

ACCESSIBLE CUSTOMER SERVICE POLICY AND PROCEDURE

POLICY

Best Way Stone is committed to eliminating barriers and improving accessibility for persons with disabilities in a manner that respects dignity, independence, integration and equality of opportunity. Best Way Stone permits persons with a disability to use their own assistive devices when accessing goods or services as well as those owned and operated by Best Way Stone. These assistive devices may include but are not limited to: support persons, service animals, communication aids, cognition aids, mobility aids and medical aids.

PURPOSE

This policy is intended to meet the requirements of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and all related standards and regulations introduced under this legislation, ensuring that persons with disabilities are provided equal opportunities and standards of service.

This policy allows for the development of procedures to be implemented to meet the accessibility standards developed by the Ministry of Community and Social Services.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all management and employees of Best Way Stone.

PROCEDURE

This procedure addresses the accessibility requirements of Regulation 429/07 Accessibility Standards for Customer Service under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005.

Reasonable efforts will be made to ensure that:

- Persons with disabilities are provided equal opportunity to obtain, use and benefit from Best Way Stone's goods and services.
- Goods and services are provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.
- The goods and services provided to persons with disabilities are integrated with the provision to the others unless an alternate measure is necessary to allow a person with a disability to benefit. The alternate measure may be temporary or permanent.
- Communications with a person with a disability are conducted in a manner that takes the person's disability into account.
- Persons with disabilities may use assistive devices, service animals and support persons as is necessary to access Best Way Stone's goods and services unless superseded by other legislation.

Approved by:  _____

Date Created: January 8, 2016

DEFINITIONS

Assistive Device – a technical aid, communication device or medical aid modified or customized, that is used to increase, maintain or improve the functional abilities of people with disabilities.

Barrier – as per the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, is 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 communication barrier, an attitudinal barrier, technological barrier, a policy or a practice.

Customer – a person who buys, receives or uses goods or services.

Disability – as per the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* and the *Ontario Human Rights Code*, is:

- Any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect 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 impairment, 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 developmental disabilities.
- 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*.

Service Animal – as per the *Ontario Regulation 429/07* an animal is a service animal for a person with a disability if it is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to his or her disability; or if the person provides a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability.

Support Person – as per the *Ontario Regulation 429/07* a support person means, in relation to a person with a disability, another person who accompanies him or her in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs or with access to goods or services.

STANDARDS AND PROCEDURES

Assistive Devices

The use of assistive devices by persons with disabilities to obtain, use or benefit from Best Way Stone's goods or services is recognized unless otherwise prohibited due to health and safety or privacy issues. Where applicable assistive devices owned and operated by Best Way Stone will be available for use by persons with disabilities.



Support Persons

Persons with disability are permitted to be accompanied by their support person in areas/premises that are open to the public, when accessing goods or services provided by Best Way Stone. If a person with a disability is accompanied by a support person, the provider of goods or services shall 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.

Service Animals

Persons with disabilities are permitted to be accompanied by their service animal and keep that animal with them in areas/premises that are open to the public, when accessing goods and services provided by Best Way Stone, unless superseded by other legislation.

In the event that a service animal is otherwise prohibited by law from the premises, Best Way Stone will ensure that other measures are available to enable the person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from Best Way Stone's goods and services.

Service Disruptions

If a disruption is planned and expected, Best Way Stone should provide notice as far in advance of the disruption as possible as individuals may require considerable time to make alternative arrangements.

If a disruption is unexpected, Best Way Stone should provide notice as soon as possible after the disruption has been identified.

The notice of disruption should include the information about the service that is disrupted, reason(s) for the disruption, the anticipated duration and a description of alternative facilities, services or alternate mechanisms to access the goods/services

Notice of Availability of Documents

Best Way Stone shall notify persons to who it provides goods or services that the documents required under this regulation are available upon request. This notice may be given by posting the information at a conspicuous place or any other reasonable method.

If Best Way Stone is required to provide a copy of a document to a person with a disability, Best Way Stone will take into consideration the person's disability and provide that document in an appropriate format. Best Way Stone and the person with a disability will agree on what format will be used.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Best Way Stone (includes all departments and staff) is responsible for:

- Ensuring compliance with the Accessible Customer Service Regulation 429/07
- Budgeting for accessibility requirements.
- Supporting staff attendance at required training.
- Notifying Human Resources of additional training requirements.
- Communicating with a person with a disability regarding the use of a service animal, support person or assistive device.
- Coordinating and/or providing service to a person with a disability who may use a service animal, support person or assistive device.
- Providing notification of service disruptions.
- Providing all documents in appropriate formats upon request by a person with a disability.

The Human Resources Department/Accessibility Coordinator is responsible for:

- Coordinating and providing Accessible Customer Service Training in order to comply with Regulation 429/07.
- Ensuring all staff are trained in providing Accessible Customer Service.
- Budgeting annually for accessibility training.
- Communicating to all departments regarding all requirements under the regulation.
- Monitoring the progress of legislative requirements in order to ensure compliance.
- Working to develop policies, procedures and practices.
- Communicating all policies, procedures and practices to staff.

The Customer is responsible for:

- Care and control of their service animal while accessing goods or services.
- Providing service animal certification upon request.
- Providing input when requested in order to work out service discrepancies.
- Utilizing feedback process to provide comments on service.

FEEDBACK PROCESS

Best Way Stone will maintain a feedback form to enable members of the public to comment on the provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities.

Feedback shall be received in any form (e.g. in person, telephone, in writing, fax, or electronic format, including e-mail) and records of all feedback will be maintained. All questions and concerns received by the Accessibility Coordinator shall be acknowledged as soon as possible from the date of receipt. Response time to the feedback will depend on the issue and will be responded to as quickly as possible, unless there are extenuating circumstances involved.

TRAINING

All employees of Best Way Stone who interact with the public or third parties on behalf of Best Way Stone, or who participate in the company's policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of goods or services to members of the public or third parties will receive training and/or information on the following topics as outlined in *Ontario Regulation 429/07*:

- Review of the AODA and the requirements of Regulation 429/07.
- How to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disabilities.
- How to interact with persons with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or the assistance of a support person.
- How to use equipment or devices provided by Best Way Stone that may help with the provision of goods or services to a person with a disability.
- What to do if a person with a particular type of disability is having difficulty accessing Best Way Stone's goods or services.
- Best Way Stone's Accessible Customer Service policies, practices and procedures.

The above-mentioned training and/or information must be provided to each person as soon as practical after he or she is assigned applicable duties.

The training must also be provided on an on-going basis in connection with any changes to Best Way Stone policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of goods or services to persons with disabilities. As this legislation is reviewed, training will need to reflect any changes or updates.

Best Way Stone will keep records of the training provided.

This policy is available in an alternative format upon request.