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## **Accessibility Standards for Client Service Policy**

This policy is intended to meet the requirements of *Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07* under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, and applies to the provision of goods and services to the public or other third parties, not to the goods themselves.

All goods and services provided by ABEX Affiliated Brokers Exchange Inc. shall follow the principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity.

### **Definitions under the Act**

Assistive Device: Is a technical aid, communication device or other instrument that is used to maintain or improve the functional abilities of people with disabilities. Personal assistive devices are typically devices that customers bring with them such as a wheelchair, walker or a personal oxygen tank that might assist in hearing, seeing, communicating, moving, breathing, remembering and/or reading.

Disability: The term disability as defined by the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, and the *Ontario Human Rights Code*, refers to:

- 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 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*.

Guide Dog: Is a highly-trained working dog that has been trained at one of the facilities listed in Ontario Regulation 58 under the *Blind Persons' Rights Act*, to provide mobility, safety and increased independence for people who are blind.

Service Animal: as reflected in *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.



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Service Dog: As reflected in *Health Protection and Promotion Act, Ontario Regulation 562* a dog other than a guide dog for the blind is a service dog if:

- It is readily apparent to an average person that the dog functions as a service dog for a person with a medical disability; or
- The person who requires the dog can provide on request a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires a service dog.

Support Person: As reflected in *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, medical needs or access to goods and services.

### **The Provision of Goods and Services to Persons with Disabilities**

ABEX will make every reasonable effort to ensure that its policies, practices and procedures are consistent with the principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity by:

- Ensuring that all customers receive the same value and quality;
- Allowing customers with disabilities to do things in their own ways, at their own pace when accessing goods and services as long as this does not present a safety risk;
- Using alternative methods when possible to ensure that customers with disabilities have access to the same services, in the same place and in a similar manner;
- Taking into account individual needs when providing goods and services; and
- Communicating in a manner that takes into account the customer's disability.

### **The Use of Assistive Devices**

Persons with disabilities may use their own assistive devices as required when accessing goods or services provided by ABEX. In cases where the assistive device presents a safety concern or where accessibility might be an issue, other reasonable measures will be used to ensure the access of goods and services.

### **Guide Dogs, Service Animals and Service Dogs**

A customer with a disability that is accompanied by guide dog, service animal or service dog will be allowed access to premises that are open to the public unless otherwise excluded by law.

#### Care and Control of the Animal:

The customer that is accompanied by a guide dog, service dog and/or service animal is responsible for maintaining care and control of the animal at all time.

#### Allergies:

If a health and safety concern presents itself for example in the form of a severe allergy to the animal, ABEX will make all reasonable efforts to meet the needs of all individuals.



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## **The Use of Support Persons**

If a customer with a disability is accompanied by a support person, ABEX will ensure that both persons are allowed to enter the premises together and that the customer is not prevented from having access to the support person.

## **Notice of Disruptions in Service**

Service disruptions may occur due to reasons that may or may not be within the control or knowledge of ABEX. In the event of any temporary disruptions to facilities or services that customer's with disabilities rely on to access or use ABEX goods or services, reasonable efforts will be made to provide advance notice. In some circumstances such as in the situation of unplanned temporary disruptions, advance notice may not be possible.

In the event that a notification needs to be posted the following information will be included unless it is not readily available or known:

- Goods or services that are disrupted or unavailable;
- Reason for the disruption;
- Anticipated duration; and
- A description of alternative services or options.

## Notification Options

When disruptions occur ABEX will provide notice by:

- posting notices in conspicuous places including at the point of disruption, at the main entrance and the nearest accessible entrance to the service disruption and/or on the ABEX website;
- contacting customers with appointments; verbally notifying customers when they are making an appointment; or by any other method that may be reasonable under the circumstances.

## **Customer Feedback**

ABEX shall provide customers with the opportunity to provide feedback on the service provided to customers with disabilities. Information about the feedback process will be readily available to all customers and notice of the process will be made available by posting our policy on the ABEX website. Feedback forms along with alternate methods of providing feedback such as verbally (in person or by telephone) or written (hand written, delivered, website or email), will be available upon request.

Customers who wish to provide feedback by completing an onsite customer feedback form or verbally can do so to any ABEX employee.

Customers that provide formal feedback will receive acknowledgement of their feedback, along with any resulting actions based on concerns or complaints that were submitted.



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## **Training**

Training will be provided to all employees who deal with the public and those who are involved in the development and approval of customer service policies, practices and procedures

### Training Provisions

As reflected in *Ontario Regulation 429/07*, regardless of the format, training will cover the following:

- A review of the purpose of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*.
- A review of the requirements of the *Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07*.
- Instructions on how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities.
- Instructions on how to interact with people with disabilities who:
  - use assistive devices;
  - require the assistance of a guide dog, service dog or other service animal; or
  - require the use of a support person
- Instructions on what to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing your services.
- ABEX policies, procedures and practices pertaining to providing accessible customer service to customers with disabilities.

### Record of Training

ABEX will keep a record of training that includes the dates training was completed.

## **Notice of Availability and Format of Documents**

ABEX shall notify customers that the documents related to the Accessibility Standard for Customer Service are available upon request and in a format that takes into account the customer's disability.

## **Contact Us**

If you would like to provide feedback on your experience or have any questions or concerns about this policy or its related procedures please contact:

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