

Client Service Policy Statement: Providing Services to People with Disabilities

Wormald Masse Keen Lopinski LLP is committed to ensuring that all services we offer are available to people living with disabilities. When serving people with disabilities we will make reasonable efforts to ensure the following four core principles of the standard are incorporated:

1. **Dignity:** We will treat people with disabilities with dignity and as valued clients who are deserving of the goods and services as any other client.
2. **Independence:** We will be patient and not rush people with disabilities while they do things in their own way. We will not attempt to control, influence or limit their access to our full complement of services because of their disability.
3. **Integration:** People with disabilities will benefit fully from the same services, in the same place and the same or similar way as other WMKL clients. There may be times where integration may not serve the needs of all people with disabilities. In those situations, WMKL will find alternative ways to provide goods and services that is agreeable to the person with the disability.
4. **Equal Opportunity:** People with disabilities will have the same opportunities as others to benefit from WMKL's services. They will be provided with the same level of service and convenience as other clients.

Interacting with clients is an important element of employee responsibilities. It is a priority of WMKL to ensure that any accommodation requirements as outlined in the Client Service Policy are met when interacting with clients with disabilities on WMKL premises. WMKL is committed to complying with the Act to provide excellent service to all clients including people with disabilities through adherence to the following:

Training

All staff will receive training as required by the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act. WMKL will provide Accessible Customer Service Training to all new employees during new hire orientation and participation will be documented. The training includes:

- The purpose of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act;
- The four core principles;
- How to communicate and interact with people with disabilities;
- How to interact with people who have a personal assistive device, service animal or support person;
- How to deal with service disruptions;
- How we can accept feedback and communicate with people with disabilities so that their disability is taken into account;
- What formats our documents are available in for people with disabilities;
- What to do if a person has difficulty accessing the services of WMKL; and
- Where the WMKL Client Service Policy statement is located.

Additional training will be provided as changes are made to the Act and standards governing the provision of goods or services to persons with disabilities.

We will ensure that all staff, volunteers, associates and third parties who interact with the public on behalf of WMKL have had Accessible Customer Service Training. Refresh training will be provided on a yearly basis to all staff.

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The AODA Customer Service Standard expressly includes requirements that must be met with regards to three types of accommodations: Personal Assistive Devices, Service Animals and Support Persons.

Personal Assistive Devices

All assistive devices including wheelchairs, electric scooters, canes, walkers, braces, software programs, TTY machines and multiple others are permitted in the WMKL office. Customers will use their own personal assistive devices as needed.

If there is a physical, technological or other type of barrier preventing a client from using their Assistive Device, attempts will be made to remove the barrier. If this is not possible, potential alternatives will be discussed with the client. Where an individual is unable to climb the stairs, alternative arrangements will be made so that individuals can fulfill appointments and access the organization's services in a suitable location.

It is recommended that employees review the tips on interacting with clients with a Personal Assistive Device.

Service Animals

Any person with a disability accompanied by a service animal is permitted to enter the premises of WMKL.

Service Animals are considered to be "working" at all times when they are accompanying clients with disabilities. As such, a Service Animals should not be touched or petted by any WMKL employee

If WMKL is uncertain that the animal brought into our property or event is a service animal, we may ask the owner to provide a license or certification that it is in fact a service animal.

It is recommended that employees review the tips on interacting with clients with a Service Animal.

Support Persons

A support person may accompany a person with a disability to provide services and/or assistance with mobility, communication, personal care, medical needs and/or access to services at the WMKL office or corporate events. The support person will be permitted to access the same areas and/or attend at no charge where an admission fee is applied.

Before entering into any confidential communications with the client, confirm that the client wishes the Support Person to be privy to these confidential discussions.

It is recommended that employees review the tips on interacting with clients with a Support Person.

Notice of Service Disruptions

In the event that there is a temporary disruption to WMKL services or offices used by persons with disabilities, a representative of WMKL will provide notice including the following information:

- Reason for the disruption;
- Anticipated duration;
- Alternative facilities or services.

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The notice will be physically posted at the site of disruption, on the WMKL website and phone message system.

Feedback

WMKL accepts feedback on the provision of goods and services for people with disabilities in a variety of methods including:

- Phone;
- Written;
- In person;
- Fax;
- Email;
- WMKL website.

WMKL will reply to the feedback in a timely manner and in a way that takes into consideration the disability of the person providing the feedback. However, clients have the option of remaining anonymous when providing feedback.

Communication and Format of Documents

When communicating with a person with a disability, WMKL will do so in a manner that takes into account the person's disability. This includes communications that are in the following formats:

- Phone (including Bell Relay);
- Written;
- In person;
- Fax;
- Email;
- Internet.

WMKL will take into account the person's disability when providing documents and ensure the format meets their needs.

Availability of the WMKL Accessibility Policy

The WMKL Accessibility Policy is available to the public upon request. A brochure is available at reception and our policy is posted on our website. It will be made available in alternate formats to take into account a person's disability when requested.