

Service Standards	Accessibility Standards for Customer Service	Section #	
		Policy #	
		Date	03.10

Objectives & Goals

The purpose of this policy is to ensure accessibility in the provision of services to persons with disabilities and to set out the standards for customer service that are expected from and apply to every person who deals with members of the public or other third parties on behalf of Science North.

Policy Statement

Science North will ensure accessibility in the provision of its goods and services to persons with disabilities in a manner that is consistent with the principles of independence, dignity, integration and equality of opportunity. Where integration is not possible, Science North will strive to implement alternative measures to enable a person with a disability to access goods and services in a manner that considers that person's individual requirements.

Scope:

This policy applies to all employees and volunteers and all agents, committee members, placements or contractors who deal with members of the public or other third parties, act on behalf of or represent Science North in any manner. All Managers are expected to support training and other efforts related to this policy and will ensure that procedures under this policy are communicated to staff, reviewed periodically and carried out consistently.

Terms & Conditions

Communication

Science North will communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability. We are committed to providing staff who are trained in interaction and communication with people with various types of disabilities. Staff will ensure clear communication in person, on the phone or in alternate formats, ensuring communication is tailored as much as possible in support of individual needs. Individuals may also communicate with Science North via fax, e-mail or written text. Science North's Accessibility policy will be made available on the Science North website.

Service Animals

When accessing goods or service, persons with disabilities are permitted to be accompanied by their service animal in areas/premises that are open to the public or third parties, unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law. Science North may prohibit the use of service animals in certain locations due to health or safety restrictions including but not limited to food preparation areas programs or areas with animals, and/or other research areas. The partner must be in full control of the animal at all times, including use of a leash as appropriate for the disability and is solely responsible for the care and supervision of a service animal. Where it is not readily apparent that the animal is used by the customer for reasons relating to his or her disability, Science North may ask whether this is a service animal, request a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons related to the disability or the customer may have an alternate form of verification that they prefer to offer. A service animal may be excluded only when the animal is out of control, when the animal poses a direct and significant threat to the property, health or safety of others or when the presence of the service animal would fundamentally change the nature of the job, program, service or activity. Risks may not be remote or speculative including biting, annoying, allergies or fear of animals and exclusions will be determined on an individual basis based on specific circumstances. In making this determination, consideration will be given as to whether another reasonable accommodation can be provided.

Support Persons

When a person with a disability requires a support person to help with communication, mobility, access to goods or services, or help with personal or medical care, the support person will not be charged an admission fee. Where necessary to protect the health or safety of the person with a disability, Science North may require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person. This situation would occur under exceptional circumstances when it is the only means through which the person with a disability can access the Centre's goods or services and only after consultation with the person with a disability. Decisions to require support persons will be made where there is a significant risk to the health and safety of the person with a disability or others, when the risk is greater than the risk associated with other customers, when the risk cannot be eliminated or reduced by other means, when the assessment of the risk is based on consideration of the duration of the risk, the nature and severity of the potential harm, the likelihood that the potential harm will occur, and the imminence of the potential harm; and when the assessment of the risk is

based on the individual's actual characteristics, not on generalizations, misperceptions, or fears about a disability. At no time will a person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person be prevented from having access to his or her support person while on our premises.

Fees and admission

Fees are generally not charged for support persons for admission to Science North premises or events where a fee is required. If an amount is payable by a support person for admission to the premises or in connection with a support person's presence at the premises Science North shall ensure that notice is given in advance regarding the amount to be paid, by posting notice of fees for support persons wherever Science North fees are posted.

Service Disruptions

In the event there is a disruption in a particular facility or service relied upon or used to allow a person with a disability to access goods or services, Science North will give notice of the disruption to the public by posting the reason for the disruption, the anticipated duration of the disruption, and alternative methods of service that may be available. Notice may be given by posting the information in a conspicuous location on premises owned or operated by Science North or its agents including public entrances, service counters, sign boards, through an announcement in our telephone voice messaging, or the notice may be published on our web site, or such other method as is reasonable in the circumstances. If the disruption is anticipated, Science North will provide a reasonable amount of advance notice of the disruption. If the disruption is unexpected, notice will be provided as soon as possible

Assistive Devices

If persons with a disability require assistive devices to access or benefit from Science North's goods or services they will be allowed to use such devices except where otherwise prohibited by law including reasons relating to health and safety. In such situations and where such measures are available, Science North may offer persons with a disability alternative measures to assist them in obtaining, using and benefiting from the Centre's goods and services. Where applicable, assistive devices owned and operated by Science North will be available for use by persons with disabilities. These include electronic door openers, elevators and wheelchairs, accessible public washrooms, headphones for theatres and building tours, reserved seating available in some Science North theatres and accessible water fountains. A limited number of wheelchairs are available at the coat check, free of charge and with identification. Audio tours are

available at the Science North Science Centre for a nominal fee and can be picked up at the entrance to the Science Centre building. FM Audio enhancers are available in the MIAX Theatre and offered on a first arrival basis. Special wheelchair seating is available in the Science North IMAX Theatre, Science North Planetarium, Atlas Copco Theatre, Wings over the North and all Object Theatre experiences.

Availability of Documents

Science North shall notify persons to whom it provides goods or services that the documents required under this regulation are available upon request. This notice will be given by posting the information at a conspicuous place, the website and/or through any other reasonable method. If a request to provide a copy of a document to a person with a Disability is made, Science North will take into consideration the person's disability and provide that document in an appropriate and available format.

Feedback Process

Science North has a mechanism through which the public can provide feedback on the accessibility of goods and services. Feedback can be made by using a feedback form, by mail, e-mail, telephone or verbally. All feedback will be kept in strict confidence and will be used to improve customer service. In addition, the author of the feedback will be provided a response in an appropriate format outlining actions deemed appropriate, if any. Feedback may be provided by a person with a disability in the manner deemed most convenient to them, such as in person, by telephone, in writing, or by delivering an electronic text by email.

Training

All Science North employees, volunteers, agents, contractors and others who deal with the public or other third parties, and those involved in developing customer service policies, practices, and procedures, will receive Accessibility Awareness Training and ongoing training with respect to related changes. Science North will keep records of the training provided including dates, name of individuals attending the training and copies of certifications relating to the training. Where applicable, agents and contractors of Science North will provide proof of 'Accessibility Awareness' training (as part of their contractual agreement with Science North). Accessibility Awareness training will include an overview of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, the requirements of the customer service standard, how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities including people who use assistive devices or people

who require the assistance of a service animal or support person. Training will also include information on the availability of equipment or devices on site to support the provision of goods and service or enabling access where persons with disabilities are having difficulty accessing Science North goods and services

Entrances

Main entrances to the Science Centres are accessible and equipped with automatic doors.

Parking and Off-loading

Taxis and other vehicles may use the offloading zone closest to our entrances to drop off and pick-up visitors with disabilities. Science North's parking lots have clearly marked parking spaces reserved for people with disabilities.