



Accessibility Policy

ORG-ACC-001

Scope

This policy applies to all employees at all RHC sites.

Purpose

This policy provides guidance for the processes established to ensure that services will be provided in a manner that respects the privacy, dignity, and independence of all and that persons with disabilities and will be integrated wherever possible in the provision of services and employment.

We are committed to establishing, maintaining and providing exceptional and accessible services and employment under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and Ontario's accessibility laws.

Responsibility

The Board of Directors, through the President & CEO, will ensure that all policies and procedures are consistent with the core principles of the accessibility standards (Appendix II). They will review the nature, manner, and methods with which the organization addresses the needs of people with disabilities and will support associated mandatory training.

The Accessibility Committee is responsible for identifying and initiating policy development which will reflect the principles defined in the accessibility standards and for supporting educational programs that will raise and maintain awareness of accessibility issues.

Department heads are responsible for maintaining departmental policies and procedures in accordance with the core principles of the standard.

Training

We are committed to training all staff, volunteers, students, and contractors in Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Training, Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulations training, and to continue to build and maintain accessibility awareness while providing goods, services, and employment. The training also includes how to interact and communicate with people with disabilities, how to interact with people with disabilities who use an assistive device or require assistance of a service animal or support person, and how to use equipment or devices on site.

We maintain training records of who completed the training, and the date of training is completed. Training occurs annually, or if there are changes to the policies or procedures.

Support for People with Disabilities:

People with disabilities who require assistance of:

Assistive Devices

We allow people with disabilities to bring their assistive devices to the Facilities when accessing our goods or services. In cases, when the assistive devices present an unavoidable health or safety concern, other devices or measures will be used to ensure one can access our goods and services.

Support Person Access

A person with a disability who is required to be accompanied by a support person will be allowed at all times, unless otherwise directed due to medical necessities. It will be asked if confidential information can be shared in the presence of the support person.

Before making a decision, Riverside Health Care Facility will:

- Consult with the person with a disability to understand their needs
- Consider health or safety reasons based on available evidence
- Determine if there are no other reasonable way to protect the health or safety of the person or others on the premises.

If the customer is receiving care or service in a restricted area, such as a surgical suite, we will explain that the support person will not be allowed and we will discuss alternative options for providing support.

Service Animals

We welcome service animals in all public areas on our premises. If the service animal is not visibly identifiable, we may request a letter from a regulated health professional confirming the need for the animal based on a disability. We also might ask for the animal's current immunization records.

A regulated health professional is defined as a member of one of the following colleges:

- College of Audiologists and Speech Language Pathologists of Ontario
- College of Chiropractors of Ontario
- College of Nurses of Ontario
- College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario
- College of Optometrists of Ontario
- College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario
- College of Physiotherapists of Ontario
- College of Psychologists of Ontario
- College of Registered Psychotherapists and Registered Mental Health Therapists of Ontario

Service animals are prohibited in the areas listed below:

- Surgical Suites
- Intermediate Care Unit
- Labour and Delivery
- Newborn Nursery
- Food preparation & serving areas
- Medication or clean/sterile storage areas

A person with a disability is responsible for maintaining care and control of the service animal during their visit. If they are unable to maintain care for the service animal, it will be requested that an alternate caretaker of the animal is available.

The Pet Procedure – ORG-INF-GEN-81 will be taken into consideration when accommodating a service animal.

Notice of Temporary Disruption

During a disruption in service, planned or unexpected, a notice will go out promptly including the following details:

- The nature of the disruption in service

- The reason for the disruption
- The expected duration of the disruption
- A description of alternatives to service, if available
- A contact number for more information

The notice will be posted to our website and other media as required. If signage is required, each department will be responsible for posting signs in their affected areas.

Emergency Procedures and Plans

Upon request, we will provide our emergency procedures and plans in an accessible format or communication support.

Please refer to our AODA Employee Emergency Response Process – ORG – HRM – WELL – 100

Feedback Process

In our ongoing efforts to reduce the barriers to accessibility for people with disabilities we invite feedback about our services. In order to provide feedback, we have an Accessibility Form on our website: [Riverside - Accessibility](#). Feedback can also be provided via telephone, email, or in person. The form will be sent to our Administration Department and then brought to the Accessibility Committee to follow up and make recommendations. Contact information is located on our website. Customers can expect to hear back in a timely manner.

Notice of Availability of Documents

Upon request we will provide documents in an accessible format or with communication support.

Procurement

We incorporate accessibility criteria and features when procuring or acquiring goods, services, or facilities. If it is not possible and practical to do so, we will provide an explanation upon request.

Information and Communication

We have a process in place for receiving and responding to feedback, and this process is accessible to people with disabilities upon request. We are committed to creating, providing, and maintaining information and communication in ways that are accessible to people with disabilities. We will work directly with the person with a disability to determine the most appropriate method of communication that meets their needs.

Self - Service Kiosks

Accessibility considerations will be integrated into the design, procurement, and acquisition of all self-service kiosks to ensure they are usable by individuals with disabilities.

Design of Public Spaces

We will comply with all applicable accessibility laws when constructing new public areas or making major changes to existing ones.

Employment

Please refer to the following policies and procedures:

- AODA Emergency Response Process
- AODA Accessibility Accommodation Process – ORG – HRM WELL – 101
- Reporting Employee Absences and Return to Work Processes
- Employee Performance Management – ORG – HRM – ERL -705 Employee Performance

Transportation

We comply with all applicable accessibility laws when providing our transportation services. Our accessible transportation services include:

- Handivan
- Specialty & Diagnostic Transportation

Changes to Existing Policies

This policy will be reviewed and updated as needed. Changes may be made at any time to reflect organizational or legal requirements. This document is publicly available. Accessible formats are available upon request

Definitions

“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*; (“handicap”)

“Support Person” means:

- a) Defined under Section 4(8) Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, O. Reg. 429/07 as follows:
“ A support person means, in relation to a person with a disability, another person who accompanies the person in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care, or medical needs or with access to goods or services”

Accessibility Principles

The provider shall use reasonable efforts to ensure that its policies, practices and procedures are consistent with the following principles:

1. The goods or services must be provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.
2. The provision of goods or services to persons with disabilities and others must be integrated unless an alternate measure is necessary, whether temporarily or on a permanent basis, to enable a person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the goods or services.
3. Persons with disabilities must be given an opportunity equal to that given to others to obtain, use and benefit from the goods or services.

References

The following processes support this policy:

- Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, S.O. 2005, C.11
- Integrated Accessibility Standards, O. Reg. 191/11
- A Guide to the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation, April 2014

- Human Rights Code, R.S.O 1990, c. H.19
- Departmental Management of Service Animal Procedure – ORG – ACC - 009
- AODA Accessibility Accommodation Process
- AODA Employee Emergency Response Process