



# Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities

## *The Ipsos Approach*

1. What is the 'AODA' or Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act?
2. Definitions & Barriers
3. The Customer Service Standard:  
Accessibility at Ipsos
4. Providing Feedback: What to do if you have suggestions, concerns or feedback about Accessibility at Ipsos

## ***What we need to do:***

**Identify, remove & prevent barriers  
for people with disabilities in key  
areas of daily living.**

## ***What is the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act? (AODA)***

The AODA is a law in Ontario that allows the government to develop, implement & enforce specific standards of accessibility for people with disabilities. This customer service standard is the first to come into effect under the AODA.

## **Goal: An Accessible Ontario by 2025**

**Involves development of accessibility standards in:**

Goods Services Facilities Accommodation	Employment Buildings Structures Premises
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***This is not about legislation  
It's about doing the right thing!***

### **Effective now:**

All private sector organizations in Ontario must implement the requirements for Accessible Customer Service.

**This means we must:**

***Identify, remove & prevent barriers for people with disabilities in key areas of daily living.***

Accessibility standards are also in development for areas including:

- Transportation
- Information & Communications
- Employment
- The Built Environment

However, there are no current define standards or timelines for these areas.

### **Facts about Disability:**

Over 15.5% of Ontarians have a disability

Disability rate increases with age: 43.4% of people aged 65+ have a disability in Canada

1 in every 7 people or approximately 1.85 million people

\*Statistics Canada

## Who are People with Disabilities?

People often tend to think primarily of visible or physical disabilities, however disability can also include invisible disabilities.

*We must remember that we cannot always tell who has a disability.*

In this Act, “disability” means: Any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness.

### Disabilities can include:

- Infirmity, malformation or disfigurement
- Includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical coordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment
- Physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device
- A condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability
- A Learning disability or a mental disorder

## What are barriers we need to consider?

**We need to consider both visible & invisible barriers.**

A barrier is anything that prevents someone with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of their disability.

### **Barriers can include:**

**Attitudes:** Stereotypes & lack of understanding can create barriers, as well as fear of offending the individual.

**Architectural:** May result from design elements of a building such as stairs, doorways etc.

**Informational & Communication:** Can make it difficult to receive or convey information. For example: print size or inability to use a standard telephone.

**Technology:** Lack of technology can prevent people from receiving information. I.e: setup or design of computers & telephones.

**Systematic:** Certain policies, practices & procedures, often unintentionally, can present barriers

## **The Customer Service Standard**

**It is now the law.**

The standard is aimed at making customer service operations accessible to people with disabilities and it is in line with Ipsos' values of providing exceptional client service.

### **Accessibility at Ipsos:**

We must ensure our policies, practices & procedures on providing service to people with disabilities are in place and consistent with the principles of:

***Dignity:*** Self-respect, respect of others.

***Independence:*** Avoid unnecessary help from others.

***Integration:*** Provide same service, in the same way.

***Equality of Employment:*** Same options and benefits.

To help maintain the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities, at Ipsos, we can support the use of accessible devices, service animals, and support persons. Every employee has an obligation to assist in achieving accessibility for people with disabilities.

## **Accessibility Principles at Ipsos**

**To help maintain dignity and independence, we must support use of accessible devices, service animals and support persons.**

### **Communication Tips:**

- Not sure what to do? Ask if you can help
- Speak directly to the person with a disability, not to their support person
- Take time to get to know their needs, just like any other customer
- Be patient. Some people may take longer to understand & respond
- Use “disability” or “disabled,” not “handicap” or “handicapped.”
- Put people first. Say “person with a disability,” rather than “disabled person.”
- If you are not sure about a disability, it’s better to wait until the individual describes their situation to you.

***Don’t make assumptions.***

## Accessible Devices

**Do not lean over, touch or move assistive devices, including wheelchairs without permission.**

### ***If you have permission:***

- Wait for the person's instructions
- Confirm they are ready to move
- Describe what you are going to do before you do it
- Avoid uneven ground & objects
- Don't leave the person in an awkward, dangerous or undignified position such as facing a wall or in the path of opening doors.

*Don't lean over the person or on their assistive device*

*Don't move items or equipment such as canes & walkers out of the persons reach*

*Respect your customer's personal space*

*Let your customer know about accessible features in the area (e.g., Automatic doors, accessible washrooms)*





## Service Animals

### Allow all Service Animals including:

- Guide dog
- Hearing or signal animal
- Mobility assistance animal
- Seizure response animal
- Therapeutic assistance animal

### General Tips:

- Don't touch or speak to service animals - They are working and have to pay attention at all times
- Avoid making assumptions – not all service animals wear special collars or harnesses. If you're not sure the animal is a pet or service animal - **ask**.



## Support Persons



- Guides
- Interpreters
- Note-takers, scribes, readers
- Personal care

**When interacting with a person accompanied by a support person:**

**Speak directly to the customer, not the Support Person**

**Welcome the Support Person**

**If you are unsure who the client is – ask.**

## **Visually Impaired**

**It can be difficult to tell if a person has vision loss. Few people with vision loss are totally blind: Don't assume the person can't see you.**

### **General Tips:**

- Don't touch your customer without asking permission
- Identify yourself when you approach and speak directly to the person
- Offer your elbow to guide the person (ensure they accept before giving it to them)
- Don't leave your customer in the middle of a room – show them to a comfortable location
- If you need to leave, let them know you are leaving and will be back.
- Avoid raising your voice – the person does not necessarily have hearing loss
- Be clear and precise in giving directions
- Do not be afraid or embarrassed to use words such as “see” “read” and “look”. People with vision loss also use these words
- Offer to read or summarize written material.

## **Deaf, Oral Deaf, Deafened or Hard of Hearing**

**Ask how best to communicate.**

### **General Tips:**

- Attract the customer's attention before speaking: A touch on the shoulder or a gentle wave of your hand.
- Ask how you can help. Don't shout.
- Ensure your face is visible when speaking: Some people read lips.
- If necessary, ask if another method of communicating would be easier (for example using a pen and paper)
- Be patient if using pen & paper to communicate. American Sign Language may be their first language & it has its own grammatical rules and sentence structure.
- If the person uses a hearing aid, ensure background noise is limited.



## **Mental Health Disabilities**

**Mental health disabilities are not always visible, so you may not know your customer has one unless you're informed about it.**

Can include schizophrenia, depression, phobias, bipolar, anxiety & mood disorders.

### **General Tips:**

- Treat a person with a mental health disability with the same respect and consideration you have for everyone else.
- Be patient, confident and reassuring. Listen carefully and work with your customer to try to meet their needs.
- If someone appears to be in a crisis, ask them the best way to help.

## Physical Disabilities

There are many types & degrees of physical disabilities, so we must ensure we tailor our interactions appropriately depending on their individual needs.

### General Tips:

- Speak naturally & directly to your customer, not to their companion or support person
- For lengthy conversations with someone in a wheelchair or scooter, consider sitting so you can make eye contact
- Ask before you help. People with physical disabilities often have their own ways of doing things
- Let the person know about accessible features (ie: automatic doors, accessible washrooms, elevators, ramps etc.)

**Remember:** Please do not touch assistive devices without permission

## **Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities**

**People with intellectual or developmental disabilities may have difficulty doing things most of us take for granted.**

Intellectual or developmental disabilities can mildly or profoundly limit a person's ability to learn, communicate, socialize and take care of their everyday needs. Be supportive & patient.

### **Types of assistance:**

- Communication board
- Speech generating device
- Service animal
- Support person

### ***Remember:***

You may not know a person has this type of disability unless you are told.

- Don't assume what a person can or can't do.
- Use plain language & speak in short sentences providing one piece of information at a time.
- If you don't understand what's being said, ask.

**As much as possible, treat people with an intellectual or developmental disability like anyone else. They may understand more than you think, and will appreciate**

## **Learning Disabilities**

**A range of information processing disorders that affect how a person acquires, organizes, expresses, retains, understands or uses verbal or non-verbal information.**

**It is important to know that having a learning disability does not mean a person is incapable of learning. Rather, it means they may learn in a different way.**

### **General Tips:**

- When you know someone with a learning disability needs help, ask how you can help.
- Speak naturally, clearly, and directly.
- Allow extra time if necessary – people may take a little longer to understand and respond.
- Be patient & willing to explain something again, if needed.

### **Types of assistance your customer might use:**

- Alternative technology for writing
- Calculator
- Scanning or reading technology
- Tape recorders, mini pocket recorders.



## **Speech or Language Impairments**

**May prevent the person from expressing themselves or from understanding written or spoken language.**

Cerebral palsy, hearing loss or other conditions may make it difficult to pronounce words or may cause slurring or stuttering.

### **General Tips:**

- Don't assume that because a person has one disability, they also have another. For example, if a person has a speech impairment, it does not mean they also have an intellectual or developmental disability
- Ask the visitor or client to repeat information if you don't understand
- If possible, ask "yes or no" questions
- Allow enough time to communicate, they may speak more slowly
- Don't interrupt or finish sentences. Wait for them to finish

### **Types of assistance your customer might use:**

- Communication board
- Paper and pen
- Speech generating device
- Support person.

## **Speaking on the Phone**

- Speak naturally, clearly and directly
- Concentrate on what they are saying, not how the person's voice sounds
- Don't interrupt or finish the person's sentences
- If you don't understand, simply ask again, or repeat or rephrase what you heard and ask if you have understood correctly
- If using an interpreter or a Relay Service, speak naturally to the customer, not to the interpreter
- If, after numerous attempts, you and your customer cannot communicate with each other, consider making alternate arrangements



## Disruptions in Service:

Either Ipsos, or our building management, must provide public notice ahead of time, if possible, when there is a temporary disruption to services usually used by persons with disabilities.  
(For example: elevators, automatic doors or accessible washrooms)

### The Notice Should Indicate:

- 1) The reason for the disruption
- 2) The expected duration
- 3) A description of possible alternate facilities or services



## What should you do if you have feedback on accessibility at Ipsos?

- Email, call or otherwise contact Ipsos Human Resources in Toronto. Emails can be sent directly to HR Canada; [HR.Canada@Ipsos.com](mailto:HR.Canada@Ipsos.com)
- Policy posted in public areas of our offices and with Human Resources
- Phone reception or main phone line, to be routed to the appropriate party in HR



Once you have read and understood the information in this booklet, we ask that you sign the accompanying acknowledgement stating that you understand the Ipsos approach to providing accessible service to people with disabilities.

If you have any questions, please contact Human Resources.