Reporting Service Disruptions

The AODA requires service disruptions to be posted or communicated to individuals. This includes closure of facilities (buildings, entrances, elevators, etc.) and altered schedules (change in office hours). Notification methods can include announcements, postings on websites, emails and outgoing telephone messages.

Acknowledgements

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A Few Helpful Tips

Physical Disabilities
Some people may use assistive devices, while others may have conditions such as arthritis, or heart or lung conditions and may have difficulty with moving, standing or sitting for long periods.
• Ask before providing help. Persons with physical disabilities often have their own way of doing things.
• If the person uses a wheelchair or scooter, sit down beside him/her, to enable eye contact and reduce neck strain for longer interactions.
• Offer preferential seating.
• If you have permission to move a person in a wheelchair, make sure the person is comfortable before you leave him/her.

Vision Loss
Few people with vision loss are totally blind. Some have limited vision, such as the loss of side, peripheral, or central vision.
• Don’t assume the person cannot see you.
• To get the person’s attention, address him/her directly; say your name; do not touch the person.
• Ask the person in which format he/she would like to receive information.
• When providing printed information, offer to read, summarize or describe it.
• Don’t be afraid to use words such as “see,” “read” or “look.”
• When offering to guide someone, hold out your elbow. Give clear, precise directions.
• Allow the person to complete what he/she is saying without interruptions.
• If you don’t understand, ask the person to repeat the information.
• Ask questions that can be answered ‘yes’ or ‘no.’
• If the person uses a communication board, symbols or cards, follow his/her lead.

Deafblind
People who are deafblind have a combination of vision and hearing loss. Many persons who are deafblind will be accompanied by an intervenor, a person who helps with communicating. Many different ways may be used to communicate, including sign language, tactile sign language, Braille, speech and lip reading.
• Ask the person what will help the two of you to communicate.
• Many people will explain what to do, perhaps giving you an assistance card or note.
• Try to communicate your presence before you get too close in order not to alarm him/her.
• Give extra time to complete a task.

Hearing Loss
There are different types of hearing loss. Commonly used terms are hard of hearing, deafened, deaf and Deaf. Persons who are deafened or hard of hearing may use devices such as hearing aids, cochlear implants, or FM systems; they may rely on lip reading. A person with little or no functional hearing may use sign language.
• Ensure you have his/her attention before speaking. Discreetly wave your hand or gently tap the shoulder if needed.
• Reduce background noise.
• Keep your face visible to enable lip reading. If the person is using an interpreter, speak directly to the person, not the interpreter.
• Speak clearly, pacing your speech and pauses normally. Don’t shout or over-pronounce words.
• Offer to communicate in writing (pen and paper) as needed.

Learning Disabilities
Examples include dyslexia (problems with reading and language-based learning); dyscalculia (problems with mathematics); and dysgraphia (problems with writing and fine motor skills.) Having a learning disability does not mean a person is incapable of learning. Rather, it means they learn in a different way.
• Ask the person how he/she would like to receive information. For example, if you have written material, offer to read the information aloud.
• Be willing to explain something again - it may take a little longer for the person to process the information.
• Give extra time to complete a task.