



## Integrated Accessibility Standards

### Accessible Customer Service Procedure

Department:	Clerk's Department	
Section / Function:	Accessibility	Procedure No.: A-001
Approval Level:	Senior Management	
Effective Date:	January 1, 2010	
Revision Date:	November 6, 2016	Council Resolution: CW212-2016

#### 1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 This Procedure implements the Township of Essa's Accessible Customer Service Policy as required under the Integrated Accessibility Standards Policy (HR13-01).
- 1.2 This Procedure is intended to provide assistance to Township employees with respect to providing exemplary customer service and equal opportunity to persons with disabilities, assisting all persons in benefitting from the Township's goods, services and facilities in an equal manner that respects each individual's dignity and independence.
- 1.3 This Procedure assists this municipality in the requirements to comply with Part IV.2 ("Customer Service Standard" specifically sections 80.45 to 80.51) of Ontario Regulation 191/11 made under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA).

#### 2.0 Application

- 2.1 This Procedure applies to every Township employee and volunteer that provides customer service on behalf of the Corporation of the Township of Essa to the public with respect to its goods, services and facilities.

#### 3.0 Definitions / Acronyms (as required)

**Disability** – as defined by the Ontario Human Rights Code means:

- (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 coordination, 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.

**Goods, Services and/or Facilities** – means any one or more of supplies, personal property, construction materials, construction services, insurance, employee benefits, construction of assets and maintenance and service contracts. “Facilities” means a building or place that provides a particular good and/or service.

**Guide Dog** – Means a guide dog as defined in Section 1 of the *Blind Persons’ Rights Act*.

**Service Animal** – An animal that is readily apparent that is used by a person with a disability for reasons relating to his or her disability; or, an animal for which a person with a disability can provide a letter from a regulated health professional confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability.

**Support Person:** In relation to a person with a disability, another person who accompanies the person with the disability in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs or with access to goods, services or facilities.

## **4.0 Provision of Goods, Services and Facilities**

### **4.1 Goods, Services and Facilities**

Staff shall provide goods, services or facilities to the requestor in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of the person making the request, in a timely manner.

Staff shall ensure that persons with disabilities are given an opportunity equal to that given to others to obtain, use and benefit from the same goods, services or facilities, at no additional charge.

### **4.2 Communication**

Township staff shall ensure that when communicating with a person with a disability that their disability is taken into consideration.

Township staff shall speak/communicate directly with the customer as opposed to communicating with the requestor’s support person.

If communication supports are not readily available, staff will work one-on-one with the customer making the request, to assist them with respect to obtaining the necessary goods, services and facilities.

Staff will offer to communicate with customers by email, hand-written notes, and/or TTY if telephone communication is not suitable to accommodate their needs, or is not readily available. Staff will communicate in the manner that best suits the needs of the requestor, if available, upon request.

Staff shall provide the requestor with the necessary information/documentation in an accessible or alternative manner, upon request.

## **5.0 Use of Assistive Devices**

The Township of Essa is committed to serving people with disabilities who use assistive devices to obtain, use or benefit from our goods and services.

Staff shall ensure that a person with a disability is permitted to enter the premises with the device and to use the device to access the Township's goods and services.

Staff shall ensure that persons with disabilities are aware of assistive devices available on the Township's premises.

Where Township devices are available, appropriate employees within the applicable area will be knowledgeable of the presence and trained in the use of the assistive devices and provide assistance to persons with disabilities upon request (ie: TTY, magnifiers, etc.)

In the event that a person with a disability is hindered from accessing the Township's goods, services or facilities through their own assistive device(s), and only after consulting with the customer, staff will make every effort to accommodate the customer by using any other assistive measures available.

Staff is instructed to not lean or reach over an assistive device.

Where possible, staff is instructed to remove potential barriers to the use of assistive devices.

## **6.0 Use of Service Animals**

The Township of Essa is committed to welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal on the parts of our premises that are open to the public.

Staff shall permit service animals into all facilities and meeting rooms that are open to the public and staff shall allow the service animal to be kept with the person with the disability, unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law from the premises.

Staff can readily identify service animals as one that is being used by a person for reasons relating to the person's disability, as a result of visual indicators such as a vest or harness worn by the animal.

In the event that staff cannot easily identify the animal as that being a "service animal", staff may request the person to provide documentation from one of the following regulated health professionals, confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability:

- A member of the College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists of Ontario

- A member of the College of Chiropractors of Ontario
- A member of the College of Nurses of Ontario
- A member of the College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario
- A member of the College of Optometrists of Ontario
- A member of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario
- A member of the College of Physiotherapists of Ontario
- A member of the College of Psychologists of Ontario
- A member of the College of Registered Psychotherapists and Registered Mental Health Therapists of Ontario

In the event that a service animal is excluded by law from the premises, Township staff shall ensure that other measures are available to enable the person with the disability to obtain, use or benefit from the Township's goods, services and facilities. Where a service animal is excluded by law from the premises, the reason why the animal is excluded shall be explained to the person with the disability

If it cannot be easily identified that the animal is a service animal, staff may ask the person to provide documentation from a regulated health professional. This documentation must confirm that the person with the service animal needs that particular service animal for reasons relating to their disability.

Staff will advise the owners of the service animal as to the location of fresh water for the service animal, and the location of where the animal may be walked to relieve themselves.

At all times, it is the responsibility of the person with the disability to be in care and control of the service animal.

Every employee shall use reasonable efforts to allow persons with disabilities to be accompanied by their service animals.

When the service animal is unruly or disruptive (i.e. jumping, biting, growling or other harmful or potentially harmful behavior), an employee may ask the person with the disability to remove the animal from the area or refuse to provide goods or services. Other reasonable arrangements to provide goods and services shall be explored with the assistance of the person with the disability.

Employees will not touch, handle, feed or speak to the service animal.

## **7.0 Use of Support Persons**

### **7.1 Support Person**

As the Township of Essa provides goods, services and facilities to members of the public in a manner that is equal to all, the Township welcomes people with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person to participate in the goods, services and facilities that it provides to the public.

As such, staff will allow any person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person to enter the Township of Essa's premises with his or her support

person. At no time will a person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person be prevented from having access to his/her support person while on our premises.

Employees will communicate directly with the person with the disability and not the support person unless otherwise instructed.

Confidential information (i.e. tax information, personal information) that is discussed in the presence of a support person will be identified as such prior to the information being released, and the person with the disability will determine if the information can be released in the presence of the support person.

## **7.2 Request for Support Person**

The Township of Essa may require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person while on the Township's premises, but only if, after consulting with the person with the disability and considering the available evidence, the Township determines that:

- A support person is necessary to protect the health or safety of the person with a disability or the health or safety of others on the premises; and
- There is no other reasonable way to protect the health or safety of the person with a disability and the health or safety of others on the premises.

## **7.3 Fees for Support Person(s)**

Provided that the person with a disability is a paying participant, where fees apply, then fees will not be charged for support persons for admission to the Township of Essa's premises, events or programs.

If the Township of Essa requests that a person with a disability be accompanied by a support person, then the Township shall waive payment of the amount, if any, payable in respect of the support person's admission to the premises, event or program, or in connection with the support person's presence on the premises.

Township staff shall notify persons to whom it provides goods, services or facilities of the fees by including a section in the Township's Fee Schedule.

## **8.0 Notice of Temporary Disruptions**

The Township of Essa will provide customers with notice in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in the facilities or services usually used by people with disabilities. This 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 placed on the Township's website, as well as all public entrances and service counters on the affected premises and the Township municipal office.

As a guide, sample notices are attached to this policy as Appendix 'A' & 'B'.

## **9.0 Feedback**

The ultimate goal of the Township of Essa is to meet and surpass customer expectations while serving customers with disabilities. Comments on our services regarding how well those expectations are being met are welcome and appreciated.

Feedback regarding the way the Township of Essa provides goods and services to people with disabilities can be made by emailing [feedback@essatownship.on.ca](mailto:feedback@essatownship.on.ca), verbally by contacting the Clerk at 705-424-9770 extension 116, or by completing the feedback form (see Appendix C).

All feedback will be directed to the Township Municipal Clerk and customers can expect to receive confirmation of receipt of their 'Request for Feedback' within five (5) business days provided that their contact information is provided as part of their request.

## **10.0 Notice of Availability of Documents**

This policy and any other document deemed to be a key in the delivery of goods and service will be made available upon request in a format that takes into account the person's disability to any person to whom it provides goods or services, in a timely manner, and at a cost that is no more than the regular cost charged to other persons. Township staff shall consult with the person making the request in order to determine the most suitable format or communication support..

Notwithstanding the above, the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation Policy (HR13-01) will be made available on the Township's website and made available to any person to whom it provides goods or services by any other method or format as is reasonable in the circumstances, upon request.

## **11.0 Training**

In addition to the requirement in Section 7 of Ontario Regulation 119/11, the Township shall ensure that the following persons receive training about the Township's provision of goods, services or facilities, as the case may be, to persons with disabilities:

- Every person who is an employee of, or a volunteer with, the Township of Essa
- Every person who participates in developing the Township's policies
- Every other person who provides goods, services or facilities on behalf of the Township of Essa.

The training shall include a review of the purposes of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), as amended, as well as the Township's Document entitled "Accessible Customer Service: Best Practices Tips and Procedures" (Appendix D), which includes information relating to:

- How to interact with persons with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a guide dog or other service animal, or the assistance of a support person
- How to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disabilities
- How to use equipment or devices available on the Township's premises or otherwise provided by the Township that may help with the provision of goods, services or facilities to a person with a disability
- What to do if a person with a particular type of disability is having difficulty accessing the Township's goods, services or facilities.

The training shall take place as soon as is practicable, upon commencement of employment with the Township of Essa.

Training will be provided on an ongoing basis in respect of any changes to the Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulation Policy, and records of the training provided shall be kept, including the dates on which the training was provided and the number of individuals to who it was provided.

The content of the training shall be posted on the Township's website.

## **12.0 Pertinent Resources**

*Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA)*

*Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA), as amended*

*Accessibility Standards for Customer Service (Ontario Regulation 191/11 as amended by O. Regulation 165/16)*

*Integrated Accessibility Standard (Ontario Regulation 191/11)*

*Township of Essa's Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (HR13-01)*

*Township of Essa's Information and Communication Policy (A-002)*

*Township of Essa's Employment Standard Policy (A-003)*

### **Attachments:**

Appendix A – Notice of Schedule Service Disruption

Appendix B – Notice of Unexpected Service Disruption

Appendix C – Customer Feedback Form

Appendix D – Accessible Customer Service “Best Practices Tips and Procedures”

**Appendix 'A'**

**Notice of Scheduled Service Disruption**



**NOTICE OF SCHEDULED  
SERVICE DISRUPTION**

**There will be a scheduled service disruption at the following location:**

---

**The disruption will be from \_\_\_\_\_ until \_\_\_\_\_.**

On behalf of the Township of Essa we would like to thank you for your patience in the matter and apologize for any inconvenience.

Thank you.

Management

**Appendix 'B'**

**Notice of Unexpected Service Disruption**



**NOTICE OF UNEXPECTED  
SERVICE DISRUPTION**

**There is currently an unexpected service disruption at the following location:**

---

**The estimated time of the service disruption will be from \_\_\_\_\_ until \_\_\_\_\_.**

On behalf of the Township of Essa we would like to thank you for your patience in the matter and apologize for any inconvenience.

Thank you.

Management

**Appendix 'C'**

**Customer Feedback Form**



**Customer Feedback Form**

Thank you for visiting the Township of Essa. We value all of our customers and strive to meet everyone's needs.

Please tell us the date and time of your visit:

\_\_\_\_\_

Did we respond to your customer service needs today?  YES  NO

Was our customer service provided to you in an accessible manner?

YES  SOMEWHAT  NO (please explain below)

Did you have any problems accessing our goods and services?

YES (please explain below)  SOMEWHAT (please explain below)

NO

Please add any other comments you may have:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Contact information (optional)\*:

Thank you.

Management

Date Received: \_\_\_\_\_ Date Action Taken: \_\_\_\_\_

Action Taken: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix "D"



### Accessible Customer Service

### Best Practices - Tips and Procedures

## Inclusive vs. Exclusive/Incorrect Language

<b>INSTEAD OF</b>	<b>USE</b>
<i>the visually impaired/blind</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>person who is blind</b></li><li>• <b>person who has a visual impairment</b></li></ul>
<i>the aged/elderly</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>seniors</b></li></ul>
<i>disabled community</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>disability community</b></li></ul>
<i>disabled, handicapped crippled</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>person with a disability</b></li><li>• <b>people with disabilities</b></li></ul>
<i>lame</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>person who has a mobility impairment</b></li></ul>
<i>physically challenged</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>person with a physical disability</b></li></ul>
<i>deaf, mute, dumb, hearing impaired</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>person who is deaf...hard of hearing</b></li></ul>
<i>confined to a wheelchair wheelchair bound</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>person who uses a wheelchair</b></li></ul>
<i>insane, crazy, demented, deviant, loony, lunatic, mad, maniac, mental mentally diseased, neurotic, nut case, pyscho, schizophrenic, unsound mind</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>person with a mental health disability</b></li><li>• <b>person who has schizophrenia</b></li><li>• <b>person who has depression</b></li></ul>
<i>mentally retarded, defective, feeble minded, idiot, imbecile, moron, simple, mongoloid</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>person with an intellectual disability</b></li><li>• <b>person who is intellectually impaired</b></li></ul>

INSTEAD OF	USE
<i>suffers from, afflicted by, stricken with, victim of</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>person with a disability or mobility impairment</b></li><li>• <b>person who has multiple sclerosis, etc.</b></li></ul>

## **PHYSICAL DISABILITIES**

Physical disabilities include a range of functional limitations from minor difficulties in moving or coordinating one part of the body, through muscle weakness, tremors and paralysis. Physical disabilities can be congenital such as Muscular Dystrophy; or acquired, such as tendonitis.

A physical disability may affect an individual's ability to:

- Perform manual tasks such as holding a pen, turning a key or grip a door knob
- Move around independently
- Control the speed or coordination of movements reach, pull or manipulate objects
- Have strength or endurance

### **Best Practices Tips and Procedures for Customer Service**

There are many types and degrees of physical disabilities and not all require a wheelchair. It may be difficult to identify a person with a physical disability.

The following procedures are to be followed in this situation:

- Provide seating for those who cannot stand in line
- People with physical disabilities often have their own way of doing things so ask first before you help
- Be patient as customers will identify their needs to you
- Speak normally and directly to your customer
- Do not speak to the support person accompanying them unless the situation warrants.

Here are some tips on serving customers who have physical disabilities:

- Wheelchairs and other mobility devices are part of a person's personal space, do not touch, move or lean on them
- Provide your customer information about accessible features of the immediate environment (automatic doors, washrooms, etc.)
- Keeps ramps and corridors free of clutter
- If a surface is too high or wide, step around it to provide service

## **HEARING DISABILITIES**

Hearing loss or disabilities may cause problems in distinguishing certain frequencies, sounds or words. A person who is deaf, deafened or hard-of- hearing may be unable to:

- Use a public telephone
- Understand speech in a noisy environment
- Pronounce words clearly enough to be understood by strangers

### **Best Practices and Procedures for Customer Service:**

Like other disabilities, hearing disabilities have a wide variety of degrees. Remember, customers who are deaf or hard of hearing may require assistive devices when communicating.

The following procedures are to be followed in this situation:

- Always ask how you can help. Do not shout. Speak clearly.
- Any personal matters should be discussed in a private room to avoid other people overhearing.
- Deaf people may use a sign language interpreter to communicate – always direct your attention to the Deaf Person – not the interpreter.
- If they have a service animal – do not touch it – the service animal is working and has to pay attention at all times

Here are some tips on servicing customers with hearing disabilities:

- Attract the customer's attention before speaking. The best way is a gentle touch on the shoulder or gently waving your hand.
- Be clear and precise when giving instructions and be prepared to repeat or rephrase if necessary.
- Face the person directly and keep all objects away from your face and mouth.
- If the person uses a hearing aid, try to speak in an area with few competing sounds
- If required, write notes back and forth to share information

## **DEAF-BLINDNESS DISABILITIES**

Deaf-blindness is a combination of hearing and vision loss. The result for a person who is deaf-blind is significant difficulty assessing information and performing daily activities. Deaf-blindness interferes with communication, learning, orientation and mobility. People who are deaf-blind communicate using various sign language systems, Braille, telephone devices, communication boards and any combination thereof. Many people who are deaf-blind use the services of an Intervener/Personal Support Person who relays information and facilitates auditory and visual information and act as a sighted guides.

### **Best Practices and procedures for Customer Service:**

Most people who are deaf-blind will be accompanied by an intervener, personal support person or professional who helps with communicating.

Interveners are trained in special sign language that involves touching the hands of the client in a two-hand, manual alphabet or finger spelling, and may guide and interpret for their client.

The following procedures are to be followed in this situation:

- A customer who is deaf-blind is likely to explain to you how to communicate with them or give you an assistance card or a note explaining how to communicate with them.
- Do not touch or address the service animals – they are working and have to pay attention at all times.
- Direct your attention to your customer, not the Intervener.

Here are some tips on serving customers who are deaf-blind:

- Do not assume what a person can or cannot do. Some people who are deaf-blind have some sight or hearing, while others have neither.
- Never touch a person who is deaf-blind suddenly or without permission unless it's an emergency.
- Understand that communication can take some time – be patient.

## **VISION DISABILITIES**

Vision disabilities reduce one's ability to see clearly. Very few people are totally blind. Many have limited vision such as tunnel vision, where a person has a loss of peripheral or side vision, or a lack of central vision, which means they cannot see straight ahead. Some can see the outline of objects while others can see the direction of light.

Vision loss may result in:

- Difficulty reading or seeing faces
- Difficulty maneuvering in unfamiliar places
- Inability to differentiate colours or distances A narrow field of vision
- The need for bright light or contrast
- Night blindness

### **Best Practices and procedures for Customer Service**

Vision disabilities may restrict your customers' abilities to read signs, locate landmarks or see hazards. In some cases, it may be difficult to tell if a person has a vision disability. Others may use a service animal or white cane.

The following procedures are to be followed in this situation:

- Verbally identify yourself before making physical contact
- If the person uses a service animal – do not touch or approach the animal– it is working
- Verbally describe the setting, form, location as necessary
- Offer your arm to guide the person.
- Do not grab or pull.
- Direct the person from the elbow.
- Never touch your customer without asking permission, unless it is an emergency
- Do not leave your customer in the middle of a room.
- Show them to a chair, or guide them to a comfortable location.
- Do not walk away without saying good-bye

## **INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES**

Intellectual disabilities affect a person's ability to think and reason. It may be caused by genetic factors such as Down's Syndrome, exposure to environmental toxins, such as Fetal Alcohol syndrome, brain trauma or psychiatric disorders. A person with an intellectual disorder may have difficulty with:

- Understanding spoken and written information
- Conceptual information
- Perception of sensory information
- Memory

### **Best practices and procedures for Customer Service**

People with intellectual or developmental disabilities may have difficulty doing many things most of us take for granted. These disabilities can mildly or profoundly limit one's ability to learn. You may not be able to know that someone has this disability unless you are told, or you notice the way people act, ask questions or use body language.

As much as possible, treat your customers with an intellectual or developmental disability like anyone else. They may understand more than you think, and they will appreciate you treating them with respect.

The following procedures are to be followed in this situation: Use clean, simple language

- Provide one piece of information at a time
- Speak directly to your customer, not to their support person
- Be patient and verify your understanding (seek confirmation)

Here are some tips on serving customers who have an intellectual or developmental disability:

- do not assume what a person can or cannot do
- be prepared to explain and provide examples regarding information remember that the person is an adult and unless you are informed otherwise, can make their own decision
- If you cannot understand what is being said do not pretend. Just ask again.

## **SPEECH DISABILITIES**

Speech disabilities involve the partial or total loss of the ability to speak. Typical disabilities include problems with:

- Pronunciation
- Pitch and loudness
- Hoarseness or breathiness
- Stuttering or slurring

### **Best practices and procedures for Customer Service**

Some people have problems communicating. It could be the result of cerebral palsy, hearing loss, or another condition that makes it difficult to pronounce words, causes slurring or stuttering, or not being able to express one's self or understand written or spoken language. Some people who have severe difficulties may use communication boards or other assistive devices.

The following procedures are to be followed in this situation:

- Give the person your full attention. Do not interrupt until they finish their sentence.
- Ask them to repeat as necessary or to write their message. Verify your understanding (seek confirmation).

Here are some tips on serving customers with speech or language impairments:

- If possible, communicate in a quiet environment
- Patience, respect and willingness to find a way to communicate are the best tools

## **LEARNING DISABILITIES**

Learning disabilities include a range of disorders that effect verbal and non- verbal information acquisitions, retention, understanding and processing. People with a learning disability have average or above-average intelligence, but take in and process information and express knowledge in different ways. Learning disabilities can result in:

- Difficulties in reading Problem solving
- Time management
- Way finding
- Processing information

### **Best Practices and procedures for Customer Services**

The following procedures are to be followed in this situation:

- Ask how you may assist them.
- Offer an alternative form of communication if required.
- Break up the information (no lengthy conversations).

Here are some tips to remember when dealing with those who have learning disabilities:

- Learning disabilities are generally invisible and the ability to function varies greatly – respond to any request for verbal information, assistance in filling in forms and so on with courtesy.
- Allow extra time to complete tasks as necessary.
- Be willing to provide the information “to go” so they may review it at home
- Use straightforward language if at all possible

## **MENTAL HEALTH DISABILITIES**

Mental Health disabilities include a range of disorders; however, there are three main health disabilities:

- Anxiety
- Mood
- Behavioural

### **Best Practices and procedures for Customer Services**

The following procedures are to be followed in this situation:

- Ask how you may assist them.
- Offer an alternative form of communication if required.
- Break up the information (no lengthy conversations).
- Treat each person as an individual.
- Ask what would make him/her the most comfortable and respect his/her needs to the maximum extent possible.
- Try to reduce stress and anxiety in situations

Here are some tips to remember when dealing with those who have mental health disabilities:

- Stay calm and courteous, even if the customer exhibits unusual behavior
- Focus on the service they need and how you can help.

## **OTHER DISABILITIES TO BE AWARE OF**

**Smell disabilities** can involve the inability to sense smells or a hypersensitivity to odours and smells. A person with a smelling disability may have allergies to certain odours, scents or chemicals or may be unable to identify dangerous gases, smoke, fumes and spoiled food.

**Touch disabilities** can affect a person's ability to sense texture, temperature, and vibration to pressure. Touch sensations may be reduced or heightened resulting in a hypersensitivity to touch, temperature, or the opposite, numbness and the inability to feel touch sensations.

**Taste disabilities** can limit the experience of the four primary taste sensations; sweet, bitter, salty and sour. A person with a taste disability may be unable to identify spoiled food or noxious substances.

**Other disabilities** result from a range of other conditions, accidents, illness and diseases including ALS, asthma, diabetes, cancer, HIV/AIDs, environmental sensitivities, seizure disorders, heart disease, stroke and joint replacement.

**IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER – Disabilities are not always visible or easy to distinguish.**

## **HOW TO INTERACT WITH INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE A SERVICE ANIMAL OR SUPPORT PERSON**

Service animals offer independence and security to many people with various disabilities. Some laws generally prohibit animals in certain areas (such as food preparation areas); however, service animals are permitted in most public situations.

Support people assist people with disabilities in a variety of ways, by assisting with communication such as an intervener sign language interpreter, or a personal support worker providing physical assistance. A support person may also be a friend or relative that will assist and support the customer.

### **Best Practices and procedures for Customer Services**

The following procedures are to be followed in this situation:

- Every employee shall use reasonable efforts to allow persons with disabilities to use their own service animal or support person to access goods and services
- Every employee shall allow persons with disabilities to be accompanied by their guide dog or service animal unless the animal is excluded by law. Where an animal is excluded by law from a premise, the reason why the animal is excluded shall be explained to the person with the disability. Other reasonable arrangements to provide goods and services shall be explored with the assistance of the person with the disability.
- When a service animal is unruly or disruptive (jumping on people, biting, or other harmful behaviour) an employee may ask the person with the disability to remove the animal from the area or refuse access to goods and services. Other reasonable arrangements to provide goods and services shall be explored with the assistance of the person with the disability.
- Persons with disabilities may be accompanied by their support person while accessing goods and services – speak to the person with the disability directly NOT the support person.
- If a support person is necessary to protect the Health & Safety of the person with a disability or the health and safety of others on the premise
- the person with a disability may be requested to make arrangements for (and cover the costs) for a support person.

## FEEDBACK PROCESS

The ultimate goal of the Township of Essa is to meet and surpass customer expectations while serving customers with disabilities.

### Ways Feedback May Be Received

Feedback regarding the way the Township of Essa provides goods and services to people with disabilities can be made by:

- Email \*
- Verbally \*, and
- Customer Feedback Form

*\* Feedback to be recorded by the Township Clerk to the "Customer Feedback Form".*

### What To Do With Feedback Once Received

- a) All feedback will be directed to the Township Clerk.
- b) If contact information is provided, confirmation of receipt of their "Request for Feedback" will be provided within **five business days**.
- c) If the feedback pertains to a particular department the feedback will be reviewed by the Clerk with the respective Department Head. Alternatively, if the feedback is more general in nature, it will be reviewed by the Clerk with the Chief Administrative Officer.
- d) The date of the review will be recorded on the Form.
- e) If revisions to procedures or customer service result from the feedback then any revisions will be recorded on the Form. These revisions will be implemented within 30 days of the review with the respective Department Head.

OR

If upon review of the feedback provided significant investment is required (financial/capital, physical) the matter will be brought forward to Department Heads where, if it is feasible to remedy the barrier, a plan will be developed to address the situation. This plan will include timeline, costs, and a reason why the barrier may not be remedied within 30 days.

- f) Feedback and Forms received will be kept on record per the Township's records retention by-law.
- g) If contact information is provided, the requestor will be provided with the results/action taken as a result of their feedback.

## **ASSISTIVE DEVICES**

The term “assistive devices” refers to an auxiliary aid such as communication aids, cognition aids, personal mobility aids and medical aids.

People with disabilities may bring “assistive devices” with them in order to access services and staff is expected to remove any potential barriers to the use of “assistive devices” where possible.

The following “assistive devices” are available through the Township of Essa:

### **Electronic Door Openers**

Electronic Door Openers are located at the following locations:

*Essa Township Administration Centre – both main entrances*

*Angus Recreation Centre – main entrance*

*Thornton Arena – back entrance only*

### **Accessible Telephone Service**

If enquiries for telephone services are received for hearing impaired or vision impaired individuals, they may be referred to the Bell Canada Relay Service or, if they are calling the Municipal Office, the Teletype (TTY) service may be used.

Information regarding the Bell Relay Service is provided in the local Bell Canada telephone book under “Special Needs”.

The Teletype (TTY) system is an electronic device for text communication via a telephone line, used when one or more of the parties have hearing or speech difficulties.

### **Accessible Parking and Accessible Ramps**

The accessible parking places for all municipal buildings should be connected or integrated with barrier-free path of travel, shall be marked by an identifying marking consisting of the International Symbol for the Disabled.

Wherever possible, the accessible path of travel shall be designated to avoid entering the vehicular routes and drives and be part of the shortest accessible route to the building or facility entrances.

The accessible parking spaces and ramps shall be cleared of snow as soon as practical.