



DEFINITIONS

Accessibility:

The term accessibility means giving people of all abilities opportunities to participate fully in everyday life. It is used to describe how widely a service, product, device, or environment is available to as many people as possible. Thus, accessibility can be seen as the ability to benefit from a system, service, product, or environment.

Barrier:

Barriers are obstacles that limit access and prevent people with disabilities from fully participating in society. Most barriers are not intentional. Instead, barriers usually arise because the needs of people with disabilities are not considered from the beginning.

Disability:

Ontario's Accessibility law adopts the definition for a disability that is in the Ontario Human Rights Code. It defines disability broadly:

- “any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, congenital disability 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 as on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device.
- A condition of mental impairment or developmental disability
- 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
- An injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997.”

PURPOSE

Lambton Elderly Outreach (LEO) is committed to working towards full compliance with current standards of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) Policy, Regulation 191/11, under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA), and any expected upcoming legislations such as Accessible Canada Act as they are introduced. In doing so, we affirm our commitment to providing quality services in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.

This policy and its sub-policies apply to:

- a. All employees, volunteers, students, contractors, consultants and others working on behalf of LEO and who communicate with clients and the public.
- b. Employees, board members, volunteers and others who are involved in developing policies and procedures regarding the standard.

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)

The AODA Multi-Year Accessibility Plan outlines the policies, achievements, and actions that LEO has taken and the work underway to improve opportunities for people with disabilities. The current plan covers a five-year period (2021-2026).

Statement of Commitment

LEO is committed to treating all people in a way that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence. We believe in inclusion and equal opportunity. LEO is committed to meeting the needs of people with disabilities promptly and shall do so by preventing and removing barriers to accessibility and meeting accessibility requirements under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act.

LEO is committed to developing, implementing, and maintaining policies that govern how the organization achieves or will achieve accessibility by meeting this Regulation. To facilitate this commitment, LEO has established, maintained, and documented a multi-year accessibility plan that is reviewed and updated at least once every five years to identify progress made in addressing barriers and will be posted on the LEO website.

Standards of Accessibility under AODA:

1. General Requirements
 - a. Accessible Emergency Information

LEO is committed to providing clients with publicly available emergency information, plans or public safety information in an accessible way upon request. This information will also be available to the public.

LEO has provided and shall continue to provide employees with disabilities with individualized emergency response information when necessary; workplace emergency response information required assistance, with the employee's consent, the workplace emergency response information shall be given to the designated employees.

LEO has created a process for documenting issues of accessibility and recording and providing accommodation for individualized accessible emergency response information. LEO shall continue to review the individualized workplace emergency response plans, when necessary, i.e. the location of the employee changes and/or there is a change in disability.

- b. Accessibility policies and plans

LEO has developed, implemented, and maintained a multi-year plan that outlines strategies and actions to identify, prevent, and remove barriers for people with disabilities. Policy revision takes place within the organization annually.

- c. Training

Accessibility and inclusion of people with disabilities is a core value for LEO, and for that reason, LEO provides training to employees and volunteers on Accessibility Standards and on the Human Rights Code related to people with disabilities. Training is provided in a way that best suits the duties and needs of employees and volunteers and every person who deals with the public on behalf of LEO, including employees, volunteers, and students. In addition, employees may require training on one or more of the standards—information and communications, employment, or transportation, related to the duties and responsibilities of their position.

LEO has taken the following steps to ensure employees are provided with the training needed to meet current standards and legislation:

- Provide educational or training resources in an accessible format that considers the accessibility needs of a person with a disability
- Ensure new employees and volunteers complete training within 30 days of employment or placement.
- Keep and maintain a database of the training participant's names and dates of completion

2. Customer Service Standard

LEO uses reasonable efforts to ensure that its policies, practices, and procedures are consistent with the following principles:

- Goods or services are provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities
- The provision of goods or services to persons with disabilities, and others, are integrated unless an alternate measure is necessary, whether temporarily or permanently, to enable a person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the goods or services
- Persons with disabilities are given an opportunity equal to that given to others to obtain, use and benefit from the goods or services
- Persons with disabilities may use assistive devices and/or support persons in the access of goods and services
- Persons with disabilities and their service animals are accommodated in all aspects of service provision unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law
- When communicating with a person with a disability, LEO employees shall do so in a manner that considers the person's disability

LEO has implemented the following measures:

- Senior leadership reviews and revises as required practices and procedures
- The Accessibility for Clients with Disabilities Policy was posted on LEO's website
- Notice shall be provided on the website, over the phone, or in writing when applicable, and in accordance with the Disaster Recovery plan when a service disruption occurs and shall be done as quickly as possible if the disruption is unexpected
- AODA and Human Rights training is assigned to all employees. Both trainings address areas regarding how to better interact with and/or accommodate persons with disabilities. Employees shall gain an understanding of their responsibilities in creating an inclusive and accessible

environment, accepting and respectful of the differences between people. The course is based on the principles and practices we believe are necessary to guide our employees in supporting LEO's vision "to provide excellent support services to the community we serve" and the mission "to enable clients to live with dignity and respect."

- Courses on equity, diversity and inclusion are also assigned to all employees
- Completion of training of all employees is tracked and recorded
- Comments relating to LEO's programs and services concerning customer service are welcomed and appreciated. A process has been established to encourage feedback regarding how LEO provides goods and services to people with disabilities. This feedback can be made verbally, by email, or in writing
- A process is in place to ensure that all feedback collected from clients, employees, or the general public is reviewed and analyzed to identify potential gaps in customer services and to ensure appropriate actions are taken
- Any person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person or by a service animal shall be allowed to enter LEO's premises with their support person and service animal. At no time shall a person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person or service animal be prevented from having access to their support person and/or service animal while on the premises

LEO shall place an ongoing emphasis on dispelling stereotypes, myths, and misconceptions about persons with disabilities to remove attitudinal barriers that might exclude persons with disabilities. LEO is committed to providing all employees, volunteers, and clients with a positive environment where persons are treated with equity.

3. Information and Communications Standard

LEO is committed to meeting the communication needs of people with disabilities. LEO shall consult with people with disabilities to determine their information and communication needs. LEO wants to achieve the most effective and efficient access to information for all users.

LEO has undertaken the following plans to ensure compliance with this standard:

- A feedback process has been established that is accessible; alternate formats are available such as telephone, mail, and in-person. These processes have been communicated to the public through LEO's website
- LEO's website has been designed to be user-friendly for people with a range of needs. People are encouraged to contact LEO via email or phone if they require additional information

In accordance with the IASR, LEO has reviewed and converted existing emergency and public policy safety information into a format that makes it available in accessible formats on request and promptly thereafter.

LEO has taken the following steps to ensure compliance with this standard:

- Continue to assess accessibility to existing website content
- Consult with persons requesting alternative formats

- Post a notice on the website and on premises that information is available in various accessible formats
- Establish a plan/familiarize with sources and timeframes for formatting that is not feasible to do in-house. i.e. captioning, video description, and conversion to Braille or audio and any other formatting

LEO shall continue to obtain additional resources to provide alternative ways to communicate policies and procedures to persons with disabilities. Within the following year, LEO shall connect with the Deaf-Blind Community to provide braille options and audio recordings.

4. Employment Standard

LEO is committed to inclusive and accessible employment practices that attract and retain individuals with disabilities. LEO has taken the following steps to notify the public and employees that, when requested, LEO shall accommodate people with disabilities throughout the recruitment and onboarding process.

a. Recruitment

LEO is committed to ensuring that the recruitment and assessment processes are fair and accessible. All Directors/Managers and other employees involved in hiring of any type shall be required to complete the applicable AODA and employment standards training courses.

LEO has taken the following steps to ensure compliance with this standard:

- Specify that accommodation is available for applicants with disabilities in recruitment material and with regards to interviews and assessments
- When making offers of employment, notify the successful applicant(s) of policies for accommodating employees with disabilities
- Inform employees of policies supporting employees with disabilities. Provide this information to new employees as soon as practicable after hiring
- Provide updated information on accommodations policies to employees when changes occur
- Consult with the employee to determine the suitability of format or support

b. Documented Individual Accommodation Plans

LEO is committed to producing and providing documented individual accommodation that includes the following:

- Participation of the employee requiring a personal accommodation plan
- Ability to request outside medical evaluation to determine if an accommodation can be achieved and how
- High level of privacy
- Regular review and updates
- Reason for denial if applicable

- The means of providing individual accommodation plans in a format that considers the needs of the employee
- And if required, include individualized workplace emergency response information

c. Return to Work

LEO is committed to developing and putting in place a process for developing individual accommodation plans and return-to-work policies for employees that have been absent due to a disability.

LEO has developed and maintained a return-to-work process for its employees who have been absent from work due to a disability and require disability-related accommodations to return to work. The process includes steps LEO takes to facilitate the return to work process, the documented individual accommodation plans.

d. Performance Management, Career Development and Redeployment

LEO is committed to ensuring the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities needs are taken into account regarding performance management, career development and redeployment processes. LEO has reviewed and updated the Human Resources policies and procedures to include the following elements:

- Accessibility needs of employees with disabilities, as well as individual accommodation plans, are taken into account when using performance management processes
- Accessibility needs of employees with disabilities, as well as individual accommodation plans, are taken into account when providing career development and advancement opportunities
- Accessibility needs of employees with disabilities, as well as individual accommodation plans, are taken into account when redeploying employees with disabilities

Within the following year, LEO shall have a Social and Wellness Committee, which shall work in conjunction with Leadership and the Joint Health and Safety Committee to provide a psychologically healthy and inclusive LEO.

5. Transportation Standard

LEO is committed to maintaining policies, planning for accessibility, and training employees to comply with the accessibility standards related to the Transportation Standards outlined in the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act. Employees involved in transporting people—either for free or for a fee, shall complete the Accessibility standards online course that includes the Transportation Standard module. Records are kept of the training provided. These commitments shall be available in accessible formats upon request. LEO provided transportation is wheelchair accessible.

Within the following year, LEO shall develop a policy and procedure for employees unable to drive into LEO's home office to provide a more inclusive and accessible workplace for disabled persons. LEO shall also offer a work from home option. This is intended to encourage persons with disabilities to apply for positions within LEO.

6. Design of Public Spaces

LEO is committed to maintaining an accessible building. LEO shall establish plans to meet the Accessibility Standards for the Design of Public Spaces when building or making major modifications to public spaces. LEO currently offers:

- Accessible off-street parking
- Accessible maintained outdoor paths of travel, like sidewalks and ramps
- Accessible entrances at all main entry points. Power-operated doors are maintained regularly and checked to be in working order monthly during LEO's workplace inspection
- Accessible washrooms
- Meetings are held in accessible rooms
- A scent-sensitive environment. Employees affected by certain cleaning products shall be offered alternatives. Clients that receive in-home services shall be required to provide employees with an alternative cleaning product if the employee is affected by the chemicals or fragrance

LEO shall take appropriate measures to prevent service disruption to the accessible parts of its public spaces. In the event of a service disruption, LEO shall notify the public of the service disruptions and alternatives available.

REFERENCE/SOURCE:

Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation Policy, Regulation 191/11

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005

Ontario Human Rights Code

RELATED DOCUMENT:

Communicating with People with Disabilities Policy

Workplace Accommodation Policy

Support Persons Policy

Use of Assistive Devices Policy

Use of Service Animals Policy

Accessibility for Clients with Disabilities Policy

Reasonable Accommodation on the Basis of Disability