

# Accessibility and Customer Service Policy - simplified

Effective: January 2012

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**Sault Ste. Marie  
YMCA**

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## 1 Introduction / Objective

On June 13<sup>th</sup> 2005, the government of Ontario passed the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA). This act requires that businesses in Ontario be more accessible to people with disabilities. The main areas that need to be addressed are:

- The built environment;
- Customer service;
- Employment;
- Information and communication; and
- Transportation

## 2 Policy Statement

Sault Ste. Marie YMCA is committed on being a business that is accessible by everyone. People should be able to access, take part in, and enjoy our services regardless of a disability. In order to achieve this goal, Sault Ste. Marie YMCA will do its best to:

- Remove barriers (within reason);
- Deal with accessibility related suggestions quickly and properly; and
- Make sure that our policies, practices, and procedures support the values of dignity, independence, integration, and equal opportunity.

## 3 Training

Sault Ste. Marie YMCA will provide training based on this policy to all current and future staff that will be working with the general public. For current staff, this training will take place upon the completion and approval of this policy and training program. However, new staff will receive training during their orientation program. Sault Ste. Marie YMCA staff will also be informed of changes to this policy on an ongoing basis. When training is provided, notes of the date and who was present will be taken.

Training will include the following:

- The goal of the AODA and the requirements of the customer service standard;
- How to interact with people who have a disability and or require an assistive device, service animal or support person;
- How to use equipment or devices (i.e. TTY) that are available on Sault Ste. Marie YMCA property;
- What to do if a person with a disability is having trouble accessing goods or services;
- Information about Sault Ste. Marie YMCA's policies, practices and procedures relating to the customer service standard.

## 4 Definitions

The following words are used in this policy:

**Accommodation:** Reducing or removing barriers (within reason) that stop people with disabilities from using our services. For example, accommodation means allowing a person to bring their service animal inside even though animals are not normally allowed.

**Assistive Device:** A piece of equipment a person with a disability uses to help them with daily living.

Assistive devices include:

- Audio devices (i.e. hearing aids);
- Mobility devices (i.e. wheelchairs, crutches, white canes, or walker), and
- Speech making devices, screen readers
- Oxygen tank

\*Bell has a relay service from any phone for free (1-800-855-0511)

**Barrier:** Obstacles that make it difficult, sometimes impossible, for people with disabilities to use our services. This may include:

- Architectural or physical barriers (i.e. stairs);
- Information or communications barriers (when a person can't easily understand information);
- Attitudinal barriers (refusing to help someone);
- Technological barriers (when technology can't be changed to support different types of assistive devices); and or
- Business barriers (business policies, practices or procedures that go against or do not consider people with disabilities).

**Customer:** A person who uses Sault Ste. Marie YMCA services.

**Disability:**

- Any degree of physical disability, infirmity, deformity or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness;
- A condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability;
- A learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language;
- A mental disorder; or
- An injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997.

**Service Animal:** Any animal that helps a person with a disability do everyday tasks.

**Support Person:** Is a person who helps someone with a disability do everyday tasks (i.e. talk, move, personal care, medical need, etc.).

## 6 Roles and Responsibilities

All supervisors and managers shall:

- Comply with this policy;
- Help staff in their program area(s) adjust to the terms of this policy;
- Provide staff and volunteers with training based on accessibility standards;
- Make sure that their program area(s) accommodate assistive devices, service animals and support person, as outlined under “Procedures for Assistive Devices, Service Animals & Support Persons”;
- Make sure that notice of temporary disruption is provided as outlined under “Notice of Temporary Disruptions”; and
- Reply to suggestions as outlined under “Suggestion Process”.

All staff, including volunteers, shall:

- Comply with this policy;
- Take part in the training program for accessibility standards; and
- Forward all suggestions that people may have to their direct supervisor or manager for handling.

All senior leaders shall:

- Comply with this policy
- Identify training needs business wide;
- Make sure that tools are in place to help managers achieve what is asked of them;
- Make sure that AODA reporting requirements on implementation of accessibility standards for customer service are completed and given to the Ontario government;
- Make sure that Sault Ste. Marie YMCA policies, practices, and procedures based on the AODA are available to anyone upon request;

## **7 Assistive Devices, Service Animals, Support Persons**

### **Use of Assistive Devices**

People with disabilities are allowed to use their own personal assistive devices while accessing Sault Ste. Marie YMCA programs or services at any location. Possible barriers to the use of assistive devices will be removed if possible.

\*Assistive devices are to be treated with respect and as part of the person's personal space. This means that approval must be given before assistance with regards to the assistive device is given.

### **Use of Service Animals**

People with disabilities are allowed to have their service animal with them while accessing Sault Ste. Marie YMCA programs or services at any location. However, this does not apply where animals are banned by law, (i.e. where food is served because it may affect the health and safety of other people). In these cases, other ways will be explored in attempts to provide service to the person with a disability.

When a person with a disability enters the building with a service animal, they shall be informed of the following:

- The service animal is to remain by their side at all times;
- Staff will not be involved in any part of care for the service animal (i.e. feeding, picking up after it). This is the duty of the person that needs the animal's service or the person's support person;
- If a person is unable to manage their service animal, a support person will be assigned until the animal is removed.

If it is not clear that an animal is a service animal, Sault Ste. Marie YMCA may:

- Ask if the animal is needed because of a disability;
- Ask what kind of work or tasks the animal has been trained to do; or
- Request a letter from a doctor or nurse confirming that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to their disability.

However, Sault Ste. Marie YMCA shall not ask about the cause or range of a person's disability.

\*Service animals are to be treated as part of the person's personal space. This means that they are not to be touched, pet or distracted while they are working.

## **Use of Support Persons**

People who require the assistance of a support person will be allowed to access our services with the support person.

In most cases there will be no program fee for the support person, provided that the support person remains beside the person with a disability at all times. However, in cases where a program fee is charged and a portion of revenues go to another business, or costs such as food, the support person may have to pay. If this is the case, Sault Ste. Marie YMCA shall make sure that notice about the fee is given in advance.

Sault Ste. Marie YMCA may require a person with a disability to be with a support person in order to protect the health or safety of the person with a disability and or other people.

## **8 Notice of Temporary Disruptions**

Sault Ste. Marie YMCA is committed to informing people of any short-term disruptions of service at any of its locations. A short-term disruption is a planned or unplanned disruption to our property or services. This may include power outages, elevator repairs, and or program changes. Regardless of the type of disruption, managers will inform the people who it affects through postings, voicemail, or by any other sensible method. The notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, how long it is likely last, and information about any other services that are available instead.

## **9 Feedback Process**

Sault Ste. Marie YMCA is thankful for all the suggestions that it receives as it allows us to learn and improve as a business. Members, customers, parents, etc. are encouraged to bring forward a complaint, concern, or compliment by directly contacting a Sault Ste. Marie YMCA supervisor or manager. In addition, people are welcome to provide a suggestion through letters, telephone, and e-mail:

**Sault Ste. Marie YMCA**  
**235 McNabb Street**  
**Sault Ste. Marie, ON P6B 1Y3**

**Email: [info@sault.ymca.ca](mailto:info@sault.ymca.ca)**

**Tel: (705) 949.3133**

Suggestions given to Sault Ste. Marie YMCA staff that relates to accessibility or human rights will be forwarded to the correct supervisor or manager.

## 10 Resources Available

This document will be available upon request in different formats that takes into account persons with disabilities.

Also, the following are sources for information about the AODA:

In addition, the following are sources for information about Accessibility Standards in Ontario:

- [www.e-laws.gov.on.ca](http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca)
- [www.accesson.ca](http://www.accesson.ca)