



## Halton Region Accessibility Policy

### Policy Statement

The Regional Municipality of Halton (hereinafter referred to as Halton Region) is committed to meeting:

- the accessibility needs of people with disabilities with respect to Halton Region's goods, services and facilities, in a timely manner; and,
- the objectives and requirements of *Ontario Regulation 191/11, Integrated Accessibility Standards (IASR)* under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)*.

### Objectives

The purpose of this policy is to set out the requirements and accessibility standards in the IASR which Halton Region is required to meet. This policy is also intended to provide a framework for how Halton Region will address these requirements.

### Scope

This policy applies to the provision of goods, services or facilities to members of the public and employees by, or on behalf of, Halton Region.

The part of the policy that deals with the use of service animals and support persons applies only to goods, services or facilities provided by Halton Region at premises owned or operated by Halton Region.

This policy is supplemented by topic specific procedures which can be found on Halton Central.

This policy will be reviewed and amended, as required, when additional accessibility related regulations are enacted by the Government of Ontario and when changes are made to the legislative framework governing accessibility.

### Guidelines and Procedures

### Background

The AODA was created with the goal of developing standards that would improve accessibility for people with disabilities across the province of Ontario. The AODA allows



the Government of Ontario to develop specific standards of accessibility and enforce them. The standards form part of the IASR. The IASR includes accessibility requirements in the following areas:

- customer service;
- information and communications;
- employment;
- transportation; and,
- the design of public spaces

The IASR requires designated public sector organizations, including municipalities, to implement these requirements.

The remainder of this document has been organized into the following sections:

- Part I - General Requirements
- Part II - Accessible Customer Service
- Part III - Accessible Information and Communications
- Part IV - Accessible Employment
- Part V - Design of Public Spaces
- Related Documents
- Approval and Review
- Contact Information
- Appendix 1 - Definitions

This document shall be made publicly available and will be provided in an accessible format upon request, as soon as is practicable.



## **Part I – General Requirements**

### **Accessibility Plans and Annual Progress Reports**

Halton Region has developed a multi-year accessibility plan outlining its strategy to prevent and remove barriers and meet requirements under the IASR. The multi-year accessibility plan is:

- posted on Halton Region's website and is provided in an accessible format, upon request; and,
- will be reviewed and updated at least once every five years.

Halton Region prepares an annual report on the progress of measures taken to implement the multi-year accessibility plan. The progress reports are posted on Halton Region's website and are provided in an accessible format, upon request, as soon as is practicable.

### **Procurement**

Halton Region will incorporate accessibility design, criteria and features when procuring and acquiring goods, services or facilities, except where it is not practicable to do so. Halton Region will incorporate accessibility features when designing, procuring or acquiring self-service kiosks.

If Halton Region determines that it is not practicable to incorporate accessibility design, criteria and features when procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities, it shall provide an explanation, upon request.

### **Training**

Halton Region will ensure that training is provided to the following individuals:

- all persons who are an employee of, or a volunteer with, Halton Region;
- all persons who are completing a practicum, co-op or placement as part of an academic program; and,
- all persons who participate in developing Halton's policies.

Ensuring that contractors and agents who provide goods, services or facilities on behalf of Halton Region have been trained is addressed through Halton Region's procurement process.



The training will include the following topics:

1. a review of the purposes of the AODA;
2. the Ontario *Human Rights Code* as it pertains to people with disabilities;
3. the requirements of accessibility standards set out in the IASR;
4. the provision of Halton Region's goods, services or facilities to people with disabilities;
5. how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities;
6. how to interact with people who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a guide dog, service animal or support person;
7. the use of equipment and devices available on Halton Region's premises or otherwise provided by Halton Region that may help with the provision of goods, services or facilities to a person with a disability; and,
8. what action to take if a person with a particular type of disability is having difficulty accessing goods or services.

The training will be appropriate to the duties of the employees, volunteers and other persons and shall be provided as soon as practicable.

Halton Region will provide training to the persons listed above with respect to any changes to its policies, on an ongoing basis.

## **Part II – Accessible Customer Service**

Halton Region will use every reasonable effort to ensure that the provision of goods, services and facilities to people with disabilities and applicable policies and procedures are consistent with the following principles:

- Goods, services or facilities shall be provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities.
- Persons with disabilities will be given an opportunity equal to that given to others to obtain, use and benefit from Halton Region's goods, services or facilities.
- The goods, services or facilities provided to people with disabilities are integrated with the provision of goods, services or facilities to others unless an alternative measure is necessary to allow a person with a disability to benefit from the goods, services or facilities. The alternative measure may be temporary or permanent.
- Communications with a person with a disability are to be conducted in a manner that takes the person's disability into account.



## **Assistive Devices**

People with disabilities may use assistive devices as required in accessing goods, services or facilities provided by Halton Region, unless prohibited by law.

If a person with a disability is unable to access Halton Region's goods, services or facilities through the use of their own personal assistive device, Halton Region staff will work with the individual to determine an alternative means.

## **Support Persons and Service Animals**

This part of the policy applies to the use of service animals and support persons with respect to goods, services or facilities provided by Halton Region at premises owned or operated by Halton Region.

### **Support Persons**

People with disabilities shall be permitted to be accompanied by their support person in areas or premises that are open to the public, when accessing Halton Region's goods, services or facilities.

When attending events or facilities for which the public is charged admission, Halton Region waives the admission charge for the support person.

In certain situations, Halton Region may deem it necessary to require a support person for a person with a disability in order to protect the health and safety of that person or of others on the premises.

Before making a decision, Halton Region will consult with the person with a disability to understand their needs, consider health or safety reasons based on available evidence and determine if there is any other reasonable way to protect the health or safety of the person or others on the premises.

### **Service Animals**

People with disabilities will be permitted to be accompanied by their service animal, including a guide dog, and keep the animal with them in areas that are open to the public, when accessing Halton Region's goods, services or facilities, unless otherwise prohibited by law.

In the event that a service animal or guide dog is prohibited from the premises, Halton Region will ensure that other measures are available to enable the person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from Halton Region's goods, services or facilities.

Service animals must be supervised by their owners and kept in control when used to access Halton Region's goods, services or facilities.



A service animal can normally be identified through visual indicators such as a harness or vest or in the assistance it provides to the person with a disability. However, if it is not readily apparent that the animal is a service animal, the person may be asked to provide documentation from a regulated health professional that confirms they require the service animal for reasons relating to their disability.

For the purposes of this policy, a regulated health professional is a member of the following:

- 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

## **Service Disruptions**

In the event of a planned service disruption to facilities and services that are relied upon by people with disabilities to access Halton Region's services, notice of the disruption will be provided to the public in advance.

The notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration and a description of alternative facilities and services that may be available.

Notice may be given by posting the information in a conspicuous place on premises owned or operated by Halton or posted on Halton Region's website or by such other method as is reasonable under the circumstances.

In the event of an unexpected disruption, notice will be provided as soon as possible and will include the information outlined above.



## **Part III - Accessible Information and Communications**

### **Feedback**

Halton Region welcomes feedback on how it provides goods, services, or facilities to people with disabilities. Feedback is welcome and accepted in person, by telephone or TTY, in writing, or email.

Halton Region will ensure that its processes for receiving and responding to feedback are accessible to people with disabilities by providing or arranging for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports, upon request.

Information on Halton Region's feedback process and the ways in which members of the public may provide feedback are available on Halton's website.

### **Accessible Formats and Communication Supports**

Halton Region will, upon request, provide or arrange for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports for people with disabilities in a timely manner that takes into account the person's accessibility needs and at a cost that is no more than the regular cost charged to other people.

Halton Region will notify the public about the availability of accessible formats and communication supports.

Halton Region will consult with the person making the request in determining the suitability of an accessible format or communication support.

The requirements in this section do not apply to products, product labels, unconvertible information or communications, or information that Halton does not control directly or indirectly through a contractual relationship.

If Halton Region determines that information or communications are unconvertible, an explanation as to why the material is unconvertible and a summary of the unconvertible information will be provided to the person making the request.

### **Emergency Procedures, Plans and Public Safety Information**

Emergency procedures, plans or public safety information, that are publicly available, shall be provided in an accessible format or with appropriate communication supports, upon request, as soon as practicable.



## **Accessible Websites and Web Content**

Halton Region will make its website and web content conform to Web Content Accessibility Guidelines, initially at level A and increasing to level AA in accordance with the timeframes set out in section 14 (4) of the IASR.

## **Part IV - Accessible Employment**

### **Application**

The requirements set out in this section apply only to employees of Halton Region. They do not apply to volunteers or other non-paid individuals.

### **Recruitment**

Halton Region will do the following:

- Notify its employees and the public about the availability of accommodation for applicants with disabilities in recruitment processes.
- Notify job applicants when they are selected to participate in an assessment or selection process that accommodations are available, in relation to the materials or processes to be used.
- Consult with a selected applicant who has requested accommodation to provide or arrange for the provision of suitable accommodation that takes into account the applicant's accessibility needs.
- Notify the successful applicant of its policies for accommodating employees with disabilities.

### **Informing Employees of Supports**

Halton Region will inform employees of its policies used to support employees with disabilities including those on the provision of work accommodation that take into account an employee's accessibility needs.

This information will be provided to new employees as soon as practicable after they begin their employment with Halton Region. Updated information will be provided to employees whenever there is a change to existing policies on the provision of work accommodation.





## **Accessible Formats and Communication Supports for Employees**

When requested by an employee, Halton Region will consult with the employee to provide or arrange for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports for:

- information needed to perform the employee's job; and,
- information generally available to employees in the workplace.

## **Workplace Emergency Response Information**

Halton Region 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 Halton Region has been made aware of the need for accommodation due to the employee's disability.

Individualized workplace emergency response information will be reviewed when an employee moves to a different location in the organization, when the employee's overall accommodation needs or plans are reviewed and when Halton Region reviews its general emergency response policies.

## **Documented Individual Accommodation Plans**

Halton Region has established a written process for the development of documented individual accommodation plans for employees with disabilities.

If requested by the employee, an individual accommodation plan shall include information regarding accessible formats and communication supports, individualized workplace emergency response information and identify any other accommodation that is to be provided.

## **Return to Work Process**

Halton Region has developed a return to work process for employees who have been absent from work due to a disability and require disability-related accommodation to return to work.



## **Performance Management, Career Development and Advancement, and Reassignment**

Halton Region shall take into account the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities and individual accommodation plans in performance management processes, when providing career development and advancement opportunities and when considering reassignment of employees with disabilities.

## **Part V- Design of Public Spaces**

### **Application**

The requirements in this section apply to Halton Region's public spaces that are newly constructed, redeveloped or significantly altered.

### **Requirements**

Where applicable, Halton Region will meet the technical and public consultation requirements identified in the IASR for the following elements:

- Recreational trails and beach access routes, boardwalks and ramps;
- Outdoor public use eating areas;
- Outdoor play spaces;
- Exterior paths of travel, ramps, stairs, curb ramps, depressed ramps, accessible pedestrian control signals and rest areas;
- Accessible parking;
- Service counters, fixed queuing guides, waiting areas; and,
- Maintenance of accessible elements

### **Related Documents**

- [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005](#)
- [Ontario Regulation 191/11 – Integrated Accessibility Standards](#)
- Ontario [Human Rights Code](#)
- [Halton Region Multi Year Accessibility Plan, 2012-2017](#)
- [Annual Accessibility Progress Reports](#)



## **Approval and Review**

The Halton Region Accessibility Policy consolidates the Accessible Customer Service Policy, approved by Regional Council on June 3, 2009 through Report No. LPS63-09, and the Integrated Accessibility Standards Policy, approved by Regional Council on November 13, 2013, through Report No. LPS86-13.

This policy will be reviewed and/or amended when additional accessibility Acts or Regulations are enacted by the Government of Ontario, or from time to time as required.

## **Contact Information**

For additional information, please Gabrielle Baldazzi, Senior Policy Advisor, Policy Integration & Communications, CAO's Office at 905 825-6000, ext. 7485



**Appendix 1 – Definitions**

<b>Term</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b>Accessible formats</b>	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.
<b>Assistive device</b>	An assistive device is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional abilities of people with disabilities with respect to daily living activities. It can be a piece of equipment, a communication device, or medical aid such as a wheelchair, scooter, cane, hearing aid or assistive listening device.
<b>Barrier</b>	A barrier means anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of their disability, including a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, an information or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy or a practice, i.e., the lack of a ramp, a form on a website that is not compatible with a screen reader
<b>Career development and advancement</b>	Career development and advancement includes providing additional responsibilities within an employee's current position and the movement of an employee from one job to another in an organization that may be higher in pay, provide greater responsibility or be at a higher level in the organization or any combination of them and, for both additional responsibilities and employee movement, is usually based on merit or seniority, or a combination of them.
<b>Communications</b>	Communications means the interaction between two or more people or entities, or any combination of them, where information is provided, sent or received.
<b>Communications supports</b>	Communication supports are used to facilitate effective communications with people with people with disabilities. They may include, but are not limited to, captioning, alternative and augmentative communication supports, plain language and sign language.
<b>Disability</b>	<p>The <i>Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005</i> defines "disability" as the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 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</li></ul>



Term	Definition
	<p>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,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability,</li><li>• a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,</li><li>• a mental disorder, or</li><li>• an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the <i>Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997</i>.</li></ul>
<b>Guide dog</b>	A guide dog is an animal described in section 1 of the <i>Blind Persons' Rights Act</i> .
<b>Information</b>	Information includes data, facts and knowledge that exists in any format, including text, audio, digital or images, and that conveys meaning.
<b>Kiosk</b>	Kiosk means an interactive electronic terminal, including a point-of-sale device, intended for public use that allows users to access one or more services or products or both.
<b>Support person</b>	A support person in relation to a person with a disability is another person who accompanies them in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs or with access to goods, services or facilities.
<b>Web Content Accessibility Guidelines</b>	Web Content Accessibility Guidelines mean the World Wide Web Consortium Recommendation, dated December 2008, entitled Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0.