

OC Transpo Accessible Customer Service Policy

Effective Date: June 6, 2011

1.0 Policy Statement

The City of Ottawa's Transit Services Department is committed to providing public transit services that are customer-focused, safe, reliable and accessible to all persons.

2.0 Purpose

The objective of this policy is to provide guidelines for the delivery of accessible customer service to persons with disabilities using public transit services, programs and goods including, but not limited to, conventional fixed-route bus, rail and Para Transpo service. This policy will also guide customer service requirements for new vehicles and facilities as older, non-accessible vehicles and facilities are refurbished or replaced.

3.0 Scope

This policy applies to all Transit Services employees and volunteers who deal with the public and who develop policy on behalf of Transit Services.

4.0 Policy Requirements

Transit Services programs, goods and services are to be provided to persons with disabilities in a manner that:

- Accommodates disability related needs - where accommodate is defined as the reasonable modification of the delivery of Transit Services programs, goods and services where possible to make them more accessible to persons with disabilities
- Reflects the principles of dignity and independence
- Seeks to provide integrated services

4.1 Assistive Devices

Transit Services will accommodate persons with disabilities who use personal assistive devices including, but not limited to, manual and power wheelchairs, scooters, walkers, canes and other mobility aids.

In instances where the assistive device is too large to be accommodated within existing facilities and vehicles, or within the allocated mobility aid spaces on existing vehicles, Transit Services will offer a person with a disability other reasonable measures to assist him or her in obtaining, using or benefitting from public transit services, where Transit Services has such other measures available. Information that outlines the maximum size of assistive devices that can be accommodated on Transit Services vehicles will be published on OC Transpo's website at www.octranspo.com.

Exceptions may occur in situations where Transit Services has determined that the assistive device may pose a risk to the health and safety of the person using the device or others.

Devices provided by Transit Services that enable persons with disabilities to access transit services, programs and goods including, but not limited to, elevators and TTY service, will be kept in good working order and the public will be informed of their availability or any disruptions in service, as outlined in section 4.5 Notice of Service Disruption.

4.2 Service Animals

Transit Services will accommodate the use of service animals by persons with disabilities who are accessing Transit Services programs, goods and services, unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law.

Service animals are defined as animals trained by a recognized school for service as guide dogs for the blind or visually impaired, guide dogs for the deaf or hearing impaired, or special skills dogs for other persons with disabilities, and includes animals used in therapy and trained by and registered with a recognized organization for that purpose.

Service animals will be permitted on Transit Services vehicles and premises if:

- in the case of conventional transit, their handlers carry an OC Transpo-issued Service Animal Card, identification from a recognized service-animal training school or a provincial government-issued guide dog photo identification card; or,
- in the case of Para Transpo, they have had their Service Animal Application approved, authorizing the use of the animal on Para Transpo.

It is the responsibility of the handler to ensure that his or her service animal is kept in control at all times and does not block the vehicle's aisle. Small service animals must be contained in a cage or pouch, or kept on a short leash or harness on their owner's lap. Larger service animals must be on a leash or harness.

Notwithstanding this policy, Transit Services is committed to addressing case-specific issues regarding service animals in a manner that balances the interests of all transit customers.

4.3 Support Persons

Where a person with a disability accessing Transit Services programs, goods and services is accompanied by a support person, Transit Services will ensure that both persons are permitted to enter the premises together and will ensure that the person with a disability can access the support person while on the premises.

Support persons accompanying a person with a disability will be permitted to ride on Transit Services vehicles, without additional charge. However, persons with disabilities, who do not use a personal assistive device and are accompanied by a support person, will be required to present an OC Transpo-issued Support Person Card.

Transit Services may require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person when riding on a Para Transpo vehicle, but only if a support person is necessary to protect the health or safety of the person with a disability or others on the vehicle.

4.4 Communication

When communicating with a person with a disability, Transit Services will do so in a manner that takes into account the person's disability and respects their dignity.

4.5 Notice of Service Disruption

Transit Services is aware that the operation of its services is of paramount importance to the public. However, temporary disruptions in Transit Services facilities and services may occur due to reasons that may or may not be within Transit Services' control or knowledge.

For the purpose of this policy, a "temporary disruption of service" is defined as a known or planned event that results in a deviation in regular service routing and/or schedule for an extended period of time, generally beyond one day. The known or planned nature of the event affords Transit Services the opportunity to prepare a revised service routing and/or schedule, and provide timely communication to its customers.

In the event there is a temporary disruption in the availability of facilities, services, programs and goods used by persons with disabilities, Transit Services will give notice to customers regarding:

- The reason for the disruption
- The date(s) of disruption and its anticipated duration, and

- A description of alternative facilities, services, routing and schedules, if any, that are available

Such notice may be provided by a variety of methods, and may include:

- Postings at transit stations, bus stops and other transit facilities;
- Information on OC Transpo's website at www.octranspo.com, or
- Other means as is reasonable under the circumstances

For all other occurrences of service disruption, such as those that are unforeseen or shorter in duration, Transit Services, as considered appropriate in the circumstances, will make a reasonable effort to advise the public of the disruption including information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative facilities, services, routing and schedules, if any, that are available.

4.6 Training

All Transit Services employees and volunteers who deal with the public or develop policy on behalf of Transit Services will receive training on accessible customer service.

Training will be provided to each person as soon as practicable after he/she is assigned the applicable duties, and will be provided on an ongoing basis in connection with changes to Transit Services' policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of programs, goods or services to persons with disabilities.

Training will be evaluated and monitored to assess skills improvement and training outcomes, and to seek input for the improvement of the training processes.

Training will also be made available to other staff, as determined by their managers and supervisors. Managers and supervisors will determine the appropriate method of training based on the employee's roles and responsibilities.

Managers and supervisors, in collaboration with the City's Human Resources department, will ensure that training records are maintained.

4.7 Feedback

Feedback about how Transit Services programs, goods and services are delivered to people with disabilities will be welcomed as it may identify areas that require change and encourage continuous service improvement. This feedback will be forwarded to the appropriate personnel, responded to, documented and tracked.

Feedback from members of the public may be provided by telephone, in person, in writing, in electronic format or through other means, including:

- Phone to Customer Service - 613-560-5000 (TTY 613-741-5280)

- [Online form](#)
- [Email](#)
- Mail: Customer Service, City of Ottawa Transit Services Department, |
925 Belfast Rd., Ottawa ON, K1G 0Z4
- In person at the [Rideau OC Transpo Customer Service Centre](#)

4.8 Documentation

Documentation that describes this policy and each of its requirements will be maintained on OC Transpo's website at www.octranspo.com and shall be provided to individuals, upon request, in a format that takes into account the person's disability, as per the City of Ottawa's Multiple Formats Policy.

5.0 Responsibilities

The Manager of Safety, Business Services and Customer Relations is responsible for reviewing this policy annually and recommending amendments to ensure ongoing compliance with regulated accessibility standards and legislated obligations.

The Manager of Safety, Business Services and Customer Relations will provide advice and direction on the implementation of this policy.

Transit Services managers and supervisors will ensure that they and their staff are familiar with this policy.

6.0 Monitoring/Contraventions

Transit Services managers and supervisors will monitor current practices to ensure compliance. Failure to comply with Transit Services' Accessible Customer Service Policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

7.0 References

Canadian Standards Association Customer Service Standard for People with Disabilities (B480-02)

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, S.O. 2005, c. 11

Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, O. Reg. 429/07

Human Rights Code, R.S.O. 1990, c. H.19

Highway Traffic Act, R.R.O. 1990, Reg. 629/07

City of Ottawa, City Strategic Plan, Updated 2007-2010 (2010)

City of Ottawa, Municipal Accessibility Plan (2009)
City of Ottawa, Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Policy (2009)
City of Ottawa, Transit Services Strategic Branch Review (2008)
City of Ottawa, Transportation Master Plan (2008)
City of Ottawa, Duty to Accommodate Policy (2003)
City of Ottawa, Multiple Formats Policy (2002)
City of Ottawa, Equity and Diversity Policy (2002)

8.0 Legislative and Administrative Authorities

Canadian Human Rights Act (R.S., 1985, c.H-6)
City of Ottawa Transit By-Law No. 2007-268