



POLICIES

DIVISION:	Clerk's		
POLICY SECTION:	Accessibility	EFFECTIVE DATE:	October 25, 2016
SUBJECT:	Accessibility Standards Policy		
POLICY NUMBER:	CLK 11.1	SUPERCEDES:	CLK 11.0

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to facilitate the County of Simcoe's regulatory compliance with the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (Ontario Regulation 191/11) of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA). The AODA and its Regulation indicate that failure to comply with the requirements set out in the Act and Regulation may result in administrative penalties for the obligated organization.

This policy outlines the overall strategic direction that the County of Simcoe will follow in the identification, removal, and prevention of barriers to people with disabilities to ensure access to the County's goods, services, and facilities.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

The County of Simcoe is committed to providing people with disabilities consistent opportunity and access to County of Simcoe goods, services, and facilities. The County will ensure that policies, procedures, and practices are provided in a manner that is timely and addresses integration, independence, dignity, and equal opportunity. The County will endeavor to follow the compliance schedule of the legislation when implementing each of the requirements addressed in this policy.

3. SCOPE

Unless otherwise prescribed, this policy applies to all employees in all classifications of employment and at all locations of the Corporation of the County of Simcoe.

4. DEFINITIONS

"Accessible formats" may include, but are not limited to, large print, recorded audio and electronic formats, Braille, and other formats usable by people 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. This includes physical, architectural, information or communication, attitudinal or technological barrier, a policy or a practice.

“Communication support” may include, but is not limited to, captioning, alternative and augmentative communication supports, plain language, sign language, and other supports that facilitate effective communications.

“Disability” means, as per the Human Rights Code:

- 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;
- A condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability;
- A learning disability or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language;
- A mental disorder; or
- An injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997.

“Emergency” may include, but is not limited to, the following types of situations:

- Fire
- Evacuation
- Bomb threat
- In-house chemical spill
- Natural gas leak
- Power failure
- Violent person and/or hostage taking
- Medical emergency
- Severe weather
- Earthquake

“Service Animal” means:

- A guide dog as defined under section 1 of the Blind Persons’ Rights Act
- An animal that is readily apparent that it is used by a person with a disability for reasons relating to his or her disability
- An animal for which a person with a disability can provide a letter from a regulated health professional confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability

5. RESPONSIBILITY

It is the responsibility of all County of Simcoe councillors and staff to ensure that this policy is adhered to and that practices of the County demonstrate a commitment to accessibility as outlined in this policy and accessibility legislation.

6. APPLICATION

6.1 Use of Service Animals, Support Persons, and Assistive Devices

The County of Simcoe, in its provision of goods, services and facilities to customers, will ensure that a person with a disability who is accompanied by a guide dog or other service animal is permitted to enter County owned and operated premises with the animal and to keep the animal with them unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law from the premises. If a service animal is excluded by law, the

County of Simcoe will ensure that other measures are available to enable a person with a disability to obtain, use, or benefit from the County's goods or services.

If a person with a disability is accompanied by a support person, the County of Simcoe will ensure that both people 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.

The County of Simcoe, in providing goods, services or facilities, may require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person when on the premises, but only if, after consulting with the person with a disability and considering the available evidence. The County of Simcoe determines that a support person is necessary to protect the health and safety of the person with a disability or the health and safety of others on the premises and there is no other reasonable way to protect the health and safety of the person with a disability or others on the premises.

If a fee is payable for a person's admission to the premises or in connection with a person's presence at the premises, the County of Simcoe shall ensure that notice is given in advance about the fee, if any, payable in respect of the support person. If the County of Simcoe requires a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person when on the premises, the County of Simcoe shall waive payment of the amount, if any, payable in respect of the support person's admission or presence on the premises.

If a person with a disability requires the use of personal assistive devices to access goods, services and facilities offered by the County of Simcoe, the County will ensure that the person is not prevented from having access to the devices while on the County's premises. The County may also have additional assistive devices available at its premises for use by people with disabilities while accessing County goods and services.

6.2 Notice of Temporary Disruptions

If there are temporary disruptions to facilities or services often used by people with disabilities to access the County's goods or services, the County will give notice of the disruption to the public.

The notice of disruption shall contain information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration and a description of alternative facilities or services, if any, that are available. Notice may be given by posting the information at a conspicuous place on the premises, by posting it on the public website, or by such other method as is reasonable in the circumstances.

6.3 Accessibility Plans

The County of Simcoe will establish, implement, maintain, and document a multi-year accessibility plan that will outline the County's strategy to prevent and remove barriers to people with disabilities and meet the requirements under accessibility legislation. The plan will be established in consultation with the County of Simcoe and Township of Springwater Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee. Members of the public, including those with disabilities, will be encouraged to provide input into the plan. County of Simcoe Council will review and endorse the multi-year accessibility plan.

The County will review and update the accessibility plan at least once every five years. As with the initial development of the plan, the Accessibility Advisory Committee and members of the public will be consulted during the updating of the plan. County Council will be presented with the updated plan for review and approval.

The County of Simcoe will prepare an annual status report, which will outline the progress of measures taken to implement the plan and the County's strategy to identify, prevent, and remove barriers to those

with disabilities. The annual status reports will be presented to the Accessibility Advisory Committee and County Council.

The County will make all accessibility plans and annual status reports available to the public. All plans and reports will be posted on the County's website and made available at County facilities. The County will provide the documents in an accessible format, upon request,

6.4 Procuring or Acquiring Goods, Services or Facilities

The County of Simcoe will incorporate accessibility criteria and features when procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities, except when it is not practicable to do so. The County will provide an explanation, upon request, when it has not been practicable to incorporate accessibility features.

6.5 Training

The County of Simcoe will ensure that training is provided on the requirements of accessibility standards and on the Human Rights Code as it pertains to people with disabilities. Such training will be provided to:

- a) All paid employees and volunteers;
- b) All people who participate in developing the County of Simcoe's policies; and
- c) All other people who provide goods, services or facilities on behalf of the County

The County of Simcoe will provide training that is appropriate to the duties of the employees, volunteers, and other parties. Training will be provided as soon as practicable. Training on any policy changes will be provided on an ongoing basis.

The County will keep records of the training provided, including the dates of the training and the number of individuals to whom training is provided.

6.6 Feedback

The County of Simcoe will ensure that the processes for receiving and responding to feedback are accessible to people with disabilities. Upon request, accessible formats or communication supports will be provided or arranged.

6.7 Accessible Formats and Communication Supports

Upon request, the County of Simcoe will provide, or arrange for the provision of, accessible formats or communication supports for people with disabilities.

These accessible formats and communication supports will be provided in a timely manner and in a way that takes into account the individual's accessibility needs due to disability. The County of Simcoe will consult with the person making the request to determine the suitability of an accessible format or communication support. Such accessible documents and communication supports will be provided at a cost no greater than the regular cost charged to others.

The County of Simcoe will notify the public about the availability of accessible formats and communication supports, upon request, by including a notice on its website and on many of the

documents produced by the County. If a document, or portions of a document, cannot be converted into an accessible format, the County will provide an explanation or summary of such information in an accessible format.

6.8 Emergency Procedure, Plan or Public Safety Information

The County of Simcoe will, upon request, provide emergency procedure, plan and public safety information in an accessible format or with communication support, as soon as practicable.

6.9 Accessible Websites and Web Content

The County of Simcoe will ensure that its external Internet websites and web content published on or after January 1, 2012, conform to the World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0, initially at Level A and increasingly to Level AA, except where it is not practicable. This applies to websites, web content and web-based applications that the County controls directly or through a contractual relationship that allows for modification.

6.10 Recruitment, Assessment and Selection

The County of Simcoe is committed to equal consideration of candidates during the recruitment, assessment, and selection process. Job applicants, including the public and current County employees, will be notified of the availability of accommodations for people with disabilities in its application process.

Individuals selected to participate in assessment or selection processes, such as an interview or testing, will be notified of the availability of accommodations, upon request, during such an assessment or selection process. In cases where accommodations due to disability are requested, the County of Simcoe will consult with the individual and provide or arrange for suitable accommodations in a manner that takes into account the applicant's disability needs. Accommodations will be provided with respect to the materials or processes used in recruitment.

When making offers of employment, the County of Simcoe will notify the successful applicant of its policies for accommodating employees with disabilities.

6.11 Informing Employees of Supports

The County of Simcoe will inform employees of its policies, and any updates to such policies, used to support employees with disabilities. The County will provide this information to new employees as soon as practicable after commencing employment. This includes policies on providing job accommodations that take into account the employee's accessibility needs due to disability.

6.12 Accessible Formats and Communication Supports for Employees

The County of Simcoe will, when requested by an employee with a disability, consult with the employee to provide or arrange for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports for information that is required in order to perform the job, as well as information that is generally available to employees in the workplace.

The County of Simcoe will consult with the employee making the request in determining the suitability of an accessible format or communication support.

6.13 Workplace Emergency Response Information

The County of Simcoe is committed to ensuring the safety of its employees. Individualized workplace emergency response information will be provided to employees who have a disability, if the disability is such that the individualized information is necessary and the employer is aware of the employee's need. This information will be provided as soon as practicable after the County becomes aware of the need for accommodation.

When an employee requires assistance in an emergency, the County of Simcoe will, with the employee's consent, provide such information to the person designated by the County to provide assistance.

The County of Simcoe will review the individualized workplace emergency response information when the employee moves to a different location in the organization, when the employee's overall accommodation needs and plans are reviewed, and when the County reviews its general emergency policies.

6.14 Documented Individual Accommodation Plans

The County of Simcoe will develop a written process for the development of documented individual accommodation plans for employees with disabilities. The individual accommodation plan will include:

- If requested, any information regarding accessible formats and communication supports provided to the employee;
- If required, individualized workplace emergency response information; and
- Any other accommodations that are to be provided.

6.15 Return to Work Process

The County of Simcoe will maintain its documented return to work process for employees with a disability and who require disability-related accommodation in order to return to work.

The County's return to work process will outline the steps the County 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 (i.e., the Workplace Safety Insurance Act, 1997).

6.16 Performance Management, Career Development and Advancement, and Redeployment

The County of Simcoe will take into account the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities and any individual accommodation plans when providing any performance management, career development, and advancement. When redeploying employees (reassigning employees to other departments or jobs within the County of Simcoe as an alternative to layoff when a particular job or department has been eliminated), the County will also take into account the employee's accessibility needs due to disability and any individual accommodation plan.

6.17 Design of Public Spaces (Built Environment)

When constructing or redeveloping public spaces, the County of Simcoe shall meet all of the requirements set out in the standards under the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation. These include technical specifications and requirements for consultation with people with disabilities for the following categories of public spaces:

- Recreational trails
- Beach access routes
- Exterior public use eating areas
- Outdoor play spaces
- Exterior paths of travel
- Accessible parking
- Obtaining services (service counters, queuing guides, and waiting areas)

7. POLICY REVIEW

This policy shall be reviewed a minimum of once per Council term to ensure its effectiveness.