

## Accessibility Standards: Customer Service Policy Directive

**Effective Date:** January 1, 2012

**Last Revision:** January 1, 2012

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### 1. BACKGROUND

The **Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (“AODA”)** is a provincial act with the purpose of developing, implementing and enforcing accessibility standards in order to achieve accessibility for persons with disabilities with respect to goods, services, facilities, accommodation, employment, buildings, structures and premises.

Under the AODA, Ontario Regulation 429/07 entitled “Accessibility Standards for Customer Service” came into force on January 1, 2008. This Regulation establishes accessibility standards specific to customer service for public sector organizations and other persons or organizations that provide goods and services to members of the public. Designated public sector organizations, including Hydro One Inc., must comply with this standard as of January 1, 2012.

### 2. PURPOSE

This policy directive is drafted in accordance with the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service (Ontario Regulation 429/07) under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act and addresses the following:

- provision of goods and services;
- assistive devices;
- service animals;
- support persons;
- notice of temporary disruptions in services and facilities;
- training;
- feedback process; and
- notice of availability of documents.

### 3. DEFINITIONS

**Customer** (as defined in Hydro One Inc. Conditions of Service)

Customer, means a person that has contracted for or intends to contract for connection of a building or Generation Facility. This includes developers of residential or commercial subdivisions, industrial companies and Local Distribution Companies.

*(Note: Includes Transmission-connected customers)*

## **Disability**

- 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*.

## **4. APPLICATION**

This policy directive applies to all persons who deal with members of the public or other third parties on behalf of Hydro One Inc., whether the person does so as an employee, agent, contractor, consultant or otherwise and to all persons who participate in developing the Company's policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of goods and services to members of the public or third parties.

Customer interaction at Hydro One Inc. is primarily conducted via phone, online, email, mail or fax. Our Field staff does have regular face-to-face interaction with customers.

Hydro One Inc. offices are not open to the public and therefore, physical access for persons with physical disabilities is not in scope of this policy directive.

Hydro One Inc. Field Business Centres are not promoted as 'walk-in' centres and customers are encouraged to use the Company's standard customer service channels. Only in exception cases, will a request be accommodated at the employee's discretion and in compliance with safety regulations.

## **5. POLICY DIRECTIVE**

### **a) Provision of Goods and Services**

Hydro One Inc. is committed to providing excellent customer service. This policy directive establishes that goods and services shall be provided to persons with disabilities in accordance with the following key principles:

- Services are provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.
- The provision of goods or services to persons with disabilities and others will be integrated, unless an alternative measure is necessary, whether temporarily or on a permanent basis, to enable a person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the goods or services.

- Persons with disabilities must be given an opportunity equal to that given to others to obtain, use and benefit from the goods and services.

## **b) Assistive Devices**

A person with a disability will be permitted to obtain, use or benefit from goods or services through the use of their own assistive devices.

In the event a person utilizing an assistive device is hindered from accessing goods or services, Hydro One Inc. will offer the person other reasonable measures, to assist the person with obtaining, using and benefiting from the Company's goods and services, where Hydro One Inc. has other such measures available. The other measures will be offered according to the situation and with the agreement of the person attempting to access the good or service.

It is the responsibility of the person with a disability to ensure that his or her assistive device is operated in a safe and controlled manner at all times.

## **c) Support Persons**

In situations where confidential information of a customer with a disability is to be discussed, Hydro One Inc. may require a statement of permission and/or consent from the customer with a disability allowing their support person to be present.

## **d) Notice of Temporary Disruptions in Services**

Hydro One Inc. will provide customers with notice in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in services. The notice will include the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative access that may be available. Notice of such disruption will be posted on the Hydro One website, and if possible, at the access point to customer services (i.e. Call Centre).

## **e) Training**

Hydro One Inc. will ensure that all employees to whom this policy directive applies to, receive training as required by the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service (Ontario Regulation 429/07). This includes staff that deal with the public or other third parties, as well as those involved in developing customer service policies, practices and procedures.

The content of the training will include:

- a review of the purposes of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA);
- a review of the requirements of Regulation 429/07 on Standards for Customer Services;
- how to interact and communicate with customers who have various types of disabilities;
- how to interact with customers with disabilities who require the assistance of assistive devices, service animals and support persons;
- what to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing Hydro One Inc. goods and services.

Training shall be provided every 3 years and new staff shall be trained as part of orientation and service training. On-going training shall be provided as changes are introduced to Hydro One Inc. policies, procedures and practices governing the provision of goods and services to customers with disabilities and to the assistive devices, equipment or technology made available by the Company.

Hydro One Inc. will maintain records of the required training. These records will include the number of individuals trained and the dates on which training occurred.

## **f) Feedback**

Hydro One Inc. is committed to providing high quality goods and services to all members of the public it serves.

Feedback from a member of the public may be provided in the manner deemed most convenient by the person providing the feedback including by phone, online, in writing or by fax.

Information about the feedback process is available to the public and notice of the process is posted on the Hydro One Inc. website ([www.HydroOne.com](http://www.HydroOne.com)).

## **g) Notice of Availability of Documents**

Notice of the availability of this policy directive as required by the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service will be posted on the Hydro One Inc. website ([www.HydroOne.com](http://www.HydroOne.com)).

If this policy is required in an alternative format, the person shall contact Hydro One Inc. via phone, online, in writing or by fax to initiate this request.