

ACCESSIBILITY FOR ONTARIANS WITH DISABILITIES (AODA)

Steel Art Signs is committed to servicing all of our customers with a consistently high level of customer service. In pursuit of our commitment Steel Art Signs will strive to ensure that our products and services are provided in an accessible manner. The following pages is Steel Art Sign's AODA Policy and [Procedures for your viewing](#).

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Accessibility: Accessible Customer Service Policy	Revision #	Issue Date: March 2014
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Accessible Customer Service Policy

PURPOSE

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) is a law in Ontario with the purpose of developing, implementing, and mandating accessibility standards, with respect to goods, services, facilities, accommodation, employment, buildings, structures and premises, in order to achieve accessibility for persons with disabilities,.

Under the AODA, Ontario Regulation 429/07, entitled “Accessibilities Standards for Customer Service,” this regulation establishes accessibility standards specific to customer service for public sector organizations and other persons or organizations that provide goods and services to members of the public or other third parties.

GOAL

Our goal is to set guidelines for identifying and responding to issues of non-accessibility of our facility and services and to do this in a fair, objective and efficient manner which respects and protects the rights and needs of any person entering upon our office and production facility or access to our installation and inspection (of signs) services.

The overall objectives of this policy are:

1. To accommodate our staff and those who do business with our company who have disabilities.
2. To ensure our staff are trained in our policy and procedures.

SCOPE

Steel Art Signs strives at all times to provide services in a way that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities. It applies to all customers, employees, volunteers, and third party contractors.

RESPONSIBILITY

Management, Employees & Contractors: To participate in the AODA training provided by the organization and comply with the policy, practices, and procedures.

Manager, Customer Care & Administration: To receive feedback regarding Steel Art Signs Accessibility Customer Service Policy, practices and procedures and to respond to this feedback, when requested within the timelines identified in this policy.

Steel Art Signs Representative (Tom Henderson): To comply with the AODA, Ontario Regulation 429/27 legislation when dealing with Customers.

Human Resources Department: Maintain AODA Customer Service Standard training records for Employees and Contractors including names and dates.

To ensure that new employees are trained as part of their employee orientation process.

POLICY:

Steel Art Signs will strive to ensure that its policies, practices, and procedures are consistent with the following core principles as outlined in the AODA.

Dignity- Goods and services are provided in a manner that is respectful to persons with a disability and does not diminish the person's importance.

Independence -Accommodating a person's disability means respecting their right to do for themselves and to choose the way they wish to information and services from our company.

Integration - Persons with disabilities can access all areas of our facility including our front office area as well as our production areas. They may require alternative formats and flexible approaches. It means inclusiveness and full participation. This is a fundamental human right.

Equal Opportunity-Service are provided to persons with disabilities in a way that their opportunity to access our staff and the services we provide is equal to that given to others.

Communication with Persons with Disabilities

When communicating with a person with a disability, our office and its staff will do so in a manner that takes into account the person's disability. Steel Art Signs and its management team commits to provide training on customer service to all current and future employees and contract person working for our company. This training will include how to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disabilities.

Assistive Devices

Personal assistive devices are permitted anywhere within our office and production facility including offices and facilities except when subject to operator/worker safety. Steel Art Signs will train its current and future employees and contract persons on the use of various assistive devices available at our office and production facility. It should be noted that the provision, use, and safety of personal assistive devices from our customers/ visitors is the responsibility of the person with the disability; this would include interpreters for the hearing impaired.

Service Animals

Persons with a disability who are accompanied by a service animal may access premises operated by Steel Art Signs, provided the public has access to such premises and the animal is not otherwise excluded by law.

There may be rare circumstances where, for reasons of health and safety of another person, allowing a person with a disability to enter a premises accompanied by a service animal needs to be considered. An example of such a situation may include where a person is allergic to

animals and adversely affected if they are in close proximity to a service animal. If deemed necessary, a risk assessment will be conducted by our company and its safety representative. The risk assessment will include identifying the risks inherent with the service animal being in the area of concern and identify alternate measures available to enable the person with a disability to access the service.

In some cases, if it is felt that areas of our production environment may cause undue stress to a service animal (excessive noise or welding operations), or if it is felt that the safety of a service animal may be endangered by production activities, service animals may be restricted from those dangerous areas. Before a decision is made, a risk assessment will be made to determine if safety precautions can be taken.

If it is not readily apparent that an animal is a service animal, the company and our safety representative may ask the person with the service animal to provide verification of the animal's duty. The use, safety, and clean-up of the service animal is the responsibility of the person with a disability.

Support Persons

Our office and production facility and offices welcomes customers who are accompanied by a support person, when the support person has been hired or chosen by the person with a disability to accompany them in order to assist in accessing goods or services and/or for the purpose of providing support with mobility, personal assistance, and/or communication.

Individuals who are accompanied by a support person are encouraged to inform their contact person of their participation.

There may be rare circumstances where, for reasons of health and safety, allowing a person with a disability to enter a premises accompanied by their support person needs to be considered. Examples of such situations include potential fire code violations or any other safety issue if you are out on the production floor. If deemed necessary, a risk assessment will be conducted by our Health & Safety Representative. The risk assessment will include identifying the risks inherent with the support person being in the area of concern and identify alternate measures available to enable the person with a disability to access the service.

Support persons shall be permitted entry to all of our facilities and meeting rooms that are open to the public.

Feedback

Feedback about the delivery of services to persons with disabilities is welcomed, as it may identify areas that require change and assist in continuous service improvement. Such feedback may be by telephone, in person, by mail, or by email. Steel Art Signs will make best efforts to provide a response in the same format in which the feedback was received.

Where possible, feedback will be addressed immediately. However, some feedback may require more effort to address, and may need to be reviewed before an action is taken. Steel Art Signs will respond to all feedback within 21 working days.

Feedback may be provided directly to:

Steel Art Signs

130 Performance Drive

Richmond Hill, ON L4S 0H5

Phone: (905) 474-1678

Fax: (905) 474 0515

Training

Steel Art Signs shall provide all Employees and Contractors with a review of the purpose of the AODA and the requirements of the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service;

More in-depth training will be provided to those Employees and Contractors who:

- deal with the public or other third parties on their behalf; or,
- are involved in the development and approval of customer signs and other products manufactured or services by our business.

The in-depth training will include:

- A review of how to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disabilities;
- How to interact with persons with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or a support person;
- How to use available equipment or devices that may assist with the provision of services to persons with disabilities;
- What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing Steel Art Signs goods and/or services;
- Steel Art Signs policies, procedures and practices related to the provision of services to persons with disabilities.

New employees and contractors will be provided such training as part of their orientation.

Documentation of training of employees, volunteers and contractors including names of participants and dates of training shall be maintained by the Human Resources Department.

Availability and Format of Documents (Alternative Formats)

All documents required by the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, including our Accessible Customer Service Policy, notices of temporary disruptions, training records, and written feedback process are available upon request, subject to the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. When providing these documents to a person with a disability, Steel Art Signs will endeavour to provide the document, or the information contained in the document, in a format that takes the person's disability into account.

All correspondence, invoices and other documents distributed by Steel Art Signs will indicate that alternative format documents are available upon request. The following statement will be including in all documents:

“Steel Arts Signs strives to provide information in a format accessible to all persons. Complete a request form available at all service counters and online at www.steelartsigns.com/accessibility or contact the Compliance Coordinator at 1(905)474-1678 to request an alternative format”.

Types of Alternative Formats Available

The types of alternative formats available include:

- Large Print
- Hard copy or email
- Audio format such as electronic recordings
- Simplified summaries

Requesting an Alternative Format Document

Steel Art Signs shall provide any correspondence, invoices, or other documents available to our clients, or the information contained within, in an alternative format upon request.

An alternative format can be requested by completing the request form available at our front reception area, email (sales@steelart.com), or by contacting the Compliance Coordinator. The Compliance Coordinator will forward the request on to the department responsible for creating the original document.

Providing Alternative Format Documents

When providing a document requested by a person with a disability, Steel Art Signs will provide an alternative format that takes into account the particular individual’s communication needs.

When a request is made from a person with a disability for a document in a different format, discussion regarding what options they have available will take place and be mutually agreed upon.

Alternative formats will be provided within a reasonable time frame (no longer than 10 business days).

Notice of Temporary Service Disruptions:

Steel Arts Signs is committed to provide a Notice of Temporary Service Disruptions when facilities, services or access to services, that could affect people with disabilities, are temporarily unavailable.

Examples of services or access to services being disrupted include, but are not limited to:

- Building being closed
- Power-operated doors not working
- Accessible entrances or washrooms not available

For planned disruptions, notice will be provided within a reasonable time in advance. For unplanned disruptions, notice will be provided as soon as possible. Notices will be posted on our web site or posted on the entrance to your facility.

Providing Notice

Notice of temporary service disruptions will be provided by the manager/supervisor of the facility or service area. For planned disruptions, notice will be provided within a reasonable time in advance. For unplanned disruptions, notice will be provided as soon as possible.

To provide notice of a temporary service disruption, the manager/supervisor will use:

A printed notice, using the a Temporary Service Disruption template, posted at public entry points and key locations around the service disruption.

, The company's website, through consultation with our IT specialist.

If appropriate the manager/supervisor may also use:

- Voice mail messages
- Any other method that is reasonable in the circumstances

When providing notice of a temporary service disruption, the manager/supervisor will include:

1. , The reason for the disruption.
2. , Anticipated duration of the disruption.
3. , A description of alternative facilities or services, if any, that are available.
4. , Their contact information.

TRAINING ON OUR ACCESSIBLE CUSTOMER SERVICE POLICY

We will:

- Review the policy of Steel Art Signs, on our Accessible Customer Service Policy
- Discuss general tips on providing service to customers with disabilities
- Discuss tips on how to interact and communicate with customers:
 - Who have vision loss
 - Who are Deaf, deafened, oral deaf or hard of hearing
 - Who are deaf-blind
 - Who have physical disabilities
 - Who have mental health disabilities
 - Who have intellectual or developmental disabilities
 - Who have learning disabilities
 - Who have speech or language impairments
 - On the telephone

The following training document must communicate to all staff working for Steel Art Signs; this will include any volunteers and contractors that may be working on behalf of our office and production facility.

Each person who participates in this training program is required to complete the attendance record at the end of this document.

Step one: review the Accessibility Customer Service Policy in its entirety.

Step two:

General tips on providing service to customers with disabilities

- If you're not sure what to do, ask your customer, "May I help you?" Your customers with disabilities know if they need help and how you can provide it.
- Speak directly to the person with a disability, not to his or her support person or companion.
- Avoid stereotypes and make no assumptions about what type of disability or disabilities the person has. Some disabilities are not visible and customers are not required to give you information about any disabilities they may have. Don't ask questions in such a way that may be embarrassing to the customer. There is certain value in being honest with a person, but you must consider if what you are asking maybe found offensive or embarrassing to the persons with a disability.

- Take the time to get to know your customer's needs and focus on meeting those needs just as you would with any other customer.
- Be patient. People with some kinds of disabilities may take a little longer to understand and respond. A good start is to listen carefully.
- Make an effort to learn about appropriate language and terminology to use when referring to people with disabilities.
- If you cannot understand what your customer is saying, politely ask them to repeat themselves.
- Don't touch or speak to service animals – they are working and have to pay attention at all times.
- Don't touch assistive devices, including wheelchairs, without permission.

Interacting and communicating with customers who have vision loss

There may be times where we may get visitors or customers that have varying levels of vision loss. Vision loss reduces a person's ability to see clearly. Few people with vision loss are totally blind. Many have limited vision such as tunnel vision, where a person has a loss of peripheral or side vision, or a lack of central vision, which means they cannot see straight ahead. Some people can see the outline of objects while others can see the direction of light.

Vision loss can restrict your customers' abilities to read signs, locate landmarks, or see hazards. Some of these customers may use a guide dog or white cane, but others may not. Sometimes it may be difficult to tell if a person has vision loss.

Types of assistance your customer might use:

- Braille
- Large print
- Magnification devices
- White cane
- Guide dog
- Support person such as a sighted guide.

Tips

- Just because they are visually impaired, doesn't mean they cannot purchase our products or services. If someone comes in with a visually impaired person with them, treat the visually impaired person with the same respect and dignity you would with the seeing person. Some people are afraid to speak to a person with a vision problem because they don't know what to say to them. Keep in mind, they are visually impaired, not deaf. You can carry on a conversation with them without raising your voice or talking like they will not understand what you are saying.

- Don't assume the individual can't see you, they may have any number of visual impairments.
- Don't touch your customer without asking permission.
- Offer your elbow to guide the person. If he or she accepts, walk slowly, but wait for permission before doing so. Lead – don't pull.
- Identify landmarks or other details to orient your customer to the environment around him or her.
- Don't touch or speak to service animals – they are working and have to pay attention at all times.
- Don't leave your customer in the middle of any open area. Show him or her to a chair, or guide them to a comfortable location.
- If you need to leave your person/ customer, let him or her know you are leaving and will be back.
- Identify yourself when you approach your person/ customer and speak directly to him or her, even if he/she is accompanied by a companion.
- There is generally no need to raise your voice because the person does not necessarily have hearing loss. Say your name even if you know the person well as many voices sound similar.
- Be clear and precise when giving directions, e.g., two steps behind you, a metre to your left, etc. Don't use "over there" or point in the direction.
- If you're uncertain about how to provide directions, ask the person how to do so.
- Do not be afraid or embarrassed to use words such as "see", "read" and "look." People with vision loss also use these words.
- When providing printed information, offer to read or summarize it.
- Offer to describe information. For example, verbally itemize the invoice or documents developed from one of our programs.

Interacting and communicating with customers who have hearing loss

People who have hearing loss may be Deaf, oral deaf, deafened or hard of hearing.

People who are *profoundly deaf* may identify themselves as culturally deaf or oral deaf. When you hear the term "Deaf culture", this is a term is used to describe a person who has severe to profound hearing loss, with little or no hearing.

Oral deaf is a term describing a person who was born deaf or became deaf before learning to speak, but is taught to speak and may or may not use Sign Language.

The term “*deafened*” describes a person who has lost their hearing slowly or suddenly in adulthood. The person may use speech with visual cues such as captioning or computerized note-taking, speech reading or sign language.

The term “*hard of hearing*” describes a person who uses their residual hearing (hearing that remains) and speech to communicate. The person may supplement communication by speech reading, hearing aids, sign language and/or communication devices.

Types of assistance your customer might use:

- Hearing aid
- Paper and pen
- Personal amplification device (e.g., Pocket Talker)
- Phone amplifier
- Relay Service
- Teletypewriter (TTY)
- Hearing ear dog
- Support person such as a sign language interpreter.

Tips

- Attract the customer’s attention before speaking. Generally, the best way is by a gentle touch on the shoulder or with a gentle wave of your hand.
- Ask how you can help. Don’t shout.
- Move to a well-lit area, if available, where your customer can see your face. This may include opening a blind in a room or asking if they would prefer to sit next to a window.
- Don’t put your hands in front of your face when speaking - some people read lips.
- Avoid turning your back on persons with hearing disabilities (e.g. reading a document while looking down)
- If necessary, ask if another method of communicating would be easier, for example, using a pen and paper.
- Be patient if you are using a pen and paper to communicate. Sign Language may be your customer’s first language. And writing everything down may take some time for them.
- Look at and speak directly to your customer. Address your customer, not the interpreter or support person.
- Be clear and precise when giving directions, and repeat or rephrase if necessary. Confirm that your customer understands you.

- If the person uses a hearing aid, reduce background noise or move to a quieter area, if possible, so the person can hear or concentrate better.
- Don't assume that the customer knows sign language or reads lips.

Communicating and Interacting with customers who are deaf blind

A person who is *deaf blind* has some degree of hearing and vision loss. This results in difficulties in accessing information and managing daily activities. Many people who are deaf blind will be accompanied by an interpreter, a professional who helps with communicating.

Types of assistance your customer might use:

- Braille
- Large print
- Print on paper (using black felt marker on using portable white and black boards)
- Communication boards
- Hearing aid with built-in FM system
- Magnification equipment such as monocular or magnifier
- Teletypewriter (TTY)
- White cane
- Service animal
- Support person, such as an interpreter.

Tips

- Don't assume what a person can or cannot do - some individuals who are deaf blind have some sight or hearing, while others have neither.
- A customer who is deaf blind is likely to explain to you how to communicate with him or her or give you an assistance card or a note explaining how to communicate with him or her.
- Identify yourself to the interpreter when you approach your customer who is deaf blind, but then speak directly to your customer as you normally would, not to the interpreter.
- Don't touch or address service animals – they are working and have to pay attention at all times.
- Don't suddenly touch a person who is deaf blind or touch them without permission.

Communicating and interacting with customers who have physical disabilities

There are many types and degrees of physical disabilities, and not all require a wheelchair. People who have arthritis, heart or lung conditions or amputations may also have difficulty with moving, standing or sitting. It may be difficult to identify a person with a physical disability.

Types of assistance your customer might use:

- Mobility device (i.e., wheelchair, scooter, walker, cane, crutches)
- Support person.

General Tips

- Speak naturally and directly to your client, not to his or her companion or support person.
- If you need to have a lengthy conversation with someone in a wheelchair or scooter, consider sitting so that you can make eye contact.
- Ask before you help. People with physical disabilities often have their own ways of doing things.
- Respect your customer's personal space. Do not lean over him or her or on his or her assistive device.
- Don't move items or equipment, such as canes and walkers, out of the person's reach.
- Don't touch assistive devices without permission. If you have permission to move a person in a wheelchair, remember to:
 - Wait for and follow the person's instructions
 - Confirm that your customer is ready to move
 - Describe what you're going to do before you do it
 - Avoid uneven ground and 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.
 - Let your customer know about accessible features in the immediate area (i.e., automatic doors, accessible washrooms, elevators, ramps, etc.).

Interacting and communicating with customers who have mental health disabilities

Mental health disabilities are not as visible as many other types of disabilities. You may not know that your customer has a mental health disability unless you're informed of it.

Examples of mental health disabilities include schizophrenia; attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD); anxiety disorders, such as generalized anxiety disorder, and phobias; as well as mood disorders, such as depression and bipolar disorder.

A person with a mental health disability may have difficulty with one, several, or none of these:

- Inability to think clearly
- Hallucinations (e.g., hearing voices, seeing or feeling things that aren't there)
- Depression or acute mood swings (e.g., from happy to depressed with no apparent reason for the change)
- Poor concentration
- Difficulty remembering
- Apparent lack of motivation

If someone is experiencing difficulty controlling his or her symptoms, or is in a crisis, you may need to help him/her. Be calm and professional and ask your customer how you can best help.

Types of assistance your customer might use:

- Service animal
- Support person.

Tips

- Treat a person with a mental health disability with the same respect and consideration you have for everyone else.
- Be patient.
- Be 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 him or her to tell you the best way to help.

Interacting and communicating with customers who have intellectual or developmental disabilities

People with intellectual or developmental disabilities may have difficulty doing many things most of us take for granted. These disabilities can mildly or profoundly limit the person's ability to learn, communicate, socialize, and take care of their everyday needs. You may not know that someone has this type of disability unless you are told.

As much as possible, treat your customers with an intellectual or developmental disability like anyone else. They may understand more than you think, and they will appreciate that you treat them with respect.

Types of assistance your customer might use:

- Communication board

- Speech generating device
- Service animal
- Support person

Tips

- Don't assume what a person can or cannot do.
- Use plain language and speak in short sentences.
- To confirm if your customer understands what you have said, consider asking the person to repeat the message back to you in his or her own words.
- If you cannot understand what is being said, simply ask again.
- Provide one piece of information at a time.
- Be supportive and patient.
- Speak directly to your customer, not to their companion or support person.

Interacting and communicating with customers who have learning disabilities

The term "learning disability" describes a range of information processing disorders that can affect how a person acquires, organizes, expresses, retains, understands, or uses verbal or non-verbal information.

Examples of these may include dyslexia (problems in reading and related language-based learning); dyscalculia (problems in mathematics); and dysgraphia (problems in writing and fine motor skills).

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

Learning disabilities can result in different communication difficulties for people. They can be subtle, such as difficulty reading, or more pronounced. They can interfere with your customer's ability to receive, express or process information. You may not know that a person has a learning disability unless you are told.

Types of assistance your customer might use:

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

There is more information on assistive devices and support persons in Units 4, 5 and 7.

Tips

- When you know someone with a learning disability needs help, ask how you can help.
- Speak naturally, clearly, and directly to your customer.
- Allow extra time if necessary – people may take a little longer to understand and respond.
- Remember to communicate in a way that takes into account the customer's disability.
- Be patient and be willing to explain something again, if needed.

Interacting and communicating with customers who have speech or language impairments

Some people have problems communicating because of their disability. Cerebral palsy, hearing loss, or other conditions (e.g. damage from stroke) may make it difficult to pronounce words or may cause slurring or stuttering. They also may prevent the person from expressing themselves or prevent them from understanding written or spoken language. Some people who have severe difficulties may use communication boards or other assistive devices.

Types of assistance your customer might use:

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

Tips

- Don't assume that because a person has one disability, they also have another. For example, if a customer has difficulty speaking, it doesn't mean they have an intellectual or developmental disability as well.
- Ask your customer to repeat the information if you don't understand.
- Ask questions that can be answered "yes" or "no" if possible.
- Try to allow enough time to communicate with your customer as they may speak more slowly.
- Don't interrupt or finish your customer's sentences. Wait for them to finish.

Talking to customers with disabilities over the phone

- Speak naturally, clearly and directly.
- Don't worry about how the person's voice sounds. Concentrate on what they are saying.

- Don't interrupt or finish your customer's sentences. Give your customer time to explain or respond.
- If you don't understand, simply ask again, or repeat or rephrase what you heard and ask if you have understood correctly.
- If a telephone customer is using an interpreter or a Relay Service, speak naturally to the customer, not to the interpreter.
- If you encounter a situation where, after numerous attempts, you and your customer cannot communicate with each other due to the customer's disability, consider making alternate arrangements.

In closing, we at Steel Art Signs are committed to the same level of service to each and every persons entering upon our premises. Every person will be treated with respect and dignity.

