

ACCESSIBLE CUSTOMER SERVICE POLICY

Policy Statement

Wm J. Trotter & Associates (WJTA) is committed to excellence in servicing all clients, including people with disabilities. We shall use reasonable efforts to ensure that our policies and practices are consistent with the following principles:

1. Our services will be provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.
2. If a person with disabilities wishes to access our services, we will take the necessary steps to ensure that they are able to do so.
3. Persons with disabilities will be given an opportunity equal to that given others to obtain, use and benefit from our services.

Practices discussed in this policy reflect requirements set out in provincial legislation: *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)*.

AODA Definitions

- **Accessibility Standard:**
An accessibility standard is a rule that persons and organizations have to follow to identify, remove and prevent barriers.
- **Barrier:**
Anything that keeps a person with a disability from participating fully in society because of his or her disability.
- **Disability:**
The AODA uses the Ontario Human Rights Code definition of “disability” which is:
 - 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
 - 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 (“handicap”).

Assistive Devices

We will strive to ensure that our staff is trained and familiar with various assistive devices that may be used by clients with disabilities while accessing our services.

Communication

We will make every effort to communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability.

Service Animals

We welcome people with disabilities and their service animals. Service animals are welcome on our premises in the areas open to the public.

Support Persons

A person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person will be allowed to have that person accompany them on our premises.

Alternate Models of Service

If a person with a disability cannot be accommodated on our premises due to the physical layout of our offices or other physical barriers, we will take the following actions:

- Ask the person if they have a preference how to proceed. For example, they may have access to an assistive device at their home which could enable us to communicate and interact with them for the purpose of providing our service (for example - telecommunications equipment with TTY service for a person who is deaf).
- Offer to attend at their home or other location of their choice to provide our services.
- Offer to work with a third party of their choice to facilitate provision of our services.

Training for Staff

WJTA will provide training initially to all employees, to new employees within one week of their start date and when changes are made to this policy.

Training will include:

- An overview of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and the requirements of the customer service standard.
- WJTA's policy related to 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.
- What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing WJTA's services.

All employees of Wm J. Trotter & Associates are governed by this policy and are required to review it annually. Acknowledgement of this review is made in the "Annual Confirmation to be Signed by Staff" document.

Feedback Process

Clients who wish to provide feedback on the way WJTA provides service to people with disabilities can speak directly to the Office Manager or send an email through the link available on our website.

All feedback will be directed to the Office Manager. Clients can expect to hear back within 15 business days. Complaints will be addressed according to WJTA's standard procedures as outlined in the Quality Assurance Manual.

Notice of Availability

WJTA's Accessible Customer Service Policy is posted on our website. Copies are available upon request by clients.

Modifications to This or Other Policies

Any policy of WJTA's that does not respect or promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities will be modified or removed.