

# **Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act**

Guidelines for Volunteers



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The Government of Ontario has a new law requiring hospitals and other organizations to provide services for people who have disabilities.

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act aims to achieve an accessible Ontario by 2025 in both the private and public sectors



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Staff, physicians & VOLUNTEERS are  
responsible for providing accessible  
customer service in our hospital



# Types of Disabilities

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- Physical Disabilities

- Everything from minor problems in moving parts of the body to muscle weakness or paralysis

- Deaf or Hard of Hearing Disabilities

- A person may have trouble hearing certain frequencies, sounds or words

- Blind or Visual Impairment Disabilities

- Vision disabilities include slightly reduced vision to total blindness



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## • Speech Disabilities

- The person has a partial or total loss of the ability to speak

## • Deaf-Blind Disabilities

- A combination of hearing and vision loss

## • Mental Health Disabilities

- People with these disabilities may appear irritated or upset. They may be unable to make a decision. They may laugh or get angry for no visible reason.



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## • Learning Disabilities

- Affect how a person communicates, understands and learns. These people learn in different ways. They may have trouble reading, solving problems, organizing themselves or understanding information

## • Intellectual Disabilities

- Affect a person's ability to think. They may be caused by Down's Syndrome, chronic diseases (such as Alzheimer's, stroke), exposure to toxic chemicals (such as Fetal Alcohol Syndrome) or by an accident



# **What is accessible customer service?**

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- Providing services to people with disabilities in a way that works for them
- It considers any barrier, visible or invisible, that prevents someone with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society as a result of the disability



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- ▶ Be precise and specific with information
  - ▶ Do not touch or move assistive devices without permission
  - ▶ Be patient, calm and polite
  - ▶ Treat all persons with respect and consideration
  - ▶ Take the time to learn each individual's needs.  
Disabilities are not always visible
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- Always speak directly to the person you are dealing with, not their support person or others who may be with them
  - If necessary, use other methods to communicate
  - When communicating use short sentences and politely ask the person to repeat, if you cannot understand



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- When engaging a person who uses a service animal, remember the animal is working. It is not a pet
  - Offer your arm for guidance, rather than grabbing or pulling



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- Always ask if you can help...they know the best way for you to assist them
  - Do not assume what the person needs, based on the type of disability
  - Be patient and willing to find a way to communicate



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# **Assistive Devices May Include:**

- Wheelchairs
- Walkers
- Canes
- Hearing aids



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- Service animals

- Service animals are specially trained to aid a person with a disability (i.e. Dogs)
- Service animals must be allowed to go everywhere with their owner, unless there are restrictions due to the nature of the service (i.e. operating room)
- Service animals should not be touched or pet unless they ask permission from the owner



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Volunteers help provide excellent  
customer service to everyone!

