

AODA – Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, became law on June 13, 2005.

The purpose of the AODA is to develop, implement and enforce mandatory accessibility standards in key areas of daily living. The goal of the AODA is to achieve a fully accessible Ontario by 2025, through both physical environment and attitude.

ZEC's Accessibility Standards for Customer Service

General Purpose

This Accessibility Standards for Customer Service policy governs ZEC's provision of goods and services to members of the public or other third parties in accordance with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA) and the *Accessibility Standards for Customer Service*. This policy details ZEC's commitment to using reasonable efforts to ensure that it provides accessible customer service to people with various kinds of disabilities.

Core Principles

ZEC will use reasonable efforts to ensure that the provision of its goods and services are consistent with the principles of dignity, independence, integration, and equal opportunity by:

- Providing goods and services in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.
- Providing goods and services so that persons with disabilities are able to fully benefit from the same services, and in the same or similar way as persons without disabilities, unless an alternative measure is necessary to enable a person with a disability to obtain, use, or benefit from ZEC's goods and services.
- Giving people with disabilities the same opportunity equal to that of persons without disabilities to obtain, use, or benefit from ZEC's goods and services.

Use of Assistive Devices

ZEC permits persons with disabilities to use their personal assistive devices while on ZEC's premises to obtain, use, or benefit from ZEC's goods and services.

Communication

When communicating with a person with a disability, ZEC will do so in a manner that takes into account the person's disability.

Service Animals

ZEC welcomes people with disabilities and their service animals. Service animals are allowed on the parts of the premises that are open to the public.

If it is not readily apparent that the animal is a service animal, ZEC may ask the person with a disability for a letter from a physician confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to his or her disability.

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.

Support Persons

Persons with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person will be allowed to have the person accompany them on our premises.

ZEC may require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person while on ZEC premises in situations where it is deemed necessary to protect the health and safety of the person with a disability and/or others.

When support persons are required for ZEC sponsored meetings or events, the person with a disability will be required to provide his or her own support person. If there are fees associated with the meeting or event, the support person will be charged the regular fee. Advance notice of said fees will be provided if such circumstances exist.

Notice of Temporary Disruptions

ZEC will make reasonable efforts to provide notice to persons with disabilities in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in the facilities or services usually used by people with disabilities. The notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available.

The notice will be posted on ZEC's website (www.zec.ca) or in a pertinent location on the premises, or another method that is reasonable given the circumstances.

Training

ZEC will provide training to all employees, volunteers and others who deal with the public or other third parties on behalf of ZEC, and all those who are involved in the development of ZEC's policies, practices and procedures concerning the provision of goods and services to the public or other third parties.

The training will include the following topics:

- A review of the purposes of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* and the requirements of the customer service standard;
- Instructions on how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities;
- Instructions on 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 ZEC's premises that may help with the provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities;;
- What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing ZEC's goods and services;
- A review of ZEC's policies, practices and procedures relating to the provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities.

New staff, and staff who take on new duties as outlined above, will be trained as soon as it is reasonable after starting the job or duties. All applicable staff will receive initial

training and additional training when there are any changes to the policies, practices or procedures that relate to the provision of goods or services for people with disabilities.

ZEC will keep records of the training, including the dates on which training is provided and the names and number of individuals to whom it was provided.

Feedback Process

Feedback from members of the public regarding the way ZEC provides goods and services to people with disabilities can be made by telephone, in person, in writing, or via email.

All feedback will be reviewed for possible action that can be taken to improve ZEC services. In most cases, a response to the feedback will be provided within 30 working days. Any complaints received will be addressed according to ZEC's regular complaint management procedures.

Notice of Availability of Documents

ZEC's Accessibility Standards for Customer Service will be posted on ZEC's website (www.zec.ca)

Format of Documents

If ZEC is required to give a copy of any document available under the *Accessibility Standards for Customer Service* to a person with a disability, ZEC will provide the document, or the information contained within the document, in a format that takes into account the person's disability. Alternatively, ZEC and the person with a disability may agree on an alternate format for the document or information.