

Section:	Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)	PP#-10-01
Subject:	Accessible Customer Service Policy	Effective Date: December 17, 2019

1.0 Purpose:

Beendigen is committed to being responsive to the needs of persons with disabilities. We strive to provide quality goods and services that are accessible to all. The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines on providing goods and services that facilitate accessibility, for people with disabilities. This policy establishes accessibility standards for customer service in accordance with the *Customer Service Standards* included in the *Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation* under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)*.

Beendigen will make reasonable efforts to ensure policies, practices and procedures and the delivery of goods and services provided to persons with disabilities and all our tenants/clients are in keeping with the principles of dignity, equity/equality of outcome, independence and integration. Beendigen will communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability and communication needs.

2.0 Definitions:

Assistive Device – Is a technical aid, communication device or other instrument that is used to maintain or improve the functional abilities of people with disabilities. Personal assistive devices are typically devices that customers bring with them such as a wheelchair, walker or a personal oxygen tank that might assist in hearing, seeing, communicating, moving, breathing, remembering and/or reading.

Disability – The term disability as defined by the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, and the *Ontario Human Rights Code*, refers to:

- Any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical co-ordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or 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 dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language;

- A mental disorder; or
- An injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997*.

Guide Dog – Is a highly-trained working dog that has been trained at one of the facilities listed in Ontario Regulation 58 under the *Blind Persons' Rights Act*, to provide mobility, safety and increased independence for people who are blind.

Service Animal – an animal is a service animal for a person with a disability if:

1. the animal can be readily identified as one that is being used by the person for reasons relating to the person's disability, as a result of visual indicators such as the vest or harness worn by the animal; or
2. the person provides documentation from one of the following regulated health professionals confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability:
 - A member of the College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists of Ontario;
 - A member of the College of Chiropractors of Ontario;
 - A member of the College of Nurses of Ontario;
 - A member of the College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario;
 - A member of the College of Optometrists of Ontario;
 - A member of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario;
 - A member of the College of Physiotherapists of Ontario;
 - A member of the College of Psychologists of Ontario; or
 - A member of the College of Registered Psychotherapists and Registered Mental Health Therapists of Ontario.

Service Dog – As reflected in *Health Protection and Promotion Act, Ontario Regulation 562* a dog other than a guide dog for the blind is a service dog if:

- It is readily apparent to an average person that the dog functions as a service dog for a person with a medical disability; or
- The person who requires the dog can provide on request a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires a service dog.

Support Person – a support person means, in relation to a person with a disability, another person who accompanies him or her in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care, medical needs or access to goods and services.

3.0 SCOPE:

This Policy applies to all employees, volunteers, agents, and/or third parties that act on behalf of Beendigen and those responsible for developing Beendigen's policies.

4.0 POLICY:

4.1 The Use of Assistive Devices

- a) People with disabilities may choose to use their own personal assistive devices, while accessing goods and services. Beendigen acknowledges the importance of these devices and will allow people with disabilities to use their own personal assistive devices to obtain, use or benefit from the services offered by Beendigen, unless there is a defined risk associated with that use.
- b) In cases where the assistive device presents a safety concern or where accessibility might be an issue, Beendigen will assess service delivery and potential service options to meet the needs of the individual.
- c) Beendigen staff, third party contractors and others who provide service to tenants/clients will be familiar with the assistive devices and other accessibility supports at Beendigen that will increase the accessibility of our services to people with disabilities.

4.2 Guide Dogs, Service Animals and Service Dogs

- a) Beendigen acknowledges the vital relationship and dependency which exists between a person with a disability and their service animal, guide dog, and/or service dog. Guide dogs or other service animals shall be permitted entry to all Beendigen facilities that are open to the public.
- b) If a guide dog or other service animal is causing a disturbance for other residents/clients, the person and the accompanying animal may be required to leave the area or premises.
- c) Beendigen anticipates there will be special situations and is prepared to make every effort to accommodate the circumstances on an individual basis, as they rise, ensuring safety for all residents, clients, visitors, volunteers, staff and animals.
- d) In cases, where the animal is excluded by law from the premises (Dog Owner's Liability Act, Ontario; The Health Protection and Promotion Act, Ontario Regulation 56 Section 60) other provisions may be afforded, such as: alternate appointment format, i.e. teleconference where technology permits; alternate time or

location; alternate accommodations; alternate other assistive measures available to ensure equality of outcome.

- e) A resident/client with a disability that is accompanied by a guide dog or service dog will be allowed access to food service areas that are open to the public unless otherwise excluded by law. Guide dogs and service dogs are allowed to go into places where food is served, sold or offered for sale. Service animals are not permitted to enter areas where food is prepared. Other types of service animals are not permitted into food service areas due to the *Health Protection and Promotion Act, Ontario Regulation 562 Section 60*.
- f) The resident/client is responsible for the care, supervision and control of their guide dog or service animal while on the premises. The owner is responsible to "stoop and scoop".
- g) If it is not readily apparent that the animal is being used by the person with a disability for reasons relating to his or her disability, they may be asked for verification.

4.3 The Use of Support Persons

- a) Beendigen is committed to welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person. People with disabilities have the right to have access to their support person while accessing goods and services of Beendigen.
- b) If confidential information is going to be discussed, the person with the disability should be asked if they prefer their support person to remain present. If the support person is present when confidential information is to be disclosed, signed consent must be received from the person with the disability. A signed confidentiality agreement should also be obtained from the support person.
- c) Beendigen does not apply fees to a support person.
- d) Beendigen may request that a person with a disability be accompanied by a support person, in the event that it is considered necessary to protect the health or safety of the person with a disability or the health and safety of others on the premises. This will only occur after consultation with the person with a disability and when it is the only means to allow the person with a disability to access Beendigen's goods or services.

4.4 Notice of Service Disruptions

- a) If there is a temporary disruption in the availability of services and facilities used by tenants/clients with disabilities (i.e. temporary loss of elevator service), Beendigen will notify tenants/clients of the reason for the disruption, the date(s) of disruption, its anticipated

duration and a description of alternative facilities or services, if any, that are available.

- b)** This notice may be provided by a variety of methods, depending on the circumstances, and may include postings in conspicuous places at the affected premises (for example, common areas by the elevator, next to the elevator on the main floor), by email, contacting tenants/clients with appointments and the Beendigen website (www.beendigen.com), as well as by other means that will ensure that the notice reaches those persons potentially affected by the temporary disruption.
- c)** If the disruption is anticipated, a reasonable amount of advance notice of the disruption will be provided. If the disruption is unexpected, notice will be provided as soon as possible.

4.5 Customer Service Feedback Process

- a)** Beendigen is committed to providing high quality customer service and wants to continue to enhance and improve the accessibility of our customer service to our tenants, applicants for housing, visitors, members of the community who use our facilities, and other members of the public with disabilities.
- b)** A process to receive feedback on the provision of goods and services to tenants/clients with disabilities accessing services at Beendigen has been established and will be accepted through the following channels:
 - 1. In person at 100 Anemki Drive, Suite 103, Fort William First Nation, ON P7J 1J4
 - 2. By phone at 807-622-1121
 - 3. By Fax at 807-622-2240
 - 4. By mail, Sent to Accessibility Feedback, 100 Anemki Drive, Suite 103, Fort William First Nation, ON P7J 1J4
- c)** A Feedback Form can be filled out online on our website (www.beendigen.com), downloaded in accessible formats from the website or a copy of the form can be picked up at any of our locations. The feedback form is available in alternate formats and communication supports when requested.
- d)** Responses to feedback received are not mandatory. If a person who submits feedback requests a response and provides contact information, Beendigen will follow-up with the individual in the format in which the feedback was received, within (15) working days. All feedback will be kept in confidence and will be used to improve customer service.

4.6 Training

- a) All individuals who interact and deal with members of the public or other third parties on behalf of Beendigen, whether the person does so as an employee, volunteer, Board member or otherwise shall be required to receive training on providing customer service to people with disabilities.
- b) Beendigen shall ensure that employees and volunteers who deal with the public on behalf of Beendigen, and those who are involved in Beendigen's policy and program development and/or in directing, monitoring or evaluating policies receive training on accessible customer service.
- c) All third party contractors who deal with the public or other third parties on behalf of Beendigen shall ensure that their employees, agents, subcontractors, etc. receive training in accordance with this policy and the *Ontario Regulation 191/11 Integrated Accessibility Standards, Customer Service Standard* and, upon request, shall provide the training records to Beendigen.
- d) Beendigen's employee/volunteer and third party contractor training will include a review of the purposes of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, S.O. 2005, c11* and the *Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 191/11*, the requirements of this policy, and instruction about the following matters:
 - o A review of the purpose of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*.
 - o A review of the requirements of the Customer Service Standards.
 - o Instructions on how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities.
 - o Instructions on how to interact with people with disabilities who:
 - use assistive devices;
 - require the assistance of a guide dog, service dog or other service animal; or
 - require the use of a support person (including the handling of admission fees).
 - o Instructions on how to use equipment or devices that are available at our premises or that we provide that may help people with disabilities.
 - o Instructions on what to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing your services.
 - o Beendigen Inc's policies, procedures and practices pertaining to providing accessible customer service to customers with disabilities.

- e) Customer service training can take various forms including as part of an orientation or as a separate training program. The training can be provided through handouts at an orientation session, in a classroom setting, by video or through other formats.
- f) Beendigen will provide training to each person as soon as practicable after he or she is assigned the applicable duties. Annual AODA Customer Service Refresher Training will be provided on an annual basis. Updated training will also be provided on an ongoing basis in connection with changes to applicable legislation, and/or organizational policies, procedures and practices governing the provision of goods or services to people with disabilities.
- g) Beendigen will log and maintain records which will record the details of the training provided, as well as the name of the person, location, and date the training was completed.

5.0 Notice of Availability and Format of Documents

Beendigen shall notify customers that the documents related to the Customer Service Standards are available upon request and in a format that takes into account the customer's disability. Notification will be given by posting the information in a conspicuous place owned and operated by Beendigen, the Beendigen's website and/or any other reasonable method. Beendigen will upon request, provide or arrange for the provision or accessible formats and communication supports for a person with disabilities in a timely manner and at no additional cost to the individual.

6.0 Administration

This policy and its related procedures will be reviewed as required in the event of legislative changes or, changes to company procedures.

Applicable Laws:

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005

<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/05a11>

Integrated Accessibility Standards, Ontario Regulation 191/11

<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/110191#BK149>

The Health Protection and Promotion Act, Ontario Regulation 562 Section 60

<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90h07>

Dog Owners' Liability Act, Ontario Regulation 562 Section 60

<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90d16>