



Algoma Central Properties Inc.

Accessible Customer Service Policy

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA 2005)

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Algoma Central Properties Inc.

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Purpose

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 is Provincial legislation that sets out Standards of compliance to ensure that services provided to Ontarians with disabilities is accessible and provided in a manner that uses reasonable efforts consistent with the core principles of:

Dignity – services are provided in a respectful manner consistent with the needs of the individual.

Independence – services for persons with disabilities shall support their independence while respecting their right to safety and personal privacy.

Integration – allow people with disabilities to fully benefit from the same service, in the same place and in a similar way.

Equality of Opportunity – persons with disabilities are given the same opportunity to benefit from the services provided as other clients.

The mission of Algoma Central Properties Inc. is to provide access to all goods and services respecting the dignity and independence of all persons with disabilities. It is our commitment, that all persons with disabilities shall have the same opportunity to access said goods and services as any other customer. This includes our properties in Sault Ste. Marie, St. Catharines and Waterloo as follows:

Sault Ste. Marie

- Station Tower -421 Bay Street
- Station 49 – 49 St. Mary’s Drive
- 289 Bay Street
- Station Mall – 289 Bay Street

St. Catherines and Waterloo

- 63 Church Street
- Ridley Square – 111 4th Avenue
- Huntington Square – 211 Martindale Road
- Martindale Business Centre – 235 Martindale Road
- 20 Corporate Park Drive
- 25 Corporate Park Drive
- 75 Corporate Park Drive
- 408 Albert Street
- 410 Albert Street
- 412 Albert Street

Scope

Accessible Customer Service will be provided by all employees who communicate with the public, all management and program staff who develop our policies and procedures.

Our intent is to ensure all persons with disabilities receive customer service in a manner that takes into consideration their disability and offers excellence in customer service.

Note

Section 6(1) of the Regulation requires Algoma Central Properties Inc. to ensure that *"every person who deals with members of the public or other third parties on behalf of the provider, whether the person does so as an employee, agent, volunteer or otherwise"* is trained about providing goods or services to people with disabilities.

Other third parties might include:

- consultants
- contractors
- trainers

Algoma Central Properties Inc. will ensure all third party service providers meet this requirement of the Standard.

Definition and Accompanying Policy

Person with a Disability:

The definition of disability under the AODA is the same as the definition of disability in the Ontario Human Rights Code.

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) Section 2 states that "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 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;
- 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.

Communicating with Persons with Disabilities

Communication is a process of providing, sending, receiving and understanding information. This section of the regulation is a specific requirement to communicate with an individual with a disability in a way that takes the person's disability into account. This means that you must consider how the disability affects the way that the person expresses, receives or processes communications. The goal is to communicate in an effective way.

Policy

When communicating with a person with a disability, Algoma Central Properties Inc. will do so in a manner that takes into account the person's disability.

Algoma Central Properties Inc. is committed to providing fully accessible telephone service to our customers. Staff will be trained to communicate with customers over the telephone in clear and plain language, to speak clearly and slowly, and to tailor their responses as much as possible in support of the individual.

We are committed to providing accessible invoices to all of our customers. For this reason, invoices will be provided in the following formats upon request: hard copy, large print, E-mail.

Algoma Central Properties Inc. will offer to communicate with customers by other means, including

- E-mail, if telephone communication is not suitable to their communication needs or is not available,
- Bell Relay Service.

Support Person

A person who accompanies a person with a disability to assist him or her. A support person can be a professional, a family member, a friend, or other person who assists a person with a disability with communication, mobility, personal care, medical needs or with access to goods or services.

Policy

Algoma Central Properties Inc. is committed to welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person.

Fees are not normally associated with the nature of our business; however, should a situation or event arise, support persons would not be charged any admission fees.

The customer shall determine whether a support person is necessary; however, in the exceptional circumstance where an employee believes that a support person should be in attendance to protect the health and safety of the customer or others, the following criteria shall be used in consulting with the customer:

- When there is a significant risk to the health and safety of the person with a disability or to others (the mere possibility of risk is insufficient).
- When the risk is greater than the risk associated with other customers.
- When the risk cannot be eliminated or reduced by other means.
- When the assessment of the risk is based on consideration of the duration of the risk, the nature and severity of the potential harm, the likelihood that the potential harm will occur, and the imminence of the potential harm.
- When the assessment of the risk is based on the individual's actual characteristics, not merely on generalizations, misperceptions, ignorance or fears about a disability.

Please note that Algoma Central Properties Inc. would only request a support person on an exceptionally rare occasion.

Service Animal

Service animals are used by people with many different kinds of disabilities. Examples of service animals include dogs used by people who are blind; hearing-alert animals for people who are Deaf, deafened, or hard of hearing; and animals trained to alert an individual to an oncoming seizure and lead them to safety.

A service animal is defined in the Act as:

"Any animal where it is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to his or her disability and if the person provides a letter from a physician or nurse or other government issued certification confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability."

Policy

Persons with a disability accompanied by a service animal are welcome at Algoma Central Properties Inc.

We are 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 and other third parties. We will also ensure that all staff, volunteers and others dealing with the public are properly trained in how to interact with people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal.

If it is not readily apparent that the animal is a service animal, e.g. a guide dog with visible harness, Algoma Central Properties Inc. will use extreme discretion in asking the person with a disability to confirm the animal is a service animal by:

- Asking if the animal is a service animal.
- If concern or inappropriate animal behaviour ask for confirmation letter from a physician or nurse of service animal or identification card signed by the Attorney General of Canada or a certificate of training from a recognized guide dog or service animal training school.

Assistive Devices

Personal assistive devices are usually devices that people bring with them, such as, walkers, personal oxygen tanks, magnification devices, wheelchairs, canes, or other mobility devices that assist the person with daily living.

We are committed to serving people with disabilities who use assistive devices to obtain, use or benefit from our goods and services. We will ensure that our staff are trained and familiar with various assistive devices that may be used by customers with disabilities while accessing our goods or services.

We will also ensure that staff know how to use assistive devices available on our premises for customers.

Policy

Persons with disabilities shall be permitted to obtain, use or benefit from goods or services through the use of their own assistive devices.

Algoma Central Properties Inc. will also ensure that staff knows how to use the assistive devices which are available on our premises, including electronic door openers.

Exceptions may occur in situations where Algoma Central Properties Inc. has determined that the assistive device may pose a risk to the health and safety of a person with a disability or the health and safety of others on the premises.

In these situations and others, Algoma Central Properties Inc. may offer a person with a disability other reasonable measures to assist them in obtaining, using, and benefiting from the services of Algoma Central Properties Inc. where other measures are available.

It should be noted that it is the responsibility of the person with a disability to ensure that their assistive device is operated in a safe and controlled manner at all times.

Notice of Service Disruption

Algoma Central Properties Inc. 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.

Policy

Algoma Central Properties Inc. is aware that the operation of its services and facilities is important to the public. However, temporary disruptions in our services and facilities may occur due to reasons that may or may not be within Algoma Central Properties Inc.'s control or knowledge. Examples of this could be "snow days", disruptions in power or heat beyond our control.

Algoma Central Properties Inc. will make reasonable efforts to provide notice of the disruption to the public, including:

- The name of the event/service
- The service location being impacted
- Alternate service locations or service methods
- Hours of service availability
- Contact information
- Any other information deemed appropriate to deliver our service

Algoma Central Properties Inc. will make reasonable efforts to provide prior notice of planned disruption if possible, recognizing that in some circumstances, such as in the situation of unplanned temporary disruption (snow storms), advance notice will not be possible. In such cases, Algoma Central Properties Inc. will provide notice as soon as possible.

In the event of a temporary service disruption that would limit a person with a disability from gaining access to any/all of our properties, Algoma Central Properties Inc. will post a notice or otherwise make the disruption known to customers in the following methods and places:

Sault Ste. Marie

- Website home page www.thestationmall.com
- Facebook Fan Page

All other buildings and including the Station Mall:

- Notice on entrance doors
- Sault Ste. Marie Transit Services
- Telephone Voice Mail System – follow prompts to special announcements and shopping hours for current announcements.
- Station Mall Administration Office – central communications for all Sault Ste. Marie properties.

St Catherines and Waterloo

- Website home page www.algonet.com
- Notice on entrance doors to office buildings
- Telephone Voice Mail System
- 63 Church Street Property Management Office – central communications for all St. Catharines and Waterloo properties.

Feedback

The Customer Service Standard requires that a process be in place for receiving and responding to feedback about how you provide goods or services to people with disabilities.

Policy

The ultimate goal of Algoma Central Properties Inc. is to meet and surpass customer expectation 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 Algoma Central Properties Inc. provides goods and services to people with disabilities **can be made by (e-mail, verbally, in person, by telephone, or postal mail)**. All feedback will be directed to the Property Manager. Customers can expect to receive a response within three business days, in the format in which the feedback was received, outlining actions deemed appropriate, if any.

Algoma Central Properties Inc. is committed to providing high quality services to all members of the public it serves. At Algoma Central Properties Inc., feedback helps us to identify areas that require change and encourage continuous service improvements.

All feedback will be kept in strict confidence and used to improve customer service

Feedback mechanisms:

- Printed format Accessible Customer Service Questionnaires are available upon request.

Training

The Accessible Customer Service Standard requires providers to train staff on how to provide customer service to people with disabilities. Training should help to dispel myths, misconceptions, stereotypes and fears about people with disabilities.

Algoma Central Properties Inc. will provide training to all employees, volunteers, and others who deal with the public or other third parties on their behalf, and all those who are involved in the development and approvals of customer service policies, practices, and procedures.

Individuals in the following positions will be trained:

All persons, in all departments, employed by Algoma Central Properties Inc – Sault Ste. Marie, St. Catharines and Waterloo

Policy

Training will include the following:

- The purposes of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and the requirements of the Customer Service Standard.
- How to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities.
- How to interact with people with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or a support person.
- How to use the barrier-free entrance doors available on provider's premises that may help with the provision of goods or services to people with disabilities.
- What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing Algoma Central Property Inc.'s goods and services.
- Algoma Central Property Inc. policies, practices, and procedures relating to the Customer Service Standard.

Applicable staff will be trained on policies, practices, and procedures that affect the way goods and services are provided to people with disabilities. Staff will also be trained on an ongoing basis when changes are made to these policies, practices, and procedures as soon as is practical.

Training Records

Algoma Central Properties Inc. will keep records of all Accessible Customer Service training which include dates and content of training provided to each employee.

Third Party Service Providers

A requirement in the Regulation is that any person or organization that provides goods or services to customers on behalf of the Algoma Central Properties Inc. must receive training on providing accessible customer service.

Businesses and individuals that the Algoma Central Properties Inc. has contracted to provide goods or services to customers must ensure that their employees are trained on providing accessible customer service.

Notice of the Availability of Documents and Format of Documents

Algoma Central Properties Inc. will notify customers by posting a notice of availability of documents in conspicuous place on our premises.

Sault Ste. Marie

- Station Tower, Main Floor
- Station 49, Main Floor
- 289 Bay, Main Floor West Entrance
- Station Mall Administration Office

St. Catharines and Waterloo

- 63 Church Street – Management Office
- 20 Corporate Park Drive
- 25 Corporate Park Drive
- 75 Corporate Park Drive
- 410 Albert Street – Management Office

Policy

Our policy and procedures in providing documentation are:

- When providing a document to a person with a disability Algoma Central Properties Inc. will provide the document, or the information contained in the document, in a format that takes the person's disability into account.
- **As a work in progress**, all existing forms and documents will be made accessible in the following formats:
 - Large print
 - All existing in-house forms that would be normally available for the public will be reviewed for "plain language" content and revised where necessary
 - Any future in-house forms that would normally be available for the public will be created with plain language
 - All forms, documents, and materials will include "Alternative formats available upon request"

A copy of any of our accessibility documents is available to anyone who asks for them.

Modifications to this and future policies

Algoma Central Properties Inc. is committed to developing customer service policies that respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities.

Therefore, any changes made to this policy will consider the needs of people with disabilities.

Any policy of Algoma Central Properties Inc. that does not respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities will be modified or removed.

Questions about this policy

This policy exists to achieve service excellence to customers with disabilities. If anyone has a question about the policy, or if the purpose of a policy is not understood, an explanation should be provided by, or referred to, the customer service department and/or the Property Manager.