



ESS Direct Inc. Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation Policy

ESS Direct Inc.

Providing goods, services or facilities to people with disabilities

ESS Direct Inc. is committed to meeting its current and ongoing obligations under the Ontario Human Rights Code respecting non-discrimination.

ESS Direct Inc. understands that obligations under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)* and its accessibility standards do not substitute or limit its obligations under the Ontario Human Rights Code or obligations to people with disabilities under any other law.

ESS Direct Inc. is committed to complying with both the *Ontario Human Rights Code* and the *AODA*.

ESS Direct Inc. is committed to excellence in serving all customers including people with disabilities.

Our accessible customer service policies are consistent with the principles of independence, dignity, integration and equality of opportunity for people with disabilities.

Assistive devices

People with disabilities may use their personal assistive devices when accessing our goods, services or facilities.

In cases where the assistive device presents a significant and unavoidable health or safety concern or may not be permitted for other reasons, other measures will be used to ensure the person with a disability can access our goods, services or facilities.

We will ensure that our staff are trained and familiar with various assistive devices we have on site or that we provide that may be used by customers with disabilities while accessing our goods, services or facilities.

Communication

We will communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability. This may include the following:

We will work with the person with a disability to determine what method of communication works for them.

Service animals

We welcome people with disabilities and their service animals. Service animals are allowed on the parts of our premises that are open to the public.

When we cannot easily identify that an animal is a service animal, our staff may ask a person to provide documentation (template, letter or form) from a regulated health professional that confirms the person needs the service animal for reasons relating to their disability.

A service animal can be easily identified through visual indicators, such as when it wears a harness or a vest, or when it helps the person perform certain tasks.

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

If service animals are prohibited by another law, we will do the following to ensure people with disabilities can access our goods, services or facilities:

- explain why the animal is excluded
- discuss with the customer another way of providing goods, services or facilities

Support persons

A person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person will be allowed to have that person accompany them on our premises.

- Fee/fare will not be charged for support persons.

In certain cases, ESS Direct Inc. might require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person for the health or safety reasons of:

- the person with a disability
- others on the premises

Before making a decision, ESS Direct Inc. will:

- consult with the person with a disability to understand their needs
- consider health or safety reasons based on available evidence
- determine if there is no other reasonable way to protect the health or safety of the person or others on the premises

If ESS Direct Inc. determines that a support person is required, we will waive the admission fee or fare for the support person

Notice of temporary disruption

In the event of a planned or unexpected disruption to services or facilities for customers with disabilities ESS Direct Inc. will notify customers promptly. This clearly posted notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated length of time, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available.

The notice will be made publicly available in the following ways:

Posted on front door of building, via phone and/or email, message on answering machine and posted to social media.

Training

ESS Direct Inc. will provide accessible customer service training to:

- all employees and volunteers
- anyone involved in developing our policies
- anyone who provides goods, services or facilities to customers on our behalf.

Staff will be trained on accessible customer service within one week after being hired.

Training will include:

- purpose of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and the requirements of the customer service standard
- ESS Direct Inc.'s policies related to 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 equipment or devices available on-site or otherwise that may help with providing goods, services or facilities to people with disabilities.
- what to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing ESS Direct Inc.'s goods, services or facilities

Staff will also be trained when changes are made to our accessible customer service policies.

Feedback process

ESS Direct Inc welcomes feedback on how we provide accessible customer service. Customer feedback will help us identify barriers and respond to concerns.

Customers will be notified of how to provide feedback in the following ways:

Facebook Page, comment box in lobby, call or email to owners.

Customers who wish to provide feedback on the way ESS Direct Inc. provides goods, services or facilities to people with disabilities can provide feedback in the following way(s):

Contact owners – Susie Parker/Sinda Simpson – phone call, 705.730.1899 or email sinda@essdirect.ca or susie@essdirect.ca.

All feedback, including complaints, will be handled in the following manner:

Feedback will be directed to the owners and customers can expect to hear back in 5 days via email, in person or by phone.

ESS Direct Inc. will make sure our feedback process is accessible to people with disabilities by providing or arranging for accessible formats and communication supports, on request.

Notice of availability of documents

ESS Direct Inc. will notify the public that documents related to accessible customer service, are available upon request by posting a notice in print in the front entrance of 411 Huronia Rd. Unit 5, Barrie ON

Should the documents related to accessible customer service be requested and e- version will be sent.

ESS Direct Inc. will provide this document in an accessible format or with communication support, on request. We will consult with the person making the request to determine the suitability of the format or communication support. We will provide the accessible format in a timely manner and, at no additional cost.

Modifications to this or other policies

Any policies of ESS Direct that do not respect and promote the principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity for people with disabilities will be modified or removed.

Accessible Formats and Communication Supports

Upon request, ESS Direct Inc. will provide, or will arrange for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports for persons with disabilities in a timely manner that takes into account the person's accessibility needs due to disability.

ESS Direct Inc. will consult with the person making the request in determining the suitability of an accessible format or communication support.

ESS Direct Inc. will also notify the public about the availability of accessible formats and communication supports.

Accessible Websites and Web Content

ESS Direct Inc. will ensure that our Internet websites, including web content, conform to the World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0, at Level AA except where this is impracticable.

Employment Standards

Recruitment

ESS Direct Inc. will notify its employees and the public about the availability of accommodation for applicants with disabilities in its recruitment process including all job ads appearing on social media, job search sites and the ESS Direct Inc. website job page.

Recruitment, Assessment or Selection Process

ESS Direct Inc. will notify job applicants, when they are individually selected to participate further in an assessment or selection process that accommodations are available upon request in relation to the materials or processes to be used.

If a selected applicant requests an accommodation, ESS Direct Inc. will consult with the applicant and provide, or arrange for the provision of, a suitable accommodation in a manner that takes into account the applicant's accessibility needs due to disability.

Notice to Successful Applicants

When making offers of employment, ESS Direct Inc. will notify the successful applicant of its policies for accommodating employees with disabilities.

Informing Employees of Supports

ESS Direct Inc. will continue to inform its employees of its policies (and any updates to those policies) used to support employees with disabilities, including policies on the provision of job accommodations that take into account an employee's accessibility needs due to disability. This information will be provided to new employees as soon as practicable after commencing employment.

Accessible Formats and Communication Supports for Employees

Upon the request of an employee with a disability, ESS Direct Inc. will consult with the employee to provide, or arrange for the provision of, accessible formats and communication supports for information that is needed to perform his/her job, and information that is generally available to other employees.

In determining the suitability of an accessible format or communication support, ESS Direct will consult with the employee making the request.

Workplace Emergency Response Information

ESS Direct Inc. will provide individualized workplace emergency response information to employees who have a disability, if the disability is such that the individualized information is necessary, and if ESS Direct Inc. is aware of the need for accommodation due to the employee's disability. ESS Direct Inc. will provide this information as soon as practicable after becoming aware of the need for accommodation.

Where the employee requires assistance, ESS Direct Inc. will, with the consent of the employee, provide the workplace emergency response information to the person designated by ESS Direct Inc. to provide assistance to the employee.

ESS Direct Inc. will review the individualized workplace emergency response information when the employee moves to a different location in the organization, when the employee's overall accommodations needs or plans are reviewed.

Documented Individual Accommodation Plans

ESS Direct Inc. will maintain a written process for the development of documented individual accommodation plans for employees with disabilities.

If requested, information regarding accessible formats and communications supports provided will also be included in individual accommodation plans.

In addition, the plans will include individualized workplace emergency response information (where required), and will identify any other accommodation that is to be provided.

Return to Work Process

ESS Direct Inc. maintains a documented return to work process for its employees who have been absent from work due to a disability and who require disability-related accommodations in order to return to work.

The return to work process outlines the steps ESS Direct Inc. will take to facilitate the return to work and will include documented individual accommodation plans as part of the process.

This return to work process will not replace or override any other return to work process created by or under any other statute (ie., the Workplace Safety Insurance Act, 1997).

Performance Management, Career Development and Advancement & Redeployment

ESS Direct Inc. will take into account the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities, as well as individual accommodation plans, when conducting performance management, providing career development and advancement to employees, or when redeploying employees.

Questions about this policy

This policy has been developed to break down barriers and increase accessibility for persons with disabilities in the areas of information and communications and employment. If anyone has a question about the policy, or if the purpose of a policy is not understood, please contact:

Sinda Simpson
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ESS Direct Inc.
705.730.1899 ext 725
sinda@essdirect.ca

Alternatively, guests and suppliers can submit feedback or comments to any of our employees and it will be forwarded to the above department for review.

Document Management

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