



CUSTOMER ACCESSIBILITY GUIDELINE:

To Access Ontario Northland Services

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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 giving 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.

This is achieved through training staff who communicate with customers and passengers on how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities.

Ontario Northland also provides accessible formats and communication to support persons with disabilities at no cost in a timely manner. A request can be made by email to the Communications Department who will consult with the person making the request in determining the suitability of an accessible format or communications support.

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

At Ontario Northland, 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 is trained and familiar with various assistive devices that may be used by customers and passengers with disabilities while accessing our goods or services.

We will also ensure that staff knows how to use assistive devices available on our premises such as wheelchair lifts, automatic doors, elevators, automated announcements, etc.

WHEELCHAIR DEVICES

Motor Coach Services

At Ontario Northland, we operate several motor coaches equipped with elevator platforms to accommodate passengers with reduced mobility or in wheelchairs. To better inform our customers lift specifications are in the following table:

Motor Coach Service Wheelchair Lifts	
Lift Capacity	660 pounds
Platform Width	30 inches
Platform Length	48 inches
Vertical Travel	50 inches

Ontario Northland will transport scooters in the undercarriage of the motor coach, provided the scooter meets the following criteria for transportation:

Motor Coach Service Scooter Ramps	
Maximum Weight	250 pounds
Maximum width	28 inches
Maximum height	28 inches (seat and steering wheel must be collapsed)
Maximum length	48 inches

Passengers who require to travel with their scooter must notify Ontario Northland 48 hours in advance at 1.800.461.8558 to ensure the required ramps are available to allow the loading of the scooter underneath the bus. A maximum of two (2) scooters may be loaded on the same service.

Polar Bear Express Passenger Train

We operate a wheelchair device for our Polar Bear Express train at our stations in Cochrane and Moosonee. To better inform our customers lift specifications for both manual and battery operated wheelchairs are located in the following table:

POLAR BEAR EXPRESS	
Maximum Lift Capacity	600 pounds
Maximum Chair Width	28 inches
Maximum Chair Length	48 inches
Chair Height	72 inches
Maximum Vertical Travel	60 inches
Main entrance to the coach is 28 inches wide.	

Due to the weight and size restrictions with motorized scooters, at this time, they are not permitted on the Polar Bear Express.

Passengers who are travelling on the Polar Bear Express and require access to our wheelchair lift are requested to make reservations 24 hours in advance by calling 1.800.265.2356.

USE OF SERVICE ANIMALS AND SUPPORT PERSONS

Service Animals

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.

Support Persons

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 our 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 has a fee schedule for support persons to accompany customers on any of our motor coaches and passenger trains, posted at all of our stations and on the following pages of our website:

Motor Coach Services:

<http://ontarionorthland.ca/en/travelling-bus>

Polar Bear Express Service:

<http://ontarionorthland.ca/index.php/en/travelling-train>

Passengers who require their attendants to travel with them must obtain a second ticket for their attendant; this ticket is free; however, it is only applicable for Ontario Northland services. If the passenger is transferring to another carrier, please check for the appropriate carrier's customer service policy for further information. The attendant ticket is valid only on the date and time indicated on the reservation.

Procedure to Purchase an Attendant Ticket

The special needs passenger must present for each trip, a valid card from a recognized association or institution for persons with disabilities or a recent letter dated within the last nine months and signed by a Physician stating the person is permanently disabled and cannot travel alone. The passenger will pay the applicable fare (i.e., senior, student or child's fare – which includes a child under two years of age) and this one fare will apply to the transportation of the two

passengers. Ontario Northland will provide two tickets, one for the passenger and one for the attendant.

Please note, in order to receive a refund, the attendant ticket must accompany the fare paying passenger ticket.

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 in some instances, such as a wheel chair lift temporarily out of service, we will post a notification on 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 to employees who deal with the public on a regular or infrequent basis. These staff will be trained on policies, practices and procedures that affect the way goods and services are provided to people with disabilities. Employees will also be trained on an ongoing basis when changes are made to these policies, practices and procedures.

At the time of this document, the utmost 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, such as wheelchair lifts, etc., available on our premises or equipment that may assist with the provision of goods or services to customers or passengers with disabilities;
- What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing Ontario Northland's goods and services; and or
- Ontario Northland's policies, practices and procedures relating to the customer service standard.

FEEDBACK PROCESS

It is the objective of Ontario Northland to meet and surpass our customer and passengers' expectation while serving customers with disabilities. Comments on our services regarding how well those expectations are being met are welcome and appreciated. To learn how you can provide us with feedback, please see the Customer Feedback Process, located at the bottom of our main webpage under 'About Us > Accessibility'.

MODIFICATIONS TO THIS GUIDELINE OR OTHER POLICES

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 THE CUSTOMER SERVICE POLICY

The policy exists to achieve service excellence to customers with disabilities. Any 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 of Passenger Operations of Ontario Northland.