



# **CUSTOMER SERVICE POLICY**

Revised: February 2020

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## PURPOSE

Ontario Northland strives at all times to provide its goods and services in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. Ontario Northland is also committed to providing people with disabilities the same opportunity to access our goods and services and allowing them to benefit from the same services, in the same place and in a similar way as other customers.

## CORE PRINCIPLES

To effectively serve all customers, Ontario Northland shall incorporate the following core principles into its procedures and practices:

### Equity

Treat all customers in a way that is inclusive and equitable, without exclusions;

### Independence

Provide maximum autonomy to people with disabilities, while respecting their right to privacy and security;

### Dignity

Recognize all customers for their inherent value and treat them with respect;

### Responsiveness

Identify and address the needs of all customers, including those with disabilities through customer service policy and practices that respect and value the input and experiences of all customers;

### Accessibility

Make services and their delivery methods accessible to all customers, removing both physical and attitudinal barriers and impediments for people with disabilities;

### Sensitivity

Ensure that customer service personnel are aware of and understand the needs of people with disabilities, so that they can be sensitive and civil in their communications with all customers;

### Quality

Develop a management system that provides the ability to plan, execute, check and act to improve service processes and customer experiences;

### Commitment and Resources

Ensure organizational commitment and resources to implement practices that address the needs of all people.

## **PROVIDING GOODS AND SERVICES TO PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES**

Ontario Northland is committed to excellence in serving all customers including people with disabilities and we will carry out our functions and responsibilities in the following areas:

### Communication

We will communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability.

We will train staff who communicate with customers on how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities.

### Telephone services

We are committed to providing fully accessible telephone service to our customers. We will train staff to communicate with customers over the telephone in clear and plain language and to speak clearly and slowly.

We will offer to communicate with customers by email and relay services if telephone communication is not suitable to their communication needs or is not available.

## Assistive devices

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, such as wheelchair lifts, automatic doors, elevators, automated announcements, etc.

## Billing

We are committed to providing accessible invoices to all of our customers. For this reason, invoices will be provided in alternate formats upon request such as hard copy, large print, e-mail, etc.

We will answer any questions customers may have about the content of the invoice in person, by telephone or email.

## **USE OF SERVICE ANIMALS AND SUPPORT PERSONS**

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.

We are committed to welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person. Any person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person will be allowed to enter Ontario Northland's premises with his or her support person. At no time will a person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person be prevented from having access to his or her support person while on our premises.

Ontario Northland allows accompaniment by an adult attendant or a service animal on all passenger transportation services. Ontario Northland will not charge a fare for the support person or support animal who is accompanying a person with a disability who has a need for a support person.

Customers will be informed of eligibility by a notice that will be posted in Ontario Northland's premises, on Ontario Northland's website and in fare publications.

## **NOTICE OF TEMPORARY DISRUPTION**

Ontario Northland will provide customers with notice in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in the facilities or services usually used by people with disabilities. This notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available.

The notice will be placed at all public entrances and service counters on our premises and posted to our website.

## **TRAINING FOR STAFF**

Ontario Northland 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.

This training will be provided as part of the standard employee orientation or as soon as possible after staff commences their duties.

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 special equipment or devices e.g., wheelchair lifts, scooter ramps, automated announcements, available on Ontario Northland's premises or otherwise 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 Ontario Northland's goods and services.
- Ontario Northland's 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.

## **FEEDBACK PROCESS**

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

Feedback regarding the way Ontario Northland provides goods and services to people with disabilities can be made by e-mail, verbally, regular mail, feedback card, etc. All feedback will be directed to the appropriate division head responsible for customer service.

All feedback will be addressed according to feedback categories already established in our company's customer service procedures.

## **MODIFICATIONS TO THIS OR OTHER POLICIES**

We are committed to developing customer service policies that respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. Therefore, no changes will be made to this policy before considering the impact on people with disabilities.

Any policy of Ontario Northland 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 Director Passenger Operations at Ontario Northland.