a person can or cannot do. It's understanding that access to the goods, services and facilities the city provides may, at times, require some modification to be accessible to some individuals.

### **Customer Service Tips**

Being able to interact and communicate in an appropriate way to individuals with disabilities is a big part of providing accessible customer service, and sometimes the best approach is to ask the person how you can best serve them. If you are not sure what to do, ask your customer, "May I Help You?" Your customers with disabilities know if they need help and how you can best provide it. Here are some general tips:

- Always treat anyone with a disability with the same respect and courtesy that you would offer to everyone else.
- Treat and speak to adults with disabilities as adults.
- Speak directly to the person with a disability not to their companion, assistant or interpreter who may be with them.
- Don't shout; speak clearly and distinctly, and at a moderate pace.
- Let a person with a disability make their own decisions regarding what they can or cannot do. Do not make assumptions.
- Do not pet, feed or distract a guide dog or service animal from doing its job.

### **Examples of Accessible Customer Service**

- A person who has low vision may need to have information read aloud to them.
- Someone who uses a wheelchair may need help finding an accessible route.
- An individual with a learning disability may need to have instructions written down for them.

- A person who has a hearing loss may want to know about what assistive listening devices are available at a public meeting.
- A person who is unable to stand for a long period of time may benefit from seating in areas where people must stand in line to receive goods or services.
- A person with an intellectual disability may need assistance with and extra time to complete forms.
- A person who is blind may need assistance by telling them the denominations of money being exchanged during a financial transaction.
- A person who is Deaf may request that a Sign Language Interpreter be available at a meeting.





## Word Choices

Choosing positive words can empower people. Inappropriate terms convey inaccurate information and perpetuate negative stereotypes.

The notion that people living with disabilities are inspirational, brave and courageous for living successfully with their disability is a myth. The fact is a person with a disability is simply carrying out the activities of daily living when they drive to work, go to a movie, pay their bills or participate in a sporting event. They just may do it in a way that is different from others.

People living with disabilities are ‘people first’ – unique individuals who also happen to have a disability. Use words that put the person first, referring to them as a “person with a disability” or “person with hearing loss.” Always put the person first.

Outdated Language	Respectful Language
The disabled, The handicapped	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A person with a disability</li> </ul>
The Blind, The Visually Impaired	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A person who is blind</li> <li>• A person who is partially sighted</li> <li>• A person with low vision</li> </ul>
The Deaf, Deaf and dumb	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A person who is deaf</li> <li>• A person who is hard of hearing</li> <li>• A person with a hearing loss</li> </ul>
Crippled, physically challenged lame, deformed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A person with a disability</li> <li>• A person with a physical disability</li> </ul>
Suffers with, victim of, stricken by	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Person with a disability</li> </ul>
Mute	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Person who is non-verbal</li> </ul>
Wheelchair bound, confined to a wheelchair, physically challenged	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Person who uses a wheelchair</li> <li>• A wheelchair user</li> </ul>
Slow-learner, dyslexic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Person with a learning disability</li> </ul>
Mentally retarded, retarded	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Person with an intellectual disability</li> <li>• Person with a developmental disability</li> </ul>
Handicapped Parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accessible Parking</li> </ul>
Normal person	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A person who is able-bodied</li> <li>• A person who is not disabled</li> <li>• A person without a disability</li> <li>• Specifically, a person who is sighted, a hearing person, a person who is ambulatory</li> </ul>
Handicapped washroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accessible Washroom</li> </ul>
Crazy, insane, mental, psycho	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A person with a mental illness</li> <li>• A person with a mental health disorder</li> </ul>

## Physical Disabilities

There are many types and degrees of physical disabilities, and not all require use of mobility aids such as wheelchairs, scooters, crutches or canes. People who have arthritis, heart or lung conditions or amputations may also have difficulty with stamina, moving, standing, sitting or the ability to reach or grasp. It may be difficult to identify a person with an invisible physical disability.

### Customer Service Tips:

- If you are having a lengthy conversation with someone who uses a wheelchair or scooter, consider sitting so that you are at eye level.
- Ask before you help; offer help but don't insist.
- Speak directly to the person.
- Avoid touching any assistive devices unnecessarily.
- Be prepared to provide information about accessible features offered at the location.



## Blindness and Vision Loss

There are varying degrees of vision loss and a distinction between blindness and low vision. Many people living with a vision loss have some degree of limited vision. Very few people have no vision at all. A vision loss can restrict someone's ability to read print or signs, recognize faces, locate landmarks or see hazards. Some may use a white cane or guide dog to help with orientation and movement, while others may not.

### Customer Service Tips

- Do not assume the individual cannot see you.
- Identify yourself when you approach a customer.
- Speak directly to the person.
- Do not leave without saying goodbye.
- Use specific directions like “behind you to your left” or “the cup is by your right hand.”
- If you help, wait until the offer is accepted.
- Offer your elbow to provide sighted guide if needed; identify obstacles before you come to them.
- Do not pet, feed or distract a guide dog from doing its job.

## Deafness and Hearing Loss

Hearing loss ranges from mild to profound. Deaf, deafened and hard of hearing individuals may use hearing aids, cochlear implants, sign language, and/or other assistive-listening and communication devices. Smart phones and text messaging can provide instant communication for people with hearing loss.

### Customer Service Tips:

- Attract the person's attention before you speak. Use eye contact and a simple wave to connect visually.
- Do not cover or have anything in your mouth when speaking.
- Speak directly to your customer, not to their interpreter.
- Speak naturally, with normal expression and at a normal pace.
- Ask one question at a time.
- When writing back and forth, keep sentences short.
- In group settings, talk one at a time.



## Deafblindness

A person who is deafblind has some degree of both vision and hearing loss. This results in greater difficulties in accessing information. Many people who are deafblind will be accompanied by an intervenor, a professional who helps with communication.

### Customer Service Tips:

- Do not assume what a person can or cannot do. People who are deafblind have varying degrees of both hearing and vision loss, making it unique to everyone.
- A customer who is deafblind will likely explain to you how to best communicate with them or give you an assistance card or note.
- Speak directly to your customer, not to the intervenor.
- Do not leave without saying goodbye.





## Speech or Language Disabilities

People with speech or language disabilities may have problems communicating. For many reasons, people may have difficulty speaking clearly – for example, because of a stroke, cerebral palsy or hearing loss – which may result in difficulties with verbal communication or voice strength. Some people may use communication boards or other assistive devices. A speech or language disability often has no impact on a person’s ability to understand.

### Customer Service Tips:

- Talk to people with speech disabilities as you would talk to anyone else and speak in your regular tone of voice.
- If your customer has a stammer, do not finish their words or sentences. Be patient.
- Tell the person if you do not understand what they are trying to say. Ask the person to repeat the message, tell you in a different way, or write it down.
- If you are able, ask questions that can be answered ‘yes’ or ‘no’ or with the nod of the head.
- Give your customer time to fully explain themselves; don’t interrupt.

## Intellectual Disabilities

An intellectual disability can be characterized by intellectual development and capacity that is significantly below average and involves a permanent limitation in a person's ability to learn or adapt to their environment. The effects of an intellectual disability can range from mild to profound. People with intellectual disabilities do not necessarily have a recognizable condition.

### Customer Service Tips:

- Don't make assumptions about what a person can or cannot do.
- Use plain language and speak in short sentences.
- Give one piece of information at a time.
- If you cannot understand what's being said, do not pretend. Just ask again.
- Be supportive and patient.
- Be prepared to repeat and rephrase your sentences.



## Learning Disabilities

Learning disabilities range from mild to severe and may affect a person's ability to receive, process, remember or analyze information. Some learning disabilities can interfere with a person's ability to concentrate or focus. Other learning disabilities can make it difficult for a person to read, write, spell, or solve math problems. A learning disability does not mean a person cannot learn. It means that they learn in a different way.

### Customer Service Tips:

- Ask your customer how to best accommodate their needs.
- Provide information in appropriate formats.
- Minimize distractions so that full attention is on communication.
- Keep sentences short and clear.
- Use gestures or diagrams as needed.
- Avoid complex words or jargon.
- Some people may find it difficult to read. Others may have problems with numbers.



## Mental Illness

People with mental illness look like anyone else. You won't know that your customer has a mental health disability unless you are told, nor will you need to. Usually it will not affect your customer service at all. But if someone is having trouble in controlling their symptoms or is in a crisis, you may need to help. Be calm and professional and let your customer tell you how you can best help.

### Customer Service Tips:

- Be respectful to the person. Do not judge.
- Talk to the person as you would talk to anyone else and speak in your regular tone of voice.
- Be confident and reassuring. Listen carefully and work with your customer to meet their needs.
- Use plain, clear language; avoid complex ideas and jargon.
- Speak in a calm manner and present one thought at a time.
- Repeat using different words if you are not understood.
- Pay attention to non-verbal cues.

## Support Persons

Support persons can go anywhere with a person with a disability to help them with communication, mobility, personal care, medical needs or access to service. The support person might be a family member, friend, volunteer or paid personnel. A support person in some cases does not necessarily need to have special training or qualifications.

### Customer Service Tips:

- A person with a disability may not always introduce his or her support person. If you are not sure, it is appropriate to ask, “Is this your interpreter or support person?”
- Always speak directly to your customer, not to their support person.
- Where possible, provide written materials both to the person with the disability and the support person.
- Do not discuss confidential matters in the presence of a support person without first getting the appropriate permission to do so.
- Where admission fees are charged, provide notice of whether the support person is required to pay the admission fee.



## Personal Assistive Devices

An assistive device is a tool or technology that enables a person with a disability to carry out everyday tasks and activities at home, at work or at play. Personal assistive devices can include wheelchairs, hearing aids, white canes, note taking devices, grasping devices, magnifiers or assistive listening devices. When we think of assistive devices, we often think of medical-type devices, however everyday products like smart phones and text messaging have opened a whole world of instant communication that was unavailable only a few years ago for people who are deaf, hard of hearing or have learning disabilities.

### Customer Service Tips:

- Consider the assistive device as an extension of the person's personal space. Do not touch or handle any assistive device without permission.
- Allow customers to keep and use their assistive devices as needed.
- Do not move assistive devices or equipment out of your customer's reach.
- Be prepared to tell your customer about any accessible features or assistive devices available at your location that are appropriate to their needs, for example: assistive listening devices, closed captioning or large print documents.

## Service Animals

Service animals are used by people with many kinds of disabilities and are specially trained to assist an individual with a disability by helping them function with greater self-sufficiency; prevent injuries; and summon help in a crisis. Service animals can be trained to open doors, pick up items, predict seizures, or alert someone to sounds such as a doorbell or telephone ring.

People are most familiar with guide dogs used by people who are blind, but not every disability is apparent. Be aware that many disabilities are invisible, such as deafness, epilepsy, autism, multiple sclerosis (M.S.), life-threatening allergies and other conditions. In some cases, you may not be able to determine if someone is disabled or the extent of their disability and under no circumstances is the service provider allowed to ask about the nature of the person's disability.



The Accessible Customer Service Standard under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act states that an animal is a service animal if it is readily identifiable that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to his or her disability. If it is not clear, the person may have a letter from a health care professional verifying that the animal is required for reasons relating to his or her disability, or an identification card from the Ministry of the Attorney General.

A person with a disability and their service animal can go to all areas that the public would normally be allowed to go. A kitchen where food is prepared is one of the few municipal environments a service animal would not be allowed.

**Customer Service Tips:**

- Pay attention to the owner, not the service animal.
- Do not pet, feed or distract a guide dog or service animal from doing its job.
- Service animals should be fed only by the user/owner.
- If the animal is off-harness, request permission before petting or talking to it.
- The user/owner must always be in full control of the service animal.
- It is not appropriate to ask the nature of the disability of the service animal handler.



## **Disruption of Service – Reasonable Notice**

### **What happens if we can't serve a person with a disability?**

It is possible that there will be disruptions in services, such as elevators under repair, renovations of buildings or outdoor spaces or technology that is temporarily unavailable. If a disruption in service is planned, it is important to provide reasonable notice.

Customers with disabilities may go to a lot of trouble to access services, such as booking transit or arranging for their support person to accompany them. By providing reasonable notice that a service is temporarily unavailable you can save the customer an unnecessary trip.

Notice can be provided by several methods and it is a good idea to use more than one method to inform individuals. A notice on the City of Burlington website, a broadcast announcement when calling the city by telephone, a notice in the paper or a temporary sign are all ways to inform customers of service disruptions.

## **Disruption of Service – Unexpected Disruptions**

In the event of an unexpected disruption in service, provide notice quickly and in as many ways as possible. Think about how you might offer another way to access the service when informing the customer who may be affected.

## Information and Communications

### Feedback

Receiving feedback on the accessibility of the city's goods, services, and facilities is an effective way to ensure we are meeting the needs of Burlington community members with disabilities. Residents can submit their feedback in person, by phone, by email, through the city's website or in writing. Anytime the city is asking the public for feedback, we must ensure that alternative formats or communication supports are available if requested.

### Accessible formats and communication supports

The city is pleased to provide any of its documents in an accessible format upon request. These requests could include formats such as items in large print, Braille, audio, plain language or electronic formats, and communication supports like sign language interpretation or real time captioning. The request form for Accessible Formats and Communication Supports is available on the city's website.

### Accessible websites and web content

The city's website and any content posted to the site must be accessible and comply with the Worldwide Web Consortium's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines [W3C WCAG].



## Employment

The city is dedicated to removing and preventing barriers to persons with disabilities when posting jobs, during the recruitment process, when implementing occupational health and safety programs and during the rehabilitation and placement of employees with disabilities who are returning to work.

The city can provide accessibility accommodations in all stages of employment. Workplace accommodations do not change performance expectations; they help our employees perform the functions of their jobs.



## Transportation

The transportation standard covers public transit and taxis and sets out specific requirements to make it easier for people with disabilities to travel. The city plans for accessibility at bus stops and shelters, provides priority seating on buses for people with disabilities, has equal fares for people with disabilities and free fare for people traveling with a person with a disability as a support person. Our buses also have audio and visual stop announcements to help people with vision and hearing loss.

### Did you know?

- Burlington Transit's entire fleet of conventional buses is accessible to people with disabilities.
- Specialized service is provided for people who cannot use the conventional transit service.
- To use specialized service, people must apply and meet the eligibility criteria.
- Burlington has on-demand accessible taxis.
- The city's Taxi bylaw prevents brokers and drivers from charging a higher meter rate to persons with disabilities and from charging a fee for the storage of a mobility device.
- It is against the law to deny taxi service to a person who uses a service animal.

## Design of Public Spaces

The Design of Public Spaces Standards applies to all new construction and major redeveloped public spaces. It includes outdoor elements such as exterior paths of travel, recreational trails, access to beaches, outdoor public eating areas, on-street and off-street parking and outdoor play spaces.

The standard also regulates some building elements associated with providing public access to service, such as service counters, fixed queuing lines and seating in waiting areas. The standard applies whether these elements are inside, for example, when paying a parking ticket or outside when accessing a refreshment concession.

## Conclusion

Accessibility is everyone's responsibility. As city staff and volunteers, we all have a role in making Burlington a community where people of all ages and abilities enjoy the same opportunities as we live, work, play, visit and invest in our city.

Thank you for completing your AODA training. You may wish to keep this booklet handy for future reference. It is important you register now that you have completed your training. Please complete and submit the form located on the next page



# Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation

## Training Registration

Please check the appropriate box:

Employee

Volunteer

First and Last Name (Please print):

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Dept. or Volunteer activity:

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By signing and submitting this registration card, I hereby confirm my acceptance of this booklet titled "Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR): Accessibility training booklet for staff and volunteers."

Further, I have read and understand the booklet material which constitutes completion of the mandatory Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation training as required under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and O. Reg. 191/11 Integrated Accessibility Standards.

Please register my compliance.

Signature:

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Date:

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**Employee** – Deliver to:

City of Burlington  
Human Resources Department  
426 Brant Street, P.O. Box 5013  
Burlington, ON L7R 3Z6  
Attn: AODA Mandatory Training  
Registration

**Volunteer** – Deliver to:

City of Burlington  
Volunteer Coordinator  
426 Brant Street, P.O. Box 5013  
Burlington, Ontario L7R-3Z6  
Attn: AODA Mandatory Training  
Registration

This volunteer training can also be completed online, through the city's volunteer software. For more information, visit [burlington.ca/volunteer](http://burlington.ca/volunteer)

If you have any questions, please contact: [volunteer@burlington.ca](mailto:volunteer@burlington.ca) or 905-335-7600 ext.7978.

[burlington.ca/accessibility](http://burlington.ca/accessibility)

