



Accessible Customer Service Policy

Section	Date Passed	Resolution #	Reviewed	Date Repealed	Resolution #
Administration	October 2, 2018	2018-466			

POLICY

The Town of Neepawa Accessible Customer Service Policy (ACSP) provides for the quality of interaction between Municipal departments and people disabled by barriers when providing information and customer services to the public. The Town of Neepawa will create equitable access by eliminating barriers and by responding to individual accessibility needs in a respectful and timely manner. The Town will inform the public of accessibility features and invite requests for alternate formats or other disability accommodations.

The policy aims to eliminate barriers faced by people with disabilities and is in accordance with the requirements of the Customer Service Standard, under *The Accessibility for Manitobans Act*. It addresses the way government provides services to persons with disabilities, but does not address program entitlements.

PRINCIPLES

Access: Persons should have barrier-free access to places, events and other functions that are generally available in the community;

Equality: Persons should have barrier-free access to those things that will give them equality of opportunity and outcome;

Universal Design: Providing access in a manner that does not establish or perpetuate differences based on a person's disability;

Systemic Responsibility: The responsibility to prevent and remove barriers rests with the person or organization that is responsible for establishing or perpetuating the barrier.

PURPOSE & SCOPE

The purpose of the ACSP is to ensure that people disabled by barriers benefit from the equitable access to information and customer services to the public provided by the Town of Neepawa.

This policy applies to all Town of Neepawa departments, all employees, all agents and volunteers. This policy intends to benefit the full range of people disabled by barriers, as indicated under *The Accessibility for Manitobans Act*. All departments must make every reasonable effort to meet the needs of people with disabilities when providing accessible customer service.

Information and other accommodations will be provided in the most cost-effective format that will reasonably* address the needs of the individual.

**The Manitoba Human Rights Commission describes reasonable accommodation as a "simple and inexpensive change to how something is typically done, which takes into account a need a person or group has that is based on a protected characteristic." The duty to reasonably accommodate disabilities is limited by undue hardship to the service provider.*

PROCEDURE

The Town of Neepawa's practices and procedures are consistent with the principles of independence, dignity, equal opportunity and barrier free access to goods or services. Access to goods and services is reasonably provided by alternate means if a barrier cannot be removed.

1. To provide accessible public information and communication, the Town of Neepawa will:
 - 1.1. Produce public information in ways than enhance accessibility, for example, using plain language and clear print;
 - 1.2. Notify the public that alternate formats are available on request by stating this on all new municipal publications;
 - 1.3. Respond in a timely manner to requests for documents in an alternate format;
 - 1.4. Update website and online information to be accessible according to existing Manitoba Government guidelines;
 - 1.5. Advise the public that information about municipal measures supporting accessibility, including this policy, is available upon request and in alternate formats;
 - 1.6. Train employees to communicate in an appropriate manner that considers the barrier, when a person has self-identified as being disabled by a barrier.
2. The Town of Neepawa welcomes people using assistive devices. This includes:
 - 2.1. An understanding that staff will be made aware of what assistive devices are;
 - 2.2. Reasonably accommodating people using assistive devices, if required;
 - 2.3. An understanding that personal assistive devices will not be touched or moved without permission.
3. The Town of Neepawa welcomes support persons accompanying people with disabilities. This includes:
 - 3.1. Training employees on how to treat each party with respect, including speaking directly to the customer and not the support person unless advised to do so;
 - 3.2. Ensuring a person with a disability accompanied by a support person has access to that individual at all times when on the premises.
4. The Town of Neepawa welcomes persons with service animals. This includes:
 - 4.1. Understanding a service animal as defined in The Manitoba Human Rights Code to be "an animal that has been trained to provide assistance to a person with a disability that relates to that person's disability."
 - 4.2. Recognizing that a person may be accompanied by a service animal when he or she seeks to obtain, use or benefit from government goods or services;
 - 4.3. Recognizing that service animals may remain with the handler during the provision of services in the home;
 - 4.4. Recognizing that a service animal must be under the care and control of its owner at all times;

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- 4.5. Training employees on appropriate questions that can be asked if it is not clear that an animal is a service animal;
 - 4.6. Training employees not to interfere with a working animal without seeking permission of the animal's owner.
5. The Town of Neepawa will ensure accessible features of the built environment are available for use as intended, or notice is given. This includes:
 - 5.1. Clearing passageways and the unobstructed use of accessible features such as accessible washrooms and ramps;
 - 5.2. Providing public notification when there is a planned or unexpected disruption of accessible services or features including:
 - 5.2.1. Posting a notice at all entranceways, and when possible, on the Town website and/or Facebook page;
 - 5.2.2. The reason for the barrier and the estimated timeframe for resolution.
6. To provide accessible public events and meetings, the Town of Neepawa will:
 - 6.1. Hold public events in accessible meeting spaces;
 - 6.2. Meet the communication needs of residents with disabilities on request;
 - 6.3. Publicize events using methods accessible to people with disabilities;
 - 6.4. Add to publicity and registration forms that disability supports are available upon request;
 - 6.5. Not charge an additional fee for a support person.
7. A feedback and response system about accessible customer service is provided to the public and includes:
 - 7.1. Public feedback accepted by phone, and email;
 - 7.2. Notice confirming receipt of feedback should be provided within 2 working days;
 - 7.3. Response to the feedback should be delivered within 2 weeks;
 - 7.4. Documented tracking of request and feedback provided.
8. The Town of Neepawa will provide training in accessible customer service to all employees, agents, volunteers and others who directly provide goods or services to Neepawa residents or to another organization on behalf of the Town of Neepawa.
 - 8.1. Customer service training includes a review of *The Human Rights Code (Manitoba)*, *The Accessibility for Manitobans Act (AMA)*, the Customer Service Standard and information required to assist employees understand the following: accessible communication and information, assistive devices, support persons, service animals, temporary barriers, barrier free access, and accessible public events;
 - 8.2. Customer service training is delivered to applicable employees, agents and volunteers as soon as is reasonably practical;

- 8.3. Customer service training is delivered as soon as is reasonably practical to newly hired employees once individuals have been assigned applicable duties;
 - 8.4. Ongoing training is delivered when there are changes made to internal accessibility policies and practices;
 - 8.5. Documentation will be maintained on the accessibility training's content, when the training is to be provided and tracking of number of persons trained.
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9. Notification that the ACSP is publicly available, including in alternate formats and is posted on the Town website. Public documentation includes:
 - 9.1. This ACSP and a summary of the provided training;
 - 9.2. Town of Neepawa Accessibility Plan and updates.

This policy is available in alternate formats, upon request.