

SUBJECT: POLICY: AODA-CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARD PROCEDURE (ACCESSIBILITY POLICY)	PAGE 1 OF 6
	EFFECTIVE DATE: DECEMBER 2012 REVISION DATE:

**Policy**

Sensity is committed to complying with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) and all of the standards under it in order to create a barrier-free Ontario.

**Purpose**

To establish accessibility standards for ensuring that all persons receiving service and support from Sensity experience an optimally accessible environment.

**Scope**

This policy and its accompanying procedures shall apply to all employees.

**Definitions**

**Alternative format** shall mean any other ways of publishing information beyond traditional printing (i.e. large print, audio format, braille, etc.).

**Assistive devices** shall mean an auxiliary aid such as communication aids, cognition aids, personal mobility aids and medical aids (i.e. canes, electronic communication devices, wheelchairs, hearing aids, etc.).

**Consumers /Customers** shall mean any person who receives goods or services.

**Disabilities** shall mean the same as the definition of disability found in the Ontario Human Rights Code:

- (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.

- (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

**Employees** shall mean every person who deals with members of the public or other third parties on behalf of Sensity, whether the person does so as an employee, board member, volunteer or otherwise.

**Persons with Disabilities** shall mean those individuals with a disability as defined under the Ontario Human Rights Code.

**Service Animals** shall mean any animal individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of a person with a disability.

**Support persons** shall mean any person, whether a paid professional, volunteer, family member or friend, who accompanies a person with a disability in order to help with communications, personal care or medical needs or with access to goods or services.

### Overview of Plans/ Procedures

Under the AODA and O. Reg 429/07 the Organization is required, by law, to develop and maintain policies and procedures specifically addressing:

- Accessible consumer service (the manner in which goods and services are provided to people with disabilities)
- Assistive Devices
- Communication
- Service Animals
- Support Persons
- Notice of Temporary Disruptions
- Training
- Consumer Feedback

**Please see attached for each individual Plan/Procedure**

The Accessibility policy is available at all Sensity locations. Accessible formats of this policy will be made available if required and as requested.

The Accessibility Plan identifies and addresses barriers which may be found at any locations owned or operated by Sensity and encourages awareness of any barriers at community locations or services which may be accessed by the Consumers we support so that they also may be brought to the attention of those locations and services. Barriers have been broken down into the following areas: *Architectural, Environmental, Attitudinal, Financial, Employment, Transportation and Community Integration.*

Identified barriers may be brought to the attention of a Manager at any time. Barrier Identification forms are available at all Sensity locations as well as on the Sensity website to ensure that all Consumers, employees, volunteers, families and visitors have an opportunity to identify any barriers they may encounter while accessing our services. Forms will be reviewed by the senior management team and plans will be put in place to remove all barriers as deemed applicable and feasible.

### Communication

- a) This policy and its accompanying procedures will be communicated to all employees during orientation training.
- b) Any revisions to this procedure will be communicated to employees, as required.

### Training

- a) Training will be arranged as deemed necessary, by legislative requirements and/or organizational goals (see attached procedure).
- b) All training sign-off sheets and/or quizzes will be maintained by the Human Resources department for the duration of the relationship between Sensity and the applicable party.

### Evaluation

- a) This policy will be evaluated at least annually by the Health & Safety Officer to ensure that all legislative requirements are being met.
- b) Changes will not be made to this policy without considering the impact on people with disabilities.
- c) All policies will be reviewed annually; any policy that does not respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities will be modified or removed.

### Reports/Forms

Barrier Identification Form

Consumer Feedback Form

### References

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)  
Ontario Human Rights Code  
Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom

Freedom of Information and protection of Personal Privacy Act (FIPPA)

## Plans/Procedures

### **Accessible Customer Service**

Sensity is committed to providing goods and services that are accessible to all people. To ensure accessible customer service, the Organization will use reasonable effort to ensure that all policies, procedure and practices related to the provision of goods and services to people with disabilities are consistent with the following principles:

1. Dignity
  - a. Goods and services will be provided in a way that allows people to maintain self-respect and the respect of others.
  - b. People with disabilities are as valued and deserving of full and effective services as any other consumer.
  - c. Sensity will ensure all privacy of the consumer is respected.
2. Independence
  - a. Goods and services will be provided without unnecessary help or interference from others.
  - b. Independence means freedom to makes one's own choices and decisions.
  - c. People with disabilities will be able to benefit from the same services, in the same place, and in the same or similar ways as other consumers.
3. Integration
  - a. Integrated services are those that are designed to be accessible to everyone including people with disabilities
  - b. In some cases, based on individuals' needs, integration may not serve the needs of all people. If this is the case alternative measures to integration will be provided.
4. Equality of Opportunity
  - a. Goods and services will be provided in such a way that a person with a disability will have the same opportunity to benefit from our good and services as others.
  - b. A person with a disability should not have to make significantly more effort to access or obtain our goods and services and should not have to accept less quality or more inconvenience.

### **Assistive Devices**



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The organization is committed to providing exceptional customer service to all consumers, including those who use assistive devices in order to obtain, use or benefit from our goods and services. Sensity will support people to use their own personal assistive devices, unless otherwise prohibited by law, to access our goods and services.

Sensity employees will be familiar with and supportive of the use of various assistive devices that may be used by our consumers while accessing our goods and services. It is 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.

## Communication

To ensure the best possible customer service, Sensity encourages open two-way communication with all persons interacting with the organization to ensure the need for accommodation or assistance is met. Sensity will train employees in how to interact and communicate with others guided by the principle of dignity, independence, integration and equality.

Persons who identify themselves as requiring alternative communication formats are offered alternative communication in a format that meets their needs as promptly as is feasible; for example:

- Documents are provided in alternative formats that meet the needs of the person in a timely manner.
- If telephone communication is not suitable for the person's need, alternative forms of communication are offered.

## Service Animals

Sensity welcomes persons with disabilities to bring their service animal on the parts of our premises that are open to the public or other third parties, but may be restricted in areas that are otherwise governed by other laws such as Health Protection and Promotions Act (sec. 59e). Restrictions may also apply to residences where an individual lives who may have a severe allergy. Where such case arises where service animal are not permitted on the property, alternative arrangements will be made (i.e. teleconference or other assistive measures available to deliver goods or services to ensure equality of outcome).

## Support Persons

Sensity is committed to welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person and will be allowed to enter the premises with his or her support person. At no time will a person with a disability who is

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accompanied by a support person be prevented from having access to his or her support person while on the premises.

Fees will not be charged for the support person for admission to recreation programs or services.

Where admission fees for the support person are applicable, Sensity will provide advance notice of the fee.

Sensity may deem it necessary to require a support person for a person with a disability in order to protect the health and safety of that person or of others on the premises. This will only occur after consultation with the person with a disability and when it's the only means to access to Sensity's services.

### Notice of Temporary Disruptions

In the event of a planned or unexpected disruption to services or facilities for consumers, Sensity will notify consumers promptly. This clearly posted notice will include information about the reason for disruption and its anticipated length of time. The notice will be placed on the front door of the location where the services are provided as well as on the Sensity website.

### Training

Sensity will provide training to all employees who support people with disabilities or come in contact with any other person who may access our services, and all those who are involved in the development and approvals of customer service policies, practices and procedures.

New and current employees will be trained by completing the **Serve-ability: Transforming Ontario's Customer Service on-line training** by accessing [www.mcass.gov.on.ca/serve-ability/splash.html](http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/serve-ability/splash.html) with employees signing off and/or completing a quiz to ensure the training is understood and complete.

### Consumer Feedback

Consumers who wish to provide feedback on the way Sensity provided goods and services to persons with disabilities can contact the Health and Safety Officer by way of phone, e-mail, verbally or by completing the attached Consumer Feedback form. All feedback, including complaints, will be reviewed by the senior management team and plans will be put in place to improve the Customer Service of Sensity as deemed applicable and feasible.