



GRAND RIVER CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

Accessibility Standards for Customer Service

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 has established requirements for accessibility standards in all businesses in Ontario. This policy establishes Standards for Customer Service for the Grand River Conservation Authority, in accordance with Regulation 429/07. The Grand River Conservation Authority (hereinafter referred to as GRCA) is committed to providing exceptional and accessible customer service to people with disabilities.

Definitions

Accessible means customer service is provided in a manner that is capable of being easily understood or appreciated; easy to get to; capable of being reached, or entered; obtainable.

Assistive Device is 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 defined by the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, means 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 communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy or a practice.

Disability, as defined by 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 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 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 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.

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 or medical needs or with access to goods or services.



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Purpose

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

GRCA's policy aims to ensure that persons with disabilities are given equal opportunity to obtain, use and benefit from GRCA's goods and services. Reasonable efforts will be made to ensure that our goods and services are provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities. The following principles will apply:

- Goods and services provided to persons with disabilities will be integrated with the provision of goods and services to others unless an alternate measure is necessary to allow a person with a disability to benefit from the goods and services. The alternate measure may be temporary or permanent.
- Communications with a person with a disability will be conducted in a manner that takes into account the person's disability.
- People with disabilities may use assistive devices, service animals and support persons as is necessary to access the GRCA's goods and services. If a service animal is excluded by law from a premise, other measures will be made available for the person with a disability to access the goods or services.

Assistive Devices

Persons with disabilities may use their assistive devices as required in accessing goods and/or services provided by the GRCA.

Support Persons

Persons with disabilities are permitted to be accompanied by their support person in areas/premises that are open to the public, when accessing goods and services provided by the GRCA. They will not be prevented from having access to each other while on the premises.

Where admission fees for the support person are applicable, such fees will be listed wherever fees are listed for participation or admission.

The GRCA 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. This will only occur after consultation with the person with a disability and when it is the only means to allow the person with a disability to access GRCA's goods or services.

Service Animals

Persons with disabilities are permitted to be accompanied by their service animal and keep that animal with them in areas that are open to the public, when accessing goods and services provided by the GRCA, unless prohibited by law. In the event of an employee being uncertain of the service animal, the employee may ask to see written documentation from a physician or nurse validating it as a service animal.

In the event that a service animal is prohibited from the premises, the GRCA will ensure that other measures, such as an alternate location or time, are available to enable the person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from GRCA's goods and services.



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The service animal must be supervised by the customer and kept in control when used to access GRCA's goods and services.

Notice of Service Disruptions Process

In the event of a planned service disruption to facilities and services that are relied upon by people with disabilities to access GRCA's goods or services, a notice of the disruption shall be provided in advance.

The Notice of Service Disruption 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 will be given by posting the information in a conspicuous place on the premises affected by the service disruption, by posting the information on GRCA's website, or by such other methods as are reasonable under the circumstances. The supervisor or manager of the affected premises in coordination with the GRCA communications department will be responsible for identifying the need for posting a notice of service disruption and for its removal following resolution. A summary of service disruptions will be available under the accessibility section of the GRCA website at www.grandriver.ca or can be provided by calling 519-621-2761.

In the event of an unexpected disruption, notice will be provided as quickly as possible using the same or similar methods.

Notice of Availability of Documents

GRCA's Accessible Customer Service Policy, practices, notices of temporary disruption and the feedback process are available upon request, subject to the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA).

If the GRCA is required by *Ontario Regulation 429/07* to provide documents to a person with a disability, the document or the information contained in the document will be provided in a format that takes into account the person's disability.

The GRCA will make reasonable efforts to respond to requests for documents in alternate formats in a timely manner.

Training Policy

As required by *Ontario Regulation 429/07*, the following individuals will receive training on a number of topics outlined in the regulation:

- Staff, volunteers, agents/contractors and any other individuals who interact with the public or other third parties on behalf of GRCA
- Staff, volunteers, agents/contractors and any other individuals who participate in the development of GRCA policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of goods and services to members of the public or third parties

Accessibility training will be provided to the above noted individuals within a reasonable amount of time. As required by *Ontario Regulation 429/07*, GRCA will keep records of the training provided.



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The training will include the following topics:

- A review of the purposes of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* and the requirements of *Ontario Regulation 429/07*
- How to interact and communicate with people in a manner that takes into account their disabilities
- How to interact with people with disabilities who use an assistive device, service animal or a support person
- How to use the equipment or assistive devices available on GRCA's premises
- What action to take if a person with a particular type of disability is having difficulty accessing goods and services
- The process for people to provide feedback to the GRCA about its provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities and how the GRCA responds to the feedback and takes action on a complaint
- GRCA's customer service policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of goods and services to people with disabilities

Feedback Process

The GRCA welcomes feedback about the manner in which we provide service to persons with disabilities. Members of the public may comment in a range of formats; such as in person, by telephone, written feedback, e-mail, electronic text on disk or other methods. The feedback process and the feedback form will be made available under the accessibility section of the GRCA website at www.grandriver.ca. Alternative formats may also be made available as required to take into account a person's disability.

Feedback can be provided to the Accessibility Coordinator:

- By phone at 519-621-2761,
- By e-mailing accessibility@grandriver.ca
- in person at any GRCA facility by arranging an appointment, or
- by any other method required to take into account the person's disability.

In order to ensure the GRCA is able to fully consider and address the feedback received where possible, the following information should be provided:

- Time and date
- Description of feedback
- Contact information (should the individual wish to be contacted).

If the feedback constitutes a complaint about the accessibility of service to persons with disabilities, an attempt will be made to resolve the complaint immediately. If this cannot be achieved, the complaint will



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be forwarded to the supervisor, manager or director of the applicable department and responded to within 10 days.

All feedback will be reviewed and categorized, and a record will be maintained outlining the details of the feedback. Where applicable, action will be taken, and may include contact with the customer to verify information and/or resolve the issue. If requested, the GRCA will provide an acknowledgment of feedback within 10 working days and/or will, when requested, respond to feedback submissions in a timely manner.

A summary regarding the nature of feedback and their outcomes will be compiled and reported to the GRCA management committee annually.

Public Notification of the Feedback Process

A notification of the availability of GRCA's feedback process will be included on the GRCA'S website, in park booklets and in GRCA newsletters.

"GRCA values your feedback on the accessibility of the good and services we provide. If you have any comments or complaints please let us know. Please complete our Feedback Form (available under the accessibility section of the GRCA website at www.grandriver.ca), phone (519) 621-2761, fax (519) 621-4945 or e-mail accessibility@grandriver.ca to provide the details of the feedback and your contact information. We will provide an acknowledgment of your feedback within 10 working days, if requested. Feedback, including complaints, will be reviewed by staff and compiled and reported to the management committee annually. "

Review and Modifications to the Accessible Customer Service Policy or Other Policies

The Accessible Customer Service Policy will be reviewed when additional accessibility related regulations are enacted by the Government of Ontario, or as required.

Any policy of the GRCA that does not respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disability will be modified or removed.



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Customer Feedback Form

Thank you for visiting Grand River Conservation Authority. We value all of our customers and strive to meet everyone's needs.

Please tell us the date and time of your visit: _____

Did we respond to your customer service needs today? YES NO

Was our customer service provided to you in an accessible manner?

YES SOMEWHAT NO (please explain below)

Did you have any problems accessing our goods and services?

YES (please explain below) SOMEWHAT (please explain below) NO

Please add any other comments you may have:

Contact information (optional)*:

Thank you.



NOTICE

SERVICE DISRUPTION

The estimated length of the temporary disruption is from **[insert estimated date and/or time]** to **[insert estimated date and/or time]**.

The following services and/or facilities are currently unavailable:

- 1) **[insert service or facility name and location]** due to **[insert reason for disruption]**

- 2) **[insert service or facility name and location]** due to **[insert reason for disruption]**

The following alternative services and/or facilities are available:

[insert alternative service or facility name and location]

Thank you for your patience in this matter.
For questions or additional information please contact:

Name –
Phone –
Fax –
Email –