



A DIVISION OF 575636 ONTARIO LTD.

1195 COURTNEYPARK DR. EAST, MISSISSAUGA, ONTARIO L5T 1R1  
 PHONE: (905)670-0009 FAX: (905)670-7856 WWW.GLOBALWAREHOUSE.CA

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## **Policy**

Global Distribution & Warehousing is committed to meeting its current and ongoing obligations under the Ontario Human Rights Code respecting non-discrimination.

Global Distribution & Warehousing understands that obligations under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) and its accessibility standards do not substitute or limit its obligations under the Ontario Human Rights Code or obligations to people with disabilities under any other law.

Global Distribution & Warehousing is committed to complying with both the Ontario Human Rights Code and the AODA.

Our accessible customer service policies are consistent with the principles of independence, dignity, integration and equality of opportunity for people with disabilities.

Global Distribution & Warehousing is committed to excellence in serving and interacting with the customers, suppliers and the public, including people with disabilities who visit our office.

Global Distribution & Warehousing will ensure that employees are trained and familiar with various assistive devices that may be used by those persons with disabilities who visit our offices.

Global Distribution & Warehousing will communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability.

Global Distribution & Warehousing welcomes people with disabilities and their service animals. Service animals are allowed in designated areas of our facility.

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

In the event of a planned or unexpected disruption to services or facilities for customers with disabilities, Global Distribution & Warehousing will notify visitors promptly. A clearly posted Notice of Disruption will include information about the reason for the disruption, the anticipated length of time, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available. The Notice of Disruption will be displayed in a conspicuous place.

Global Distribution & Warehousing will provide training to all employees. Training will be provided during new employee orientation and whenever changes are made to our accessible customer service plan.

Global Distribution & Warehousing will provide a customer feedback process for persons with disabilities who visit our facility.

Global Distribution & Warehousing

# Accessible Customer Service Plan

## Assistive Devices

People with disabilities may use their personal assistive devices when accessing our goods, services or facilities.

In cases where the assistive device presents a significant and unavoidable health or safety concern or may not be permitted for other reasons, other measures will be used to ensure the person with a disability can access our goods, services or facilities.

Global Distribution & Warehousing will ensure that staff is trained and familiar with various assistive devices that include tools, technology or other mechanisms that enable a person with a disability to access our premises.

## Communication

Global Distribution & Warehousing will communicate with people with disabilities who visit the offices in ways that take into account their disability. When an employee of Global Distribution & Warehousing is unsure of the best approach, they are encouraged to ask the person politely and not assume how they can best communicate with the person. We will work with the person with a disability to determine what method of communication works for them.

## Employee Training

Global Distribution & Warehousing will provide training to all employees that will include the following:

An overview of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and the requirements of the customer service standard

- Global Distribution & Warehousing Accessible Customer Service Plan
- Appropriate interaction and communication with people with various types 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

How to use any devices supplied by Global Distribution & Warehousing to assist people with disabilities

- Procedures to assist a person with a disability when they are having difficulty in accessing Global Distribution & Warehousing office.
- Staff will also be trained when changes are made to our accessible customer service policies.

## Service Animals

Global Distribution & Warehousing welcomes people with disabilities and their service animals. Service animals will be allowed within the reception and conference room areas of Global Distribution & Warehousing offices.

## **Accessible Customer Service Plan (continued)**

### **Support Persons**

Global Distribution & Warehousing welcomes people with disabilities and their support persons. Support persons are allowed within the reception and conference room areas of Global Distribution & Warehousing offices.

### **Notice of Temporary Disruption**

In the event of a planned or unexpected disruption to services or facilities for visitors with disabilities, Global Distribution & Warehousing will notify the visitor promptly and directly through the original contact person.

Alternative services or assistance, if available, will be provided by the original contact person.

### **Feedback Process**

Global Distribution & Warehousing welcomes feedback on how we provide accessible customer service. Customer feedback will help us identify barriers and respond to concerns.

Visitors who wish to provide feedback on the way Global Distribution & Warehousing provides services to people with disabilities who visit the offices can verbally discuss their concerns or send an email directly to any Global Distribution & Warehousing employee. All feedback will be directed to the Health and Safety Coordinator of Global Distribution & Warehousing. The visitor can expect to hear back within 48 hours. Complaints will be addressed promptly.

Global Distribution & Warehousing will make sure our feedback process is accessible to people with disabilities by providing or arranging for accessible formats and communication supports, on request.

### **Notice of availability of documents**

Global Transportation & Dispatch will notify the public that documents related to accessible customer service, are available upon request by posting a notice

Global Transportation & Dispatch will provide this document in an accessible format or with communication support, on request. We will consult with the person making the request to determine the suitability of the format or communication support. We will provide the accessible format in a timely manner and, at no additional cost.

## **Accessible Customer Service Plan (continued)**

### **Modifications to this plan or other policies**

Any modification to this plan will be immediately communicated to all Global Distribution & Warehousing employees and where necessary a training session will be organized.

Any policies of Global Distribution & Warehousing that do not respect and promote the principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity for people with disabilities will be modified or removed.

### **Plan Review**

The Health and Safety Coordinator shall review the Accessible Customer Service Plan on an annual basis to ensure that the plan is in compliance with current regulations and best practices.

### **What is the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005?**

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) is a law in Ontario that allows the government to develop specific standards of accessibility and to enforce them. Recognizing the history of discrimination against persons with disabilities in Ontario, the purpose of this Act is to benefit all Ontarians by:

- developing, implementing and enforcing accessibility standards in order to achieve accessibility for Ontarians with disabilities with respect to goods, services, facilities, accommodation, employment, buildings, structures and premises on or before January 1, 2025; and
- Providing for the involvement of persons with disabilities, the Government of Ontario and of representatives of industries and various sectors of the economy in the development of accessibility standards.

The standards require the people or organizations identified in the standard to identify, remove and prevent barriers for people with disabilities in key areas of daily living. Barriers keep people with disabilities from fully participating in activities that most of us take for granted. The customer service standard is the first standard to come into effect under the AODA.

The Government of Ontario is working with different standards development committees to develop other standards in the areas of transportation, information and communications, the built environment and employment. These committees include people with disabilities or their representatives, business owners, government representatives and members of the public.

The standards development committees propose standards for government consideration and the government may adopt them by regulation. Once adopted by regulation, the standards will impose requirements to make these areas more accessible to people with disabilities. They may apply to private and public sector organizations across Ontario.

## **What is the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005?** (continued)

### **Who are people with disabilities?**

When we think of disabilities, we tend to think of people who use wheelchairs and who have physical disabilities that are visible and obvious. But disabilities can also be invisible. We cannot always tell who has a disability. The AODA uses the same definition of “disability” as the Ontario Human Rights Code.

### **In the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, “disability” 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 intellectual or 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) Mental health challenges, 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

## **What is the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005?** (continued)

### **What are barriers?**

When you think about accessibility, it is important to be aware of both visible and invisible barriers. A barrier is anything that keeps someone with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of their disability.

Attitude is perhaps the most difficult barrier to overcome because it's hard to change the way people think or behave. Some people don't know how to communicate with those who have visible or invisible disabilities – for example, assuming someone with a speech problem has intellectual limitations and speaking to them in a manner that would be used with a child; or forming ideas about the person because of stereotypes or a lack of understanding. Some people may feel that they could offend the individual with a disability by offering help, or they ignore or avoid people with disabilities altogether. Remember, attitude is a major barrier that's within our power to change.

Architectural or structural barriers may result from design elements of a building such as stairs, doorways, the width of hallways and even room layout.

Information and communication barriers can make it difficult for people to receive or convey information. For example, a person who is Deaf cannot communicate via standard telephone.

Things like small print size, low colour contrast between text and background, confusing design of printed materials and the use of language that isn't clear or easy to understand can all cause difficulty.

Technology, or lack of it, can prevent people from accessing information. Everyday tools like computers, telephones and other aids can all present barriers if they are not set up or designed with accessibility in mind.

Systemic barriers can result from an organization's policies, practices and procedures if they restrict people with disabilities, often unintentionally – for example, a clothing store with a "no refund" policy and no way for someone in a scooter to enter the change room.



## **The Customer Service Standard**

### **What is the customer service standard?**

Ontario's accessible customer service standard is now the law. It came into force on January 1, 2008. People, businesses and other organizations that provide goods or services to the public or to other businesses or organizations in Ontario ("providers") have legal obligations under the standard. The standard is aimed at making their customer service operations accessible to people with disabilities. The customer service standard is the first of five standards that will help lead the way to an accessible Ontario by 2025.

### **General tips on providing service to customers with disabilities**

- ✓ If you're not sure what to do, ask your customer, "May I help you?" Your customers with disabilities know if they need help and how you can provide it.
- ✓ Speak directly to the person with a disability, not to his or her support person or companion.
- ✓ Avoid stereotypes and make no assumptions about what type of disability or disabilities the person has. Some disabilities are not visible and customers are not required to give you information about any disabilities they may have.
- ✓ Take the time to get to know your customer's needs and focus on meeting those needs just as you would with any other customer.
- ✓ Be patient. People with some kinds of disabilities may take a little longer to understand and respond. A good start is to listen carefully.
- ✓ If you cannot understand what your customer is saying, politely ask them to repeat themselves.
- ✓ Don't touch or speak to service animals – they are working and have to pay attention at all times.
- ✓ Don't touch assistive devices, including wheelchairs, without permission.

## **The Customer Service Standard (continued)**

### **How to interact and communicate with customers who have physical disabilities**

There are many types and degrees of physical disabilities, and not all require a wheelchair. People who have arthritis, heart or lung conditions or amputations may also have difficulty with moving, standing or sitting. It may be difficult to identify a person with a physical disability.

#### **Types of assistance your customer might use:**

- Mobility device (i.e., wheelchair, scooter, walker, cane, crutches)
- Support person

#### **Tips for dealing with people with physical disabilities:**

##### **People with physical/mobility disabilities**

Only some people with physical disabilities use a wheelchair. Someone with a spinal cord injury may use crutches while someone with severe arthritis or a heart condition may have difficulty walking longer distances.

##### **Tips:**

- Speak naturally and directly to your customer, not to his or her companion or support person.
- Ask before you help; people with disabilities often have their own way of doing things.
- If you need to have a lengthy conversation with someone who uses a wheelchair or scooter, consider sitting so you can make eye contact at the same level.
- Respect your customer's personal space. Do not lean over him or her or on his or her assistive device.
- Don't touch items or equipment (e.g., canes, wheelchairs) without permission.
- Don't move items or equipment, such as canes and walkers, out of the person's reach.
- If you have permission to move a person's wheelchair, don't leave them in an awkward, dangerous or undignified position, such as facing a wall or in the path of opening doors.
- Wait for and follow the person's instructions.
- Confirm that your customer is ready to move.
- Describe what you're going to do before you do it.
- Avoid uneven ground and objects.
- Think ahead and remove any items that may cause a physical barrier, such as boxes left in an aisle.

## **The Customer Service Standard (continued)**

### **How to interact and communicate with customers who have vision loss**

Vision loss can restrict someone's ability to read, locate landmarks or see hazards. Some customers may use a guide dog or a white cane, while others may not.

Not everyone with vision loss is totally blind. Many have some vision.

#### **Tips:**

- when you know someone has vision loss, don't assume the individual can't see you; many people who have low vision still have some sight
- identify yourself when you approach and speak directly to the customer
- ask if they would like you to read any printed material out loud to them (e.g., a menu or schedule of fees)
- when providing directions or instructions, be precise and descriptive
- offer your elbow to guide them if needed. If they accept, lead – don't pull
- if you need to leave the customer, let them know by telling them you'll be back, or saying goodbye
- don't leave the customer in the middle of the room – guide them to a comfortable location

### **How to interact and communicate with customers who have hearing loss**

People who have hearing loss may be deaf, deafened or hard of hearing. They may also be oral deaf – unable to hear, but prefer to talk instead of using sign language. These terms are used to describe different levels of hearing and/or the way a person's hearing was diminished or lost.

#### **Tips:**

- once a customer has identified themselves as having hearing loss, make sure you are in a well-lit area where they can see your face and read your lips
- as needed, attract the customer's attention before speaking; try a gentle touch on the shoulder or wave of your hand
- if your customer uses a hearing aid, reduce background noise or if possible, move to a quieter area
- if necessary, ask if another method of communicating would be easier (e.g., using a pen and paper)
- speak directly to your customer – not to their sign language interpreter – if they are accompanied by one

## **The Customer Service Standard (continued)**

### **People who are deafblind**

A person who is deafblind has some degree of both hearing and vision loss. People who are deafblind are often accompanied by an intervenor, a professional support person who helps with communication.

#### **Tips:**

- a customer who is deafblind is likely to explain to you how to communicate with them, perhaps with an assistance card or a note
- speak directly to your customer, not to the intervenor

### **How to interact and communicate with customers who have speech or language disabilities**

Cerebral palsy, stroke, hearing loss or other conditions may make it difficult for a person to pronounce words or express themselves. Some people who have severe difficulties may use a communication board or other assistive devices.

#### **Tips:**

- don't assume that a person who has difficulty speaking doesn't understand you
- whenever possible, ask questions that can be answered with "yes" or a "no"
- read visible instructions for communication devices, if the person uses one
- be patient; don't interrupt or finish your customer's sentences
- confirm what the person has said by summarizing or repeating – don't pretend if you're not sure
- speak directly to the customer and not to their companion or support person

### **How to interact and communicate with customers who have learning disabilities**

The term "learning disabilities" refers to a range of disorders. One example is dyslexia, which affects how a person takes in or retains information. This disability may become apparent when a person has difficulty reading material or understanding the information you are providing.

#### **Tips:**

- be patient – people with some learning disabilities may take a little longer to process information, to understand and to respond
- try to provide information in a way that works for your customer (e.g., some people with learning disabilities find written words difficult to understand, while others may have problems with numbers and math)
- be willing to rephrase or explain something again in another way

## **The Customer Service Standard (continued)**

### **How to interact and communicate with customers who have developmental disabilities**

Developmental disabilities (e.g., Down syndrome) or intellectual disabilities, can mildly or profoundly limit a person's ability to learn, communicate, do every day physical activities and live independently. You may not know that someone has this disability unless you are told.

#### **Tips:**

- don't make assumptions about what a person can or cannot do
- use plain language
- provide one piece of information at a time
- ask the customer if they need help reading your material or completing a form

### **How to interact and communicate with customers who have mental health disabilities**

Mental health disability is a broad term for many disorders that can range in severity. It can affect a person's ability to think clearly, concentrate or remember things. A person with a mental health disability may experience depression or acute mood swings, anxiety due to phobias or panic disorder, or hallucinations.

You may not know someone has a mental health disability unless you are told. Stigma and lack of understanding are major barriers for people with mental health disabilities.

#### **Tips:**

- if you sense or know that a customer has a mental health disability, treat them with the same respect and consideration you have for everyone else
- be confident, calm and reassuring
- respect your customer's personal space
- limit distractions that could affect your customer's ability to focus or concentrate – loud noise, crowded areas and interruptions could cause stress

## The Customer Service Standard (continued)

### How to interact and communicate with customers who use assistive devices

An assistive device is a piece of equipment that a person with a disability uses to help them with daily living (e.g., a wheelchair, screen reader, hearing aid, cane or walker, an oxygen tank).

#### Tips:

- don't touch or handle any assistive device without permission
- don't move assistive devices or equipment (e.g., canes, walkers) out of your customer's reach
- let your customers know about accessible features in the immediate environment that are appropriate to their needs (e.g., public phones with TTY service, accessible washrooms, elevator)

If your organization offers any equipment or devices that can help customers with disabilities access your services, make sure you and your staff know how to use them. It could be helpful to have instruction manuals handy or an instruction sheet posted where the device is located or stored.

Some examples of assistive devices that your organization might offer include:

- mobility device, such as a manual wheelchair or motorized scooter
- lift, which raises or lowers people who use mobility devices
- technology that makes it easier for people with disabilities to communicate or access information, such as certain computer software, an amplification system or a TTY phone line
- accessible interactive kiosk, which might offer information or services in braille or through audio headsets

## **The Customer Service Standard (continued)**

### **How to interact and communicate with customers who use service animals**

There are various types of service animals who support people with various types of disabilities. People with vision loss may use a guide dog. Hearing alert animals help people with hearing loss. Other service animals are trained to alert a person to an oncoming seizure or to help people with autism, mental health disabilities, physical disabilities and other disabilities.

The law requires you to allow service animals on the parts of your premises that are open to the public. In cases where another law prohibits a service animal from entering certain areas (e.g., a service animal would not be allowed in the kitchen of a cooking school), provide another way for the person to access your goods, services or facilities.

While service animals may be prohibited from certain areas, service dogs are allowed in areas where food is sold, served or offered for sale. This includes a restaurant's public dining room.

### **Tips for communicating with people who use Service Animals:**

- don't touch or distract a service animal, it is not a pet, it is a working animal and has to pay attention at all times
- if you're not sure if the animal is a pet or a service animal, ask your customer
- you can provide water for the service animal if your customer requests it, but the customer is responsible for the care and supervision of the animal
- if the service animal is prohibited by another law, explain why to your customer and discuss other ways to serve them, e.g., leaving the dog in a safe area or serving your customer in another area where the animal is allowed

## **The Customer Service Standard (continued)**

### **How to interact and communicate with a customer with a support person**

A support person may accompany some people with disabilities. A support person can be a paid personal support worker, an intervenor, a volunteer, a family member or a friend. A support person might help your customer with communication, mobility, personal care or with accessing your services.

Welcome support people to your workplace or business. They are permitted in any part of your premises that is open to the public. If your organization is one that charges admission, such as a movie theatre, provide advance notice about what admission fee or fare will be charged for a support person.

#### **Tips:**

- if you're not sure which person is the customer, take your lead from the person using or requesting your goods, services or facilities, or simply ask
- speak directly to your customer, not to their support person
- if your organization charges an admission fee or fare, be familiar with its policy on fees or fares for support persons

### **When it may be necessary to require a support person**

There are certain cases when it might be necessary for a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person on your premises. You must first discuss the situation with the person and consider available evidence before you determine 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 that of others on the premises

In such a situation, you must waive the admission fee or fare for the support person, if one exists.

### **How to interact and communicate with customers accessing goods, services or facilities**

If you notice that your customer is having difficulty accessing your goods, services or facilities, a good starting point is to simply ask "How can I help you?"

Your customers are your best source for information about their needs. Being flexible and open to suggestions will help create a good customer experience. A solution can be simple and they will likely appreciate your attention and consideration.



## **The Customer Service Standard (continued)**

### **How to interact and communicate with customers with disabilities over the phone**

- ✓ Speak naturally, clearly and directly.
- ✓ Don't worry about how the person's voice sounds. Concentrate on what they are saying.
- ✓ Don't interrupt or finish your customer's sentences. Give your customer time to explain or respond.
- ✓ If you don't understand, simply ask again, or repeat or rephrase what you heard and ask if you have understood correctly.
- ✓ If a telephone customer is using an interpreter or a Relay Service, speak naturally to the customer, not to the interpreter.
- ✓ If you encounter a situation where, after numerous attempts, you and your customer cannot communicate with each other due to the customer's disability, consider making alternate arrangements.

### **Assistive Devices**

An assistive device is a tool, technology or other mechanism that enables a person with a disability to do everyday tasks and activities such as moving, communicating or lifting. It helps the person to maintain their independence at home, at work and in the community.

There are a variety of assistive devices that some of your customers may use, depending on their disability. Many will be personal assistive devices, meaning they are owned and brought along by the individual, while others may be provided by your organization. The following are examples of some devices you may come across when serving your customers with disabilities:

#### **People who have vision loss**

- ✓ Digital audio player - enables people to listen to books, directions, art shows, etc.
- ✓ Magnifier - makes print and images larger and easier to read
- ✓ Portable global positioning systems (GPS) - helps orient people to get to specific destinations
- ✓ White cane - helps people find their way around obstacles

## **Assistive Devices** (continued)

### **People who are Deaf, deafened, oral deaf, hard of hearing**

- ✓ FM transmitter system or other amplification devices - boosts sound closest to the listener while reducing background noise
- ✓ Hearing aid - makes sound louder and clearer
- ✓ Teletypewriter (TTY) - helps people who are unable to speak or hear to communicate by phone. The person types their messages on the TTY keyboard and messages are sent using telephone lines to someone who has a TTY, or to an operator (Bell Relay Service) who passes the message to someone who doesn't have a TTY.

### **People who have physical disabilities**

- ✓ Mobility device (e.g., a wheelchair, scooter, walker, cane, crutches) - helps people who have difficulty walking
- ✓ Personal oxygen tank - helps people breathe

### **People who have learning disabilities**

- ✓ Electronic notebook or laptop computer - used to take notes and to communicate
- ✓ Personal data managers - stores, organizes and retrieves personal information
- ✓ Mini pocket recorders - records information for future playback

## **Internal Accessibility Committee members**

HR Manager

Warehouse Manager

IT Manager

## **Accessible Customer Service Standard - Signoff**

Accessibility Standards for Customer Service - establishes accessibility standards for customer service for the disabled in Ontario. It applies to every designated public sector organization, the private sector, and all employers who employ at least one worker in the province of Ontario.

Should at any time a “person” with a disability of any capacity wish to visit Global Distribution & Warehousing every and all-reasonable efforts will be made to accommodate the individual.

**I acknowledge that I have read and understand this policy and will abide by procedures noted within.**

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

# Change Log

Date	Supersedes	Reason	Name
November 24, 2017	Version 1.0	Changes for compliance reporting Dec. 31, 2017. Include hiring, return to work and emergency accommodations for people with disabilities, added overview of act to table of contents, added shipping office access for mobility devices	S. B.
June 11, 2021	v1.1	Change: version number to match other controlled documents Change: policy to include multiple policies Add: Additional language for service animals per Ontario.ca website	S. B.
June 22, 2021	v2021.1	Add Internal Accessibility Committee members	S. B.
March 18, 2022	v2021.2	Change: Notice to Temporary Disruption notified by from "Receptionist" to "original contact person" Remove: from Internal Committee members "S. B. and H. S." Change: Committee member actual name to HR Manager Add: to Internal Committee members "Warehouse Manager and IT Manager"	M. H.