

## SSI 04 - 08

# Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities (AODA)

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### **Purpose**

In keeping with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA), Samsonshield is committed to ensuring equal access and participation for people with disabilities. Samsonshield has a long-standing corporate culture of inclusiveness, respect, and support. We are committed to treating people with disabilities in a way that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence.

We believe in integration, and we are committed to meeting the needs of people with disabilities in a timely manner. We will do so by removing and preventing barriers to accessibility and by meeting our accessibility requirements under Ontario's accessibility laws. Further, Samsonshield is committed to meeting its current and ongoing obligations under the Ontario Human Rights Code respecting a work environment of non-discrimination.

Samsonshield understands that obligations under the AODA and its accessibility standards do not substitute or limit its obligations under the Ontario Human Rights Code or obligations to people with disabilities under any other law. Samsonshield is committed to excellence in providing services to all customers including people with disabilities. Our accessible customer service policies are consistent with the principles of independence, dignity, integration, and equality of opportunity for people with disabilities.

#### **Corporate Responsibility**

Given the importance that Samsonshield places on AODA, the corporate responsibility for all such matters has been assigned to Human Resources under the direction of the company president.

#### **Training**

We are committed to training all staff and volunteers in accessible customer service, other Ontario's accessibility standards and aspects of the Ontario Human Rights Code that relate to persons with disabilities. In addition, prior to allowing any employee to commence work, we will train all employees:

- a) Who participate in developing the organization's policies; and
- b) All other persons who provide goods, services, or facilities on behalf of the organization.

Training of our employees and volunteers on accessibility relates to their specific roles and includes:

- Purpose of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and the requirements of the Customer Service Standards
- Our policies related to the Customer Service Standards
- How to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities
- How to interact with people with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of service animal or support person
- How to use the equipment or devices available on-site or otherwise that may help with providing goods, services or facilities to people with disabilities.

#### **Equipment & Devices**

We train every person as soon as practicable after being hired and provide training in respect of any changes to the policies. We maintain records of the training provided including the dates on which the training was provided and the number of individuals to whom it was provided.

People with disabilities may use their personal assistive devices when accessing our services or facilities. In cases where the assistive device presents a significant and unavoidable health or safety concern or may not be permitted for other reasons, other measures will be used to ensure the person with a disability can access our services or facilities.

We ensure that our staff are trained and familiar with various assistive devices we have on site or that we provide that may be used by customers with disabilities while accessing our services or facilities. We communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability. We will work with the person with disabilities to determine what method of communication works for them.



We welcome people with disabilities and their service animals. Service animals are allowed on the parts of our premises that are open to the public and third parties. When we cannot easily identify that an animal is a service animal, our staff may ask for documentation that supports this need from a regulated health professional that confirms the person needs the service animal for reasons relating to their disability. A service animal can be easily identified through visual indicators, such as when it wears a harness or a vest, or when it helps the person perform certain tasks requires no supportive documentation. A person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person will be allowed to have that person accompany them on our premises.

Before making any decision, Samsonshield 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 no other reasonable way to protect the health or safety of the person or others on the premises.

If this organization determines that a support person is required, Samsonshield will waive any admission fee or fare (if applicable) for the support person.

### **Notice of Temporary Disruption**

In the event of a planned or unexpected disruption to services or facilities for customers with disabilities, this organization will notify customers promptly. This clearly posted notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated length of time, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available.

### **Feedback**

Samsonshield welcomes feedback on how we provide accessible customer service. Customer feedback will help us identify barriers and respond to concerns. Samsonshield ensures our feedback process is accessible to people with disabilities by providing or arranging for accessible formats and communication supports, on request.

### **Communication**

Samsonshield notifies the public that documents related to accessible customer service, are available upon request by posting a notice in the following location(s)/way(s):

- By corporate governance; and
- By way of corporate website.

Samsonshield will provide these documents in an accessible format or with communication support, on request. We will consult with the person making the request to determine the suitability of the format or communication support. We will provide the accessible format in a timely manner and, at no additional cost.

### **Engagement**

Samsonshield will consult with the person making the request in determining the suitability of an accessible format or communication support. If the organization determines that information or communications are unconvertible, the organization shall provide the requestor with:

- a) An explanation as to why the information or communications are unconvertible; and
- b) A summary of the unconvertible information or communications.

Samsonshield will notify the public about the availability of accessible formats and communication supports. We will also meet internationally-recognized Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level AA website requirements in accordance with Ontario's accessibility laws.

### **Employment**

Samsonshield notify employees, job applicants and the public that accommodations can be made during recruitment and hiring. We notify job applicants when they are individually selected to participate in an assessment or selection process that accommodations are available upon request. We consult with the applicants and provide or arrange for suitable accommodation.

We notify successful applicants of policies for accommodating employees with disabilities when making offers of employment. We notify staff that supports are available for those with disabilities as soon as practicable after they begin their employment. We provide updated information to employees whenever there is a change to existing policies on the provision of job accommodation that take into account an employee's accessibility needs due to a disability.



Samsonshield will consult with employees when arranging for the provision of suitable accommodation in a manner that takes into account the accessibility needs due to disability. We will consult with the person making the request in determining the suitability of an accessible format or communication supports specifically for:

- a) Information that is needed in order to perform the employee's job; and
- b) Information that is generally available to employees in the workplace.

Where needed, Samsonshield will also provide customized emergency information to help an employee with a disability during an emergency. With the employee's consent, we will provide workplace emergency information to a designated person who is providing assistance to that employee during an emergency. We will provide the information as soon as practicable after we become aware of the need for accommodation due to the employee's disability.

Samsonshield will review the individualized workplace emergency response information:

- a) When the employee moves to a different location in the organization;
- b) When the employee's overall accommodations needs or plans are reviewed; and
- c) When the employer reviews its general emergency response policies.

Samsonshield has a written process to develop individual accommodation plans for employees. We have a written process for employees who have been absent from work due to a disability and require disability-related accommodations in order to return to work.

### **Career Development**

Our performance management, career development and redeployment processes take into account the accessibility needs of all employees.

### **Changes to Existing Policies**

Any policies of this organization that do not respect and promote the principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity for people with disabilities will be modified or removed. This document is publicly available. Accessible formats are available upon request.