



Policy Type	Public	Policy Number	P13
Policy Title	Customer Service Accessibility Standards		
Date Created	April 28, 2009	Date Revised	December 20, 2010

POLICY STATEMENT:

The PPL adheres to the corporate policy requirements with respect to the establishment of accessibility standards for customer service, in accordance with Ontario Regulation 429/07 created under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*.

The Library makes reasonable efforts to ensure that its policies, practices and procedures are consistent with the core principles of the standards:

- Dignity and independence: Customer service will be provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. People with disabilities should not be forced to accept lesser service, quality or convenience as a result of their disability.

Service delivery must consider how people with disabilities can effectively access and use the services provided. Awareness and respect of any individual is paramount when providing customer service.

- Integrated services: allow people with disabilities to fully benefit from the same services, in the same place and in the same or similar manner as other customers. Service provision and associated procedures will be inclusive of all clients. There are occasions when customer service must be provided using alternative measures which are not integrated. Alternative measures will only be employed when they cannot be integrated and are the only means of providing customer service to a person with a disability.
- Equal opportunity: allows people with disabilities to be given an equal opportunity to use and benefit from services provided by the Library. People with disabilities should not be required to put forward a greater effort in order to access, use and/or benefit from a service. As a result, additional services may be extended to people with disabilities in order to ensure they do not need to put forward a greater effort.

DEFINITIONS

1. Assistive Device:

Any device that is designed and/or adapted to assist a person to perform a particular task. Assistive devices include specialized aids and devices that enable people with disabilities to carry out their everyday activities. These include, but are not limited to, wheelchairs, hearing aids, adaptive computer technologies, ventilators, walkers, crutches and personal sound amplification devices.

2. Disability:

- a) any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, disability since birth, 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 coordination, 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.
- b) a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability
- c) a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language.
- d) a mental disorder.
- e) an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997*.

3. Clients:

All staff; Board members; citizens and visitors to the PPL; businesses; volunteers and agents recognized by the Library; and all community stakeholders.

PRINCIPLES

1. **Library staff:**

Staff are to be trained on how to provide customer service to people with disabilities in accordance with the core principles of the accessibility standards. Training must be delivered to any employee, volunteer, and/or agent as well as any other individual who might reasonably be expected to interact with the public on behalf of the Library or influence the development of policies, practices and procedures.

2. **Communication:**

Communication will be provided in a manner that takes into account an individual's disability. Consideration is given to the way in which individuals express, receive and process information without making assumptions about a particular disability. Individuals with the same disability may process information in different ways. The Library will continue to review the nature, manner and methods with which it communicates to people with disabilities in an attempt to improve the accessibility of information and services.

3. **Website:**

The PPL will provide its internet sites in a format that is accessible to persons with disabilities unless it is not technically feasible to do so. The Library's website uses a preset font type and size for optimal layout, but in all cases the font and size is adjustable by users to meet their specific needs. Information is readily available in HTML format with Adobe PDF as the standard for documents, forms and reports. The Library is committed to use of World Wide Web Consortium (W3c.org) best practice technologies when they are available and appropriate for a task and use of the latest versions when supported. These strategies include:

- a. use of navigation mechanisms in a consistent manner
- b. provision for essential components of the page to work without a mouse
- c. providing information about the general layout of a site (e.g. a site map or table of contents)
- d. good colour contrast between foreground & background
- e. easily-readable text. Text size can be adjusted by the user, using browser controls
- f. providing a text equivalent for non-text elements (e.g. via "alt" or "alternate" text tags). This includes: images, graphical representations of text (including symbols, image map regions, animations, applets and programmatic objects, audio files, and audio tracks of video
- g. use of full text pages
- h. use of style sheets to control layout and presentation

Note: this section to be implemented when Ontario Regulations are finalized.

4. Print Material:

The Pickering Public Library uses Arial 12 point for official documents: correspondence, reports, agreements, minutes, etc. These documents can also be made available in more accessible fonts if necessary.

5. Alternate Formats for Printed Documents:

The Library will provide any document produced by the Library in an alternate format upon request, unless it is not technically feasible to do so, and subject to the *Municipal Freedom of Information of Privacy Act*. Alternate formats can include, but are not limited to web access, large print versions of the document or a text-only electronic file which can then be read by a computer or printed in Braille. Requests for information in alternate format will be sent to the Administrative Services Assistant (at kima@picnet.org 905 831 6265 ext 6245) and forwarded to the department most responsible for the document. Staff will consult with the requestor to determine the most appropriate format, and will make every effort to provide the information in the preferred format as soon as possible.

6. Assistive Listening and other Devices:

Assistive listening devices are available to the public for use at public meetings in the Central Library Auditorium or Boardroom. We currently have a portable system that can be installed with notice. If this current system is unsuitable, we will need to be notified so other arrangements could be made. Any expenses incurred to meet the request will be the responsibility of the department or division organizing the function. Three days' notice to the Administrative Services Assistant (at kima@picnet.org 905 831 6265 ext 6245) is required. The availability of Assistive Listening Devices is also included as a resource on the Accessibility tab on the Pickering Public Library website (please see below) along with promotional material.

The Library will make reasonable efforts to ensure that other assistive devices can be used to access services.

7. TTY (an alternative service channel for the hard of hearing):

A TTY line is available in Customer Care at the City of Pickering. Instructions on its use are located with the TTY, or staff can assist. If you need to reach the Library from home using a TTY line, please call 905-420-1739.

8. Notice of Temporary Disruptions:

People with disabilities may rely on certain systems or amenities to access a Library facility or use a service. Disruptions to these can provide complications for people with disabilities as they may have to book accessible transit or make alternate arrangements. As a result, public notice will be provided when facilities, amenities or services are temporarily unavailable or when they are expected to be temporarily unavailable. Such public notice might relate to facility renovations including maintenance of elevators, and/or washrooms. Notice will be provided

for anything that may reasonably prohibit or limit the use of a service or facility by a person with a disability. Signs will be conspicuously displayed at the premises where the disruption has occurred; message placed on the Pickering Public Library's voicemail system at 905-831-6265 #6 and if possible; a notice will be posted on the Library's website under the Accessibility tab and communicated by various other means as deemed necessary. The content of the notice will include the reason for the disruption, the expected duration and alternative services provided, if any.

9. Service Animals:

Service animals are used by people with various kinds of disabilities including those who are blind, deaf, hard of hearing or those who may need to be alerted to an oncoming seizure. People requiring service animals are permitted to be accompanied by the animal in areas open to the public or third parties. A letter may be requested to confirm the status of a service animal if its purpose is not immediately evident.

This requirement does not apply where an animal is excluded by law from being on the premises, or if the presence of the service animal adversely affects the health and/or safety of other users (For example, regulations under the *Health Protection and Promotion Act, 1990* and the *Food Safety and Quality Act, 2001* prohibit animals from entering areas where food is prepared, stored or sold). Where a service animal is excluded by law, the Library will make reasonable efforts to ensure goods and services can be provided by alternative means.

10. Support Persons:

A support person is an individual hired or chosen by a person with a disability to provide services or assistance with communication, mobility, personal care, medical needs, or to assist with accessing services. People with disabilities are permitted to be accompanied by a support person in any area that is open to the public, or to use any library-provided service, if that support person is essential to protect the health and safety of the person with a disability, or the health and safety of others on the premises. Reasonable efforts will be made to ensure that people with disabilities are not prevented from having access to their support person while on the premises, or while using library-provided services. In some cases, it may be necessary for the support person to provide consent to rules specific to the service provided or, if necessary, agree to a confidentiality clause.

11. Training/Awareness:

Accessible customer service training/awareness is provided to every employee or agent who interacts with the public on behalf of the Library, as well as those who participate in developing policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of customer service. A form of ongoing training will be provided to individuals and/or groups as soon as practicable after that individual or group is assigned the applicable duties. Any substantive amendment to a policy, practice and procedure with respect to the provision of accessible customer service may also necessitate further training.

12. Accessible @ Pickering Public Library:

This webpage, located at www.picnet.org provides a listing of available services for people with disabilities, a feedback form and notices of service disruptions.

13. Feedback:

Through the Library's Client Feedback process within the Accessible @ Pickering Public Library webpage, any individual may submit feedback regarding the provision of accessible customer service. Individuals may also provide feedback in person, by telephone, in writing, via the comments boxes or electronically. The Library is committed to using client feedback to improve/enhance accessible service delivery. All feedback is monitored, tracked and responded to by public service staff, working with the relevant department. If a response is not immediately available, staff will confirm that the feedback has been received and indicate a timeline for a response.

14. Emergency Preparedness:

The City of Pickering's Operations & Emergency Services Department is responsible for ensuring community emergency planning and response activities incorporate emergency management practices that have the greatest impact on meeting the needs of people with disabilities. This includes but is not limited to:

- notification
- evacuation
- emergency transportation
- sheltering
- access to medications, refrigeration, and back-up power
- access to their mobility devices or service animals while in transit or at shelters
- access to information.

The Pickering Public Library will do all it can to assist the City to achieve this goal as it relates to its premises.

For further information, please contact: Kathy Williams, Director of Public Services at Pickering Public Library: (905) 831-6265 ext. 6251, email kathyw@picnet.org