# Accessibility Standards for Customer Service

# Policy and Procedures



Adopted by:

**Ravenshoe United Church** 

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### References & Acknowledgements

- 1. Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Ontario Regulation 429/07
- 2. Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005
- 3. Accessibility and the United Church of Canada <a href="http://www.bayofquinteconference.ca/accessibility.pdf">http://www.bayofquinteconference.ca/accessibility.pdf</a> <a href="http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search">http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search</a>
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- 14. http://www.wondercafe.ca/churches/ravenshoe-united-church
- 15. http://www.mcss.gov.on.ca/en/mcss/publications/accessibility/informationAndCommunic, ation/understanding.aspx
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- 17.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/dignity

### **Introduction to:**

### Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2005 (AODA)

"Ontario is working towards making the province accessible for people with disabilities by <u>2025.</u>"

Under this Act (which is now Law), Ontario has developed accessibility standards for businesses and organizations in Ontario that will need to be followed to break down barriers of everyday life for persons with disabilities. The first of these steps to come into law is "Customer service" – and will eventually include...

- Transportation
- Employment
- Information
- Communication
- Built Environment (which includes buildings and other structures)

**NOTE:** Every Business and Organization that provides goods or services and operates in Ontario that has at least <u>1 employee</u> must comply with the Customer Service Standards.

Under the Standards: Employees are staff members who are full-time, part-time, and/or working under contract.

(Volunteers, and independent contractors are not included when counting

(Volunteers, and independent contractors are not included when counting employees.)

In accordance with the regulation: as a Church, we will be required to do the following to ensure that we are providing accessible customer service to people with disabilities.

(See "Fundamentals of the Accessibility Standards" listed below for details. Page -)

- Establish Policy and procedures
- Policy for persons to use their own assistive devices to access our services
- Ensure reasonable efforts made to ensure that the policies, procedures and practices are consistent with core principles of independence dignity, integration and equality of opportunity.
- Provide Training to everyone that interacts with Public or acts on behalf of our service.
- Allow Access to our service for persons that require service animals.
- Allow Access to our services for persons that require support person.
- Provide advance notice to persons with disabilities that Fees are to be charged to access the services offered.
- Provide notice to persons with disabilities when the facility or services that people with disabilities rely on to access or use are temporarily interrupted. (not accessible at this time).

Some steps that the church can implement immediately to improve accessibility include:

- 1. Treating all customers with dignity and respect
- 2. asking "How may I assist you?"

### Accessibility and the Church

Resources: <a href="http://www.bayofquinteconference.ca/accessibility.pdf">http://www.bayofquinteconference.ca/accessibility.pdf</a>
<a href="http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search">http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search</a>

In April 2005, the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities "Act was passed into law. Unlike previous versions, this Act has implications for those who <u>fail to meet</u> the various standards that were to be developed and implemented.

The First of these standards, "Customer service," has been passed with a compliance deadline of <u>January 1, 2012</u>.

### **Interpreting the Act:**

Customer service is understood as how we interact with those who come through our doors, parishioners, community ministry participants, campers, students, seniors and so on. It may also include those who are seeking religious services, weddings, funerals, baptisms-and how we are able to provide those services



"It does not pertain to the physical accessibility of the property, which is addressed through the "built environment" standards yet to be released.

What this has to do with the ministries of the United Church of Canada?

The "ACT" only applies to those ministries within Ontario. Translated what it comes down to be, is;

... What our specific ministry might look like as a church welcoming people with disabilities.

The Customer Service Standards address how we provide our services to those who require them. The standards that *Ravenshoe United Church* adopts, must be developed, and outlined in policies and practiced including training to everyone involved.

### What is Required of our Church?

- 1. Establish policies, practices and procedures
- 2. Establish a training program to train staff and volunteers
- 3. Establish a feedback process

Additional Standards will follow but have not yet been passed into Law and there is no deadline for compliance.

### These include the following:

- Information and Communication: one way, or interactive process
- Communication Access for people who have communication disabilities. (services that can be understood by persons with sight or hearing disabilities. Also available space for person with service animals)
- Built Environment: Access to and from church and within buildings and outdoor spaces. (ramps, doors, counters—"height")
- Employment: helping employers create equal employment opportunities for people with disabilities.
- Transportation: accessibility to public and private transportation services (buses, taxis, accessible transportation services)

### In Summary:

"All United Church congregations and ministries are encouraged to consider how we can be more welcoming by making our buildings and practices accessible to all. The steps that are taken today may benefit tomorrow, and will reflect the spirit of welcome and compassion we experience in Jesus."

Romans 12:13... Share with the Lord's people who are in need, and seek to show hospitality.

# Fundamentals of the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Regulation.

### Principles when developing Policies, Practices and Procedures

### Serve-Ability: Transforming Ontario's Customer Service

• Make your service more accessible

• Provide better service for everyone - especially for the 1.85 million Ontarians with a disability

- Learn how to comply with the training requirements of the customer service standard, which is now law.
- 1. Use reasonable efforts to ensure that your policies, practices and procedures are consistent with the core principles of <u>independence</u>, <u>dignity</u>, <u>integration and equality of opportunity</u>.
- 2. How can you best allow customers to maintain their independence and dignity. (customers may wish to do things themselves) without help)
- 3. Give the customers with disabilities (all types) the same opportunity to access services as everyone else. (will they be able to access every part of the church that accommodates everyone for church functions e.g. stage, music areas, boardroom, social areas, washrooms, parking lots, phone, cloak room)
- 4. Set a policy on allowing people to use their own personal assistive devices to access our services. (room for service animals, wheelchairs, oxygen tanks, other assistive devices)
- 5. Allow customers with disabilities to access services in a way that is integrated with other customers, (unless an alternate measure is required).
- 6. Communicate with a person with a disability in a manner that takes into account their disability. (learn phrases that are acceptable and those that are NOT when communicating with or about persons with disabilities) See Words and Phrases pages attached to this document.

- 7. As part of the training process, communicate to everyone within the church a policy about the use of assistive devices by people with disabilities to access services (items include wheelchairs, walkers, white canes, oxygen tanks, and electronic communication devices).
- 8. Allow people with disabilities to be accompanied by their guide dog/service animal in the areas of the premises that are open to the public, unless the animal is excluded by law. If excluded by law, use other measures to provide service to the person with the disability. (ensure that A.C.D.C.R. values apply).

ACDCR: Accommodation, Compassion, Dignity, Common Sense, Respect

- 9. Permit people with the disability who use a support person, to bring that person with them.
- 10. Notify person with a disability in advance, if fees are to be charged for admission for themselves or their support person, if attending a function where fees are applicable.
- 11. If the church facilities that service a person with disabilities are disrupted or temporarily disrupted, the persons with the disability, must be notified of such disruptions.
- 12. Training of members of the congregation, volunteers, contractors, and any other people who interact with the public or third parties on the church's behalf need to be apprised of a number of topics as outlined in the **Customer Service Standards**.
- 13. Establish a process for people to provide feedback on how you provide goods or services to people with disabilities and how you will respond to any feedback or complaints. Information about the feedback process must be readily available to the public. (on pamphlets, copies of feedback forms at church, on the website)
- 14.Documents under the Customer Service Standards are available upon client/customers request.
- 15. When providing documents required under the customer service standards to a person with a disability, provide the information in a format that takes into account the person's disability.

### **Understanding Various Forms of Disability**

http://www.mcss.gov.on.ca/en/mcss/publications/accessibility/informationAndCommunic, ation/understanding.aspx

In order to understand Disabilities, we need to know as much as we can about various forms of disability. The following paragraphs outline disabilities that we must take into consideration for accommodation and customer service.

Disabilities can take many forms. They may be permanent or temporary; developmental or physical; severe or mild; for the young or the old; or any combination of disabilities. A person can be born with a disability or someone could become injured resulting in a temporary or permanent disability. Some disabilities are visible and many are non-visible. Since you never know who may want to interact with you during the election process, it is important that you plan to include all people.

### Physical Disabilities

There are many types and degrees of physical disabilities, and while people who use mobility aids like wheelchairs, scooters, crutches or canes are most recognizable, it is important to consider that not all people with physical disabilities require a mobility device. People who have arthritis, heart or lung conditions or amputations may also have difficulty with stamina, moving, standing, sitting or the ability to reach or grasp. It may be difficult to identify a person with a physical disability.

### Vision Loss

There are varying degrees of vision loss and a distinction between blindness and low vision. In some cases, it may be difficult to tell if a person has a vision loss. The majority of people living with a vision disability have some vision. Some people are totally blind. Vision disabilities can reduce one's ability to see clearly or can affect the range of visual field. Some people can distinguish between light and dark, or between contrasting colours, or read large print, but have difficulty with small print or low-light situations. Others may have a loss of peripheral or side vision, or a lack of central vision, which impacts a person's ability to distinguish details, like recognizing faces or reading. Vision disabilities can restrict a person's ability to read print and signs, locate landmarks or see hazards. They may use a white cane or service animal to help with orientation and movement in an environment.

### Deafness and Hearing Loss

Hearing loss ranges from mild to profound. The distinctions between the terms "deaf', "Deaf', "deafened", and "hard of hearing" are based principally on the individual's preferred language (spoken or signed) rather than on the actual degree of hearing loss. Deaf, deafened and hard of hearing individuals may use hearing aids, cochlear implants, and/or other assistive-listening and communication devices.

### Deaf-Blindness

A person who is deaf-blind has some degree of both vision and hearing loss. This results in greater difficulties in accessing information and managing daily activities. Most people who are deaf-blind will be accompanied by an intervenor, a professional who helps with communicating. An intervenor is trained in many adaptive communication methods, depending upon the preferences of the person who is deaf-blind. The intervenor may guide and interpret for their client.

### Speech Disabilities

People with speech disabilities may have problems communicating. For many reasons, people may have difficulty speaking clearly - for example, as a result of a stroke or cerebral palsy - which may result in difficulties with verbal communication. Some people may use communication boards or other assistive devices to help communicate. A speech disability often has no impact on a person's ability to understand.

### Cognitive Disabilities

Cognitive disabilities may affect understanding, communication, or behavior and can be attributed to brain injuries, developmental or learning disabilities. It is not always easy to identify someone who has a cognitive disability. Some conditions, such as Down's syndrome exhibit physical characteristics, but there are others that are not so apparent. People with a cognitive disability may have difficulties recognizing, understanding and remembering information.

### Mental Illness

Mental illness is a disturbance in thoughts and emotions that may decrease a person's capacity to cope with the challenges of everyday life. Mental illness can take many forms, just as physical illness does. Mental illnesses include schizophrenia, mood disorders (such as depression and bipolar disorder), anxiety disorders, personality disorders, and eating disorders.

### TERMINOLOGY - SPEAKING ABOUT DISABILITIES

The following is an excerpt from the *Ministry of Community and Social Services*. [htto: Ilwww.mcss.aov.on.ca/mcss/enallsh/how/howtochoose.htm]

"Words can influence and reinforce the public's perception of people with disabilities. They can create either a positive view of people with disabilities or an indifferent, negative depiction. Here are some general tips that can help make your communication and interactions with or about people with all types of disabilities more successful.

- Use "disability or disabled," not "handicap or handicapped."
- Never use terms such as "retarded, dumb, psycho, moron or crippled." These words are very demeaning and disrespectful to people with disabilities.
- Remember to put people first. It is proper to say "person with a disability," rather than "disabled person."
- If you don't know someone or if you are not familiar with the disability, it's better to wait until the individual describes his/her situation to you, rather than to make your own assumptions. Many types of disabilities have similar characteristics and your assumptions may be wrong.

See below chart of Preferred Terms and Phrases

### Preferred Words & Phrases

The following preferred words and phrases will help you choose language that is neither demeaning nor hurtful. People with disabilities prefer these terms:

INSTEAD OF	PLEASE USE
Afflicted by cerebral palsy,	Person who has cerebral palsy.
multiple sclerosis, arthritis, etc.	Person who has multiple sclerosis,
	Person who has arthritis, etc.
	Person with a Disability.
Aged, (the)	Seniors
Autistic	A person with autism. A person who has autism.
Birth defect, congenital defect,	A person who has a congenital
deformity	disability. A person with a
	disability since birth.
Blind (the), visually impaired	A person who is blind. A person
(the)	with a vision disability. A person
	with vision loss. A person with a
	visual impairment. A person with
	low vision.
Confined to a wheelchair, wheelchair bound	A person who uses a wheelchair.
Crazy, Insane, Lunatic, Psycho,	A person with a mental health
Mental,	disability. A person who has
Mental patient, Maniac, Neurotic,	depression. A person with
Psychotic, Unsound mind,	schizophrenia.
Schizophrenic.	
Cripple, crippled, lame	A person with a disability. A person
	with a mobility impairment.
Deaf and dumb, deaf mute	A person who is deaf without
	speech
Differently Abled	A person with a disability
Disabled (the)	People with disabilities
Elderly (the)	Seniors, older adults

Epileptic	Person who has epilepsy
Fits, spells, attacks	Seizures
Handicapped (the)	Person with a disability. The term
•	handicapped may be used when
	referring to an environmental or
	attitudinal barrier as in "a person
	who is handicapped by a set of
	stairs leading to the entranced."
Hidden disability	Non-visible disability
Invalid	Person with a disability
Learning disabled, learning	A person with a learning disability
disordered, the dyslexics	or people with learning disabilities.
Mentally retarded, idiot, simple,	A person with an intellectual
retarded, feeble minded, imbecile,	disability. A person with a
Barra Danie	developmental disability.
Midget, Dwarf	A person of short stature. A person
	who has a form of dwarfism. A
	little person. A person diagnosed
	with "Achondroplasia, SED, or what ever their specific diagnosis"
*	is," a form of dwarfism.
Mongoloid, Mongolism, Downs	A Person with Down Syndrome.
Wiongoloiu, Wiongonsin, Downs	One can use this terminology only
	when it is directly relevant. A
	person with an intellectual or
	developmental disability.
Normal	Person who is not disabled. Person
	who is able bodied. Specifically, a
	person who is sighted, a hearing
	person, a person who is ambulatory
Patient	Person with a disability. The word
	"patient" may be used when
	referring to a relationship between
	a medical professional and a client.
Physically Challenged	Person with a physical disability
Spastic	Person who has muscle spasms

Stutterer	A person with a speech impairment or impediment. A person with a communication	
Victim of/suffers from/stricken	disorder.  Person who has cerebral palsy.	
with cerebral palsy, multiple sclerosis, arthritis, etc.	Person who has multiple sclerosis, etc. Person with a disability.	

# Ravenshoe United Church 1837 to 2011 and Beyond



### Ravenshoe Church Background

(Taken from www.wondercafe.ca/churches/ravenshoe-united-church)

"The Ravenshoe United Church congregation meets in the Ravenshoe Chapel of which there is a unique history regarding the chapel's origin. In the 1870's two Methodist families in the area surrounding Ravenshoe decided to build a local church. One family donated the land while another family provided the building materials. The records indicate that: "The building would be known as Ravenshoe Chapel and was to be used for public Sunday School and the advancement of Christian Knowledge according to the true intent and meaning of the Holy Scriptures. In addition it was specified that the church was to be used by a denomination pertaining to Methodism. On December 22, 1877 the land and buildings were turned over by the original donors to 5 trustees and their successors. Some descendants of these original trustees are members of the current congregation. It was eventually decided that the church should belong to the community and could never be sold or given away. In 1893, the trustees voted to have the financial burdens of the building borne by the congregation using it in lieu of paying rent. It was decided that a debt could never be held against the building. Over the years other denominations have held services in the chapel while waiting to build or use other accommodations. In 1923 the property just east of the church was purchased. Fundraising efforts financed the relocation of the church and a ten foot addition. In 1990 the church had a ramp built to provide wheelchair accessibility. Presently in 2011, the church hosts a variety of events which include an outreach program, a seniors group, men's group, bible study, and a social committee. Since 2006 the church has undergone various construction projects that have been accomplished by the tenacious perseverance of a hard working congregation and caring community. We are a vibrant and active congregation, very proud of our quaint country church nestled within a rural community.

### **Church Statements**

Mission:

"The Mission of Ravenshoe United Church is to be a worshipping congregation of energetic, caring, socially interactive Christians who:...

- Continue with the grace of God, to grow spiritually;
- Promote Christian values within our community;
- Use our various gifts to help all-within our church family, the community and the world;
- Welcome and build relationships with all people that seek to become part of our church family."

### **Commitment:**

We are committed to ensuring that everyone in our church family has the care and compassion that our Christian faith reflects. Anyone that joins our community of worship is welcomed within that family and cared for, in the same way that was done since 1837.

The success of Ravenshoe United Church (as it is presently known), is a reflection of its deep rooted faith, and increasing support of the congregation, community and pastoral care.

The church believes that it can only grow stronger with change, and looks forward to adopting the new regulations that will provide education and training. With the knowledge and changes to come over the next 15 years under the A.O.D.A., Ravenshoe United Church is confident of its customer service commitment to not only provide care for all its current members, but for everyone who enters our House and joins our family within.

### Obligation:

As human beings and Christians, we have an obligation to mankind, and God, to help each other and treat everyone equally with respect and dignity under the eyes of God. When you as an individual are dealing with a person with a disability, imagine yourself in that situation and would you conduct yourself in that same manner if you were in the other persons shoes.

### ...statements c'ntd...

### The Future:

The foundation of Ravenshoe United Church has always been based on caring, and respect. The fundamental obligations in terms of the AODA have been met with positive enthusiasm. The Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Ontario Regulation 429/07 compliance have been addressed applying the protocol and measures expected. This church has also had the forethought of visualizing the necessary expectations of the Act as laws are developed and passed over the next 15 years.

Ravenshoe United Church will continue to ensure that it meets customer service standards to people with disabilities that make up our community and access our services.

Implementation of service presentation devices as are necessary, will be part of the future of worship.

Accessibility and accommodation will be met throughout the building structure.

Customer service personnel will be trained in the required aspects of assisting persons with a disability.

Outside the building, transportation and accessible parking will be addressed so that everyone with a disability is provided equal opportunity to access the services that our church offers.

Accessibility to the stage and equal opportunity for access to areas of the church not attainable at this time will be addressed and changed in accordance with the law.

Items that are currently at a "Height level" that may not be accessible for people with disabilities, or visitors with disabilities will be evaluated and changed as are necessary.

Other changes as recommended by the AODA Committee of Ravenshoe United Church in accordance with the ACT and regulations that are implemented by law.

### **Policy Belief**

# Policy Guideline for Ravenshoe United Church: (To be addressed in the Guideline Package)

Accommodation - For Every Person who enters our place of worship, we will ensure that they are made comfortable, and feel accepted as part of a greater family unit. We will make every efforts to understand people's needs and address them in a manner that encompasses our values and policies, respects independence and equality.

Compassion – This is the depth of our passion, and commitment to Christian principles and the foundation of our loyalty to every person that enters our church. It is one of our greatest virtues and is regarded as a part of love itself. Not only does it symbolize the cornerstone of a greater social integration and humanity – but is the heart and soul, foundational to the highest principles in philosophy, social values, and personhood.

**Dignity** – This "right to" belonging to everyone who comes through our doors of worship. The right of all human beings that are created in the image of God, and are equal in dignity and rights. We are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in the spirit of equality. This being our promise to all.

**Common Sense** - Assist everyone who asks or requires our help within the boundaries of the property of Ravenshoe United Church, and as Christians, assist everyone outside of our house of worship who may be in need.

**Respect** – Assist everyone with the same consideration that we would expect ourselves. "Do unto others..."

### **Training**

#### **Committee Members:**

- Review of the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Ontario Regulation 429/07
- Review Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)
- Review Summary of Requirements as per / Access On.ca
- Review Accessibility and the United Church of Canada Summary
- Review Terminology Understanding Disabilities MCSS
- Study Appropriate Definitions and Terms for persons with Disabilities
- Attend workshop (April 13, 2011) on Preparing Practices and Procedures
- Review Training videos online prepared by MCSS on Regulations.
- Prepare Practices and Procedures as outlined by the "Regulations" for Ravenshoe Church
- Present Training to Customer Service members within the Ravenshoe Church in accordance with the Policy & procedures.
- Presentation to Congregation members regarding protocol, and terminology.
- Update Congregation on amendments to the procedure as new legislation comes into affect.
- Outline review on what the Future will hold with respect to Ravenshoe church as new legislation comes into affect and present it to the congregation.

.... Continued see below for more training topics ....

#### Training cntd...

### **Customer Service Representatives:**

- Attend Training as provided by Committee members Log sheet For training (see below)
- Review independently training online under MCSS for Customer Service
- Carry out customer service standards as implemented by the committee, and as outlined in the regulations of the Accessibility Standards regulations 429/07.
- Treat everyone with Dignity & Respect, Allow persons with disabilities their independence, ensure their integration within our congregational family, and provide them with equal opportunity within our services.
- Follow the congregational "Statements" and "Policy Beliefs." Accommodation, Compassion, Dignity, Common Sense, Respect.
- Ensure that all attendees, customers, visitors, and guests are aware of the Feedback Form Process, and it is readily available.

  (Form avail. Hardcopy at the church, by fax, by mail, e-mail, on web page, or delivered in person)

### Congregation:

- Attend presentations of the policy and procedures adopted by the Ravenshoe United Church as set up by the Accessibility Standards Committee.
- Review posted chart on appropriate words and terminology when talking to or about people with disabilities.
- Review policy, procedures, and amendments as outlined by the Ravenshoe United Church Accessibility Standards Committee, in place for Ravenshoe United Church regarding the "AODA" under Customer Service Regulations 429/07 as new legislation comes into law.

#### **Review and Amendments**

Shall be the responsibility of the committee notwithstanding or limiting input by the board, which is representative for the well being and continued growth of the Ravenshoe United Church.

The committee upon learning of changes to the "ACT" or regulation requirements that directly affect the church, shall put forth amendments and implement changes to the policy and procedures as are necessary to fulfill the obligations under the Act, and Christian principles as adopted by this church.

### Closing:

With God's guidance, the members of Ravenshoe United Church will affirm that all people who attend our house of worship, now and in the future, will always be nurtured, and grow in the spirit of God's love. We will learn, educate, and ensure that whatever is expected of us, will be adopted and fulfilled with God's Blessing. Amen!

### 2 Corinthians 1:4

"...who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God."

### **Customer Feedback Form**

We thank you for attending Ravenshoe United Church. We value every person who attends our house of worship and strive to meet the needs of everyone. Your feedback is important to us. Please take the opportunity to answer the following questions so that we may better assist you. Date and Time of visit: (Please circle the appropriate response) Did we meet your customer services needs today? No Yes Was our customer Service provided to you Yes No In an accessible manner? Did you encounter any problems in accessing Yes No. our services today? Somewhat Please add any other comments that may help us serve you better. Contact Information: (Optional)

Ravenshoe United Church, (Accessibility Standards Committee)

Thank you,

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### **Disruption of Service Form**

# **Admission Fee Form**