



GARDINER ROBERTS

## Accessible Customer Service Policy

### Intent

This policy is intended to meet the requirements of *Accessibility Standards for Customer Service*, *Ontario Regulation 429/07* under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, and applies to the provision of goods and services to the public or other third parties, not to the goods themselves.

All goods and services provided by Gardiner Roberts LLP (“GR”) shall follow the principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity.

### Scope

- a) This policy applies to the provision of goods and services at premises owned and operated by GR;
- b) This policy applies to employees, volunteers, agents and/or contractors who deal with the public or other third parties that act on behalf of GR, including when the provision of goods and services occurs off the premises of GR such as in: delivery services, call centres, vendors, drivers, catering and third party marketing agencies.
- c) The section of this policy that addresses the use of guide dogs, service animals and service dogs only applies to the provision of goods and services that take place at premises owned and operated by GR.
- d) This policy shall also apply to all persons who participate in the development of GR’s policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of goods and services to members of the public or third parties.

### Definitions

Assistive Device – is a technical aid, communication device or other instrument that is used to maintain or improve the functional abilities of people with disabilities. Personal assistive devices are typically devices that customers bring with them such as a wheelchair, walker or a personal oxygen tank that might assist with hearing, seeing, communicating, moving, breathing, remembering and/or reading.

Disability – the term disability as defined by the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, and the *Ontario Human Rights Code*, refers to:

- any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical co-ordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device;
- a condition of mental impairment or remedial appliance or device;

- a learning disability, or dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language;
- a mental disorder; or
- an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997.

Guide Dog – is a highly-trained working dog that has been trained at one of the facilities listed in Ontario Regulation 58 under the *Blind Persons' Right Act*, to provide mobility, safety and increased independence for people who are blind.

Service Animal – as reflected in *Ontario Regulation 429/07*, an animal is a service animal for a person with a disability if:

- it is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to his or her disability; or
- if the person provides a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability.

Support Person – as reflected in *Ontario Regulation 429/07*, a support person means, in relation to a person with a disability, another person who accompanies him or her in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care, medical needs or access to goods and services.

## **GENERAL PRINCIPLES**

In accordance with the *Accessibility Standards for Customer Services, Ontario Regulation 429/07*, this policy addresses the following:

- A. The Provision of Goods and Services to Persons with Disabilities;
- B. The Use of Assistive Devices
- C. The Use of Guide Dogs, Service Animals and Service Dogs
- D. The Use of Support Persons
- E. Notice of Service Disruptions
- F. Customer Feedback
- G. Training
- H. Notice of Availability and Format of Required Documents

### A. The Provision of Goods and Services to Persons with Disabilities

GR will make every reasonable effort to ensure that its policies, practices and procedures are consistent with the principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity by:

- Ensuring that all customers receive the same value and quality;
- Allowing customers with disabilities to do things in their own ways, at their own pace when accessing goods and services as long as this does not present a safety risk;
- Using alternative methods when possible to ensure that customers with disabilities have access to the same services, in the same place and in a similar manner;
- Taking into account individual needs when providing goods and services; and
- Communicating in a manner that takes into account the customer's disability

## B. Assistive Devices

### **Customer's own assistive device (s)**

Persons with disabilities may use their own assistive devices as required when accessing goods or services provided by GR.

In cases where the assistive device presents a safety concern or where accessibility might be an issue, other reasonable measures will be used to ensure the access of goods and services. For example, open flames and oxygen tanks cannot be near one another. Therefore, the accommodation of a customer with an oxygen tank may involve ensuring the customer is in a location that would be considered safe for both the customer and business. Or, where elevators are not present and where an individual requires assistive devices for the purposes of mobility, services will be provided in a location that meets the needs of the customer.

## C. Guide Dogs, Service Animals and Service Dogs

A customer with a disability that is accompanied by guide dog, service animal or service dog will be allowed access to premises that are open to the public unless otherwise excluded by law. "No pet" policies do not apply to guide dogs, service animals and/or service dogs.

### **Food Service Areas:**

A customer with a disability that is accompanied by guide dog or service dog will be allowed access to food service areas that are open to the public unless otherwise excluded by law.

Other types of service animals are not permitted into food service areas due to the *Health Protection and Promotion Act, Ontario Regulation 562 Section 60*.

### **Exclusion Guidelines:**

If a guide dog, service animal or service dog is excluded by law (see applicable laws below) GR will offer alternative methods to enable the person with a disability to access goods and services, when possible.

### **Applicable Laws:**

*Dog Owners' Liability Act, Ontario:* If there is a conflict between a provision of this Act or of a regulation under this or any other Act relating to banned breeds (such as pitbulls) and a provision of a bylaw passed by a municipality relating to these breeds, the provision that is more restrictive in relation to controls or bans on these breeds prevails.

### **Recognizing a Guide Dog, Service Dog and/or Service Animal:**

If it is not readily apparent that the animal is being used by the customer for reasons relating to his or her disability, GR may request verification from the customer. Verification may include:

- a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons related to the disability;
- a valid identification card signed by the Attorney General of Canada, or
- a certificate of training from a recognized guide dog or service animal training school.

**Care and Control of the Animal:**

The customer that is accompanied by a guide dog, service dog and/or service animal is responsible for maintaining care and control of the animal at all time.

**Allergies:**

If a health and safety concern presents itself for example in the form of a severe allergy to the animal, GR will make all reasonable efforts to meet the needs of all individuals.

**D. Support Persons**

If a customer with a disability is accompanied by a support person, GR will ensure that both persons are allowed to enter the premises together and that the customer is not prevented from having access to the support person.

There may be times where seating and availability prevent the customer and support person from sitting beside each other. In these situations GR will make every reasonable attempt to resolve the issue.

In situations where confidential information might be discussed, consent will be obtained from the customer, prior to any conversation where confidential information might be discussed.

**E. Notice of Disruptions in Service**

Service disruptions may occur due to reasons that may or may not be within the control or knowledge of GR. In the event of any temporary disruptions to facilities or services that customer's with disabilities rely on to access or use GR's goods or services, reasonable efforts will be made to provide advance notice. In some circumstances such as in the situation of unplanned temporary disruptions, advance notice may not be possible.

**Notifications will Include:**

In the event that a notification needs to be posted the following information will be included unless it is not readily available or known:

- goods or services that are disrupted or unavailable
- reason for the disruption
- anticipated duration
- a description of alternative services or options

**Notification Options:**

When disruptions occur GR will provide notice by:

- posting notices in conspicuous places including at the point of disruption, at the main reception and the nearest accessible entrance to the service disruption and/or on the GR website;
- contacting customers with appointments;
- verbally notifying customers when they are making a reservation or appointment; or
- by any other method that may be reasonable under the circumstances.

## F. Feedback Process

GR shall provide customers with the opportunity to provide feedback on the service provided to customers with disabilities. Information about the feedback process will be readily available to all customers and notice of the process will be made available on our company website at [www.grllp.com](http://www.grllp.com). Feedback forms along with alternate methods of providing feedback such as verbally (in person or by telephone) or written (hand written, delivered, website or email), will be available upon request.

### **Submitting Feedback:**

Customers can submit feedback to:

Ms. Talin Artinian  
 Human Resources Manager  
 416-865-6735  
 Bay Adelaide Centre - East Tower  
 22 Adelaide St West, Suite 3600  
 Toronto, ON M5H 4E3  
[tartinian@grllp.com](mailto:tartinian@grllp.com)  
[www.grllp.com](http://www.grllp.com)

Customers who wish to provide feedback by completing an onsite customer feedback form or verbally can do so to Ms. Talin Artinian.

Customers that provide formal feedback will receive acknowledgement of their feedback, along with any resulting actions based on concerns or complaints that were submitted.

## G. Training

Training will be provided to:

- e) all employees, volunteers, agents and/or contractors who deal with the public; and
- f) those who are involved in the development and approval of customer service policies, practices and procedures.

### **Training Provisions**

As reflected in *Ontario Regulation 429/07*, regardless of the format, training will cover the following:

- A review of the purpose of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*.
- A review of the requirements of the *Accessibility Standards for Customer Services, Ontario Regulation 429/07*.
- Instructions on how to interact with people with disabilities who:
  - Use assistive devices;
  - Require the assistance of a guide dog, service dog or other service animal; or
  - Require the use of a support person (including the handling of admission fees).
- Instructions on how to use equipment or devices that are available at our premises or that we provide that may help people with disabilities.
- Instructions on what to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing your services.

- GR's policies, procedures and practices pertaining to providing accessible customer service to customers with disabilities

**Training Schedule:**

GR will provide training as soon as practicable. Training will be provided to new employees, volunteers, agents and/or contractor who deal with the public or act on our behalf. Revised training will be provided in the event of changes to legislation, procedures and/or practices.

**Record of Training:**

GR will keep a record of training that includes the dates training was provided and the number of employees who attended the training.

H. Notice of Availability and Format of Documents

GR shall notify customers that the documents related to the *Accessibility Standard for Customer Service* are available upon request and in a format that takes into account the customer's disability. Notification will be given by posting the information in a conspicuous place owned and operated by GR, the firm's website and/or any other reasonable method.

**Administration**

If you have any questions or concerns about this policy or its related procedures please contact:

Ms. Talin Artinian  
Human Resources Manager  
416-865-6735  
Bay Adelaide Centre - East Tower  
22 Adelaide St West, Suite 3600  
Toronto, ON M5H 4E3  
[tartinian@grllp.com](mailto:tartinian@grllp.com)  
[www.grllp.com](http://www.grllp.com)

This policy and its related procedures will be reviewed as required in the event of legislative changes.



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### **Acknowledgement and Agreement**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, acknowledge that I have read and understand Gardiner Roberts LLP Accessible Customer Service Policy and its contents. I agree to adhere to the Policy, regulations and practices stated in the policy. I understand that if I violate the rules set forth under the Policy, I may face punitive or corrective action, up to and including the termination of employment, and/or potential legal action. I understand that the Firm expressly reserves the right to change, modify or delete the provisions without notice. I further agree that I am responsible for regularly reviewing the terms of the Accessible Customer Service Policy.

This completed form must be submitted to Human Resources.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Human Resources: \_\_\_\_\_