



POLICY AND PROCEDURE MANUAL

SECTION: Human Resources

POLICY: HR 01

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ACCESSIBILITY POLICY

PREAMBLE

Contact Brant is committed to upholding and exceeding Ontario's legislation intended to remove barriers to accessibility for persons with disabilities. This includes providing equal access to employment, information, goods and services, and treating persons with disabilities with dignity and respect in a way that takes their disability into account.

Contact Brant is committed to giving people with disabilities the same opportunity of access to our services and in a similar way that these services are available to all others we serve. Contact Brant will abide by the provisions of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, as well as the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Regulation (AODA regulation 429/07). Contact Brant is committed to providing services to clients, families, the public, and staff that are free of barriers and biases. (Also see Confidentiality Policy; Complaints Policy)

Users of Contact Brant services and facilities may have disabilities and may use personal assistive devices. Examples of assistive devices include:

- Wheelchair, scooter, walker, cane
- Hearing aids or amplification device
- Oxygen tanks
- Electronic notebooks or laptop computers
- Personal data managers
- Communication boards using symbols, words or pictures
- Speech-generating device that 'speaks' when a symbol, word or picture is pressed.

A key point to remember is not to touch or handle an assistive device without permission.

- Ask to move a person in a wheelchair and confirm that the person is ready to move
- Wait for and follow the person's instructions
- Describe what you are going to do/where you are going before you do it
- Avoid uneven ground and objects that create a bumpy and unsafe ride
- Practice consideration and safety – do not leave the person in an awkward, dangerous or undignified position such as facing a wall or in the path of opening doors
- Do not move items or equipment such as canes or walkers out of the user's reach
- Respect personal space. Do not lean over a person with a disability or lean on their assistive device
- Let the person know about accessible features in the immediate environment (e.g., automatic doors, accessible washrooms, elevator)

Communicating with people with disabilities:

- Speak as you would to anyone, talking directly to the person with disabilities and making eye contact
- Adjust your communication only according to the person's specific needs for accommodation, which may include speaking slower, speaking a bit louder, simplifying communication, pausing sufficiently to allow the person to reply, informing the person directly if you require assistance yourself with their form of communication, inquiring if an interpreter is required

Definitions

Definitions are taken from the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*, S.O. 2005, C. 11 or *Ontario Human Rights Code*.

"*Accessible formats*" may include, but are not limited to, large print, recorded audio and electronic formats, braille, and other formats usable by persons with disabilities.

"*Barrier*" means anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of his or her disability, including a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, an information or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy, or a practice; ("obstacle").

"*Disability*" is defined broadly by the *Ontario Human Rights Code* include both visible and non-visible disabilities such as physical disabilities, vision disabilities, deafness or being hard of hearing, intellectual or developmental disabilities, learning disabilities, and mental health disabilities:

1. 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 coordination, 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,
2. A condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability,
3. A learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,
4. A mental disorder, or
5. an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act*, 1997."

POLICY

Contact Brant will make every reasonable effort to meet the requirements of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)*, 2005, including all applicable elements of the *Integrated Accessibility Standards*:

1. Information and Communication
2. Employment
3. Customer Service
4. Design of Public Spaces
5. Transportation

Contact Brant will orient employees, volunteers, and students to ensure they are familiar with our policies, practices, and procedures for communicating with and providing services to persons with disabilities.

PROCEDURE

1. The Chief Executive Officer and Managers will ensure appropriate training is available for employees to ensure they are familiar with policies, practices, and procedures for communicating with and providing services to persons with disabilities.
2. The Chief Executive Officer will address barriers in a timely manner, and inform the Board of Contact Brant of any identified barriers as well as recommended solutions.

3. Information and Communication

Contact Brant will make its information accessible to people with disabilities by creating materials and supports in accessible formats, and it will notify the public of the types of accessible formats provided.

Contact Brant will deliver alternate formats of information to clients, upon request. If a particular material cannot be converted into an accessible format that meets the needs of the person requesting it, Contact Brant will provide details of why it cannot be converted and provide a summary of the information or communication in another way that is suitable to the person requesting it. This extends to any emergency procedures or safety information prepared by Contact Brant.

4. Employment

Contact Brant welcomes and encourages employment applications from people with disabilities and will do its part to make hiring and employee support practices more accessible by providing accommodation during all stages of recruitment, hiring, and employment.

- 4.1 If a job applicant requests accommodation, Contact Brant will consult with the applicant and provide suitable accommodation that takes the person's accessibility needs into account.
 - 4.2 When making offers of employment, Contact Brant will notify the successful applicant of its policies for accommodating employees with disabilities.
 - 4.3 New employees will be reminded about the organization's job accommodation policies as soon as possible upon being hired and notified when any future changes are made to policies. Policy and practice information will include available employment accommodations that will be provided for job related matters such as performance management, career development, emergency response plans, and return to work information.
 - 4.4 Contact Brant will consult with an employee who requests it, to provide or arrange for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports that take the employee's needs into account when providing information that is needed to perform the employee's job, and information that is generally available to employees in the workplace.
- ### **5. Customer Service**
- Contact Brant will provide customer service in a manner that removes barriers for people with disabilities according to the following key principles of the AODA:

- 5.1 Goods and services will be provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.
- 5.2 Service to people with disabilities will be integrated with others unless the person with the disability requires an alternate way of providing the goods, services, or facilities.
- 5.3 Persons with disabilities will be given equal opportunity to use and benefit from the goods, services, or facilities an organization or business has to offer.
- 5.4 We will communicate with people with disabilities in a way that takes the individual's disability into account.

6. **Assistive Devices, and Service Animals, Service Dogs or Guide Dogs:**

Persons with disabilities who use an assistive device will be permitted to use their own device to access the goods and services of Contact Brant. Assistive devices are used by people with disabilities to help with daily living and include a broad range of products such as wheelchairs, walkers, white canes, oxygen tanks, portable chalk boards and electronic communication devices that people may bring to the premises.

If a guide dog or other service animal accompanies a person with a disability, Contact Brant shall ensure that the person is permitted to enter the premises with the animal and to keep the animal with him or her, unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law from the premises. Employees must be prepared to respond to special situations, such as other customers having an allergy or great fear of animals, and making every effort to meet the needs of both individuals.

7. **Support Workers:** If a support person accompanies a person with a disability, Contact Brant will ensure that both persons are permitted to enter the premises together and that the person with a disability is not prevented from having access to the support person while on the premises.

Employees will secure consent of the individual/guardian regarding disclosures made in the presence of the support person.

8. **Service Interruptions:** If there is a temporary disruption in any of our services either in whole or in part, Contact Brant will provide notice of the disruption to the public via as many channels as possible, in accessible formats, where available, including physically posting notices where the disruption is taking place as well as through any other channels that are appropriate such as email, phone, text, social media, or on our website. Notice of the disruption will include the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration and a description of alternative facilities or services, if any, that are available.

9. **Process for Receiving Feedback:** Contact Brant will accept feedback about the way in which it provides goods and services to persons with disabilities in person, by phone or email, or in another way that is suitable to a person with a disability.

When a complaint is received about the manner in which we provide goods, services or facilities to persons with disabilities, Contact Brant will let the person who submitted the feedback know about the actions the organization will take to resolve the issue.

10. **Design of Public Spaces**

If Contact Brant redesigns or redevelops an outdoor public space such as a parking area, outdoor eating area or play space, exterior path of travel, recreational trail or beach access route, or an indoor or outdoor service counter, waiting area or queuing line, it will do so in accordance the Design of Public Spaces Standard of the AODA. Contact Brant will also ensure any newly redesigned or redeveloped areas are maintained in accordance with the rules set out by the AODA.

10.1 Contact Brant will provide an environment in its facilities and exhibit conduct that reflects and values diversity, dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity for our clients, families, the public, staff and volunteers.

10.2 Employees will ensure that the facilities' accessibility elements, including the elevator and wheelchair accessible door, are functioning, and will ensure they are knowledgeable on how to operate these accessibility elements.

10.3 Employees will inform the Chief Executive Officer of any physical barriers, architectural barriers, information/communication barriers, technological barriers, or a policy or practice that pose barriers for people with disabilities.

10.4 The CEO will ensure that wheelchair accessibility signage is maintained and visible, and that any parts of the facilities that are not open to the public are marked "Employees Only".

11. **Transportation**

Contact Brant does not provide conventional or specialized transportation services to passengers and is not required to adhere to the Transportation Standard.