

Kitchener - Wilmot Hydro Inc.

Policy & Procedure

SUBJECT: Accessibility Standards for Customer Service

Department: All	Revision: New	Number: GA-8
President: J. Van Ooteghem Safety Supervisor: G. Minow	Issue Date: December 22, 2011 Revision Date:	Page 1 of 4

Background

Under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, the Ontario Regulation 429/07, Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, requires every provider of goods and services to establish policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of its goods and services to persons with disabilities.

Policy Statement

Kitchener-Wilmot Hydro Inc. (KWH) is committed to providing appropriate and accessible service for its customers. Goods and services will be provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of all its customers. The provision of services to persons with disabilities will be integrated wherever possible. Persons with disabilities, including those that use and/or need the use of a service animal, support person or assistive device, will be given an opportunity, equal to that given to others, to obtain, use or benefit from the goods and services provided by and on behalf of KWH.

Definitions

Assistive Devices: For the purposes of this policy, 'assistive devices' are defined as any piece of equipment or product that is used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of persons with disabilities.

Service Animal: For the purposes of this policy, a 'service animal' is defined as either:

- 1) Guide Dog: Defined in section 1 of the Blind Persons Rights' Act, R.S.O. 1990, c.B.7;
or
- 2) An animal used by a person with a disability, including but not limited to a dog, if:
 - it is readily apparent that such animal is used by the person for reasons related to his or her disability; or
 - if the person provides a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires such animal for reasons relating to his or her disability.

Service Disruption: For the purposes of this policy, a 'service disruption' is defined as planned or unplanned unavailability of facilities or services operated by KWH such as elevators and websites.

Support Persons: For the purpose of this policy, a 'support person' is defined as, in relation to a person with a disability, another person who accompanies him or her in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs or with access to goods or services.

General Principles

a) Provision of Goods and Services to Persons with Disabilities

KWH will use reasonable efforts to ensure that its policies, practices and procedures promote accessibility and reflect the principles of independence, integration, dignity and equal opportunity.

b) Training

KWH will ensure that the following persons receive training in Accessibility Standards for Customer Service:

- All employees, contracted persons, agents and those other third parties who deal with members of the public on behalf of KWH.
- Every person who participates in developing the employer's policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of goods and services to members of the public or other third parties.

Training will be provided as soon as practicable upon an individual being assigned the applicable duties and on an ongoing basis in connection with changes to KWH policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities and on the requirements of the Customer Service Standards.

Training will include the following but not limited to:

- A review of the purposes of the Act and the requirements of the Regulation.
- How to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disability.
- How to interact with persons with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a guide dog or other service animal or the assistance of a support person.
- How to use equipment or devices available on KWH's premise or otherwise provided by KWH that may help with the provision of goods or services to a person with a disability.
- What to do if a person with a particular type of disability is having difficulty accessing KWH's goods or services.

KWH will keep records of the training provided including dates the training is provided and the number of persons trained.

c) Communication with Persons with Disabilities

When communicating with a person with a disability, KWH will do so in a manner that takes into account the person's disability. The individual with a disability may request an accommodation and/or alternate formats to facilitate their interaction with KWH. KWH staff and volunteers who deal with members of the public will work with the individual with a disability to provide a timely and appropriate accommodation and/or alternate format.

d) Service Animals

KWH is committed to welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal onto all KWH owned and operated public facilities that are open to the public. KWH will ensure that the individual is permitted to keep the animal with him or her unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law.

If a service animal is excluded by law, KWH will ensure that alternate means are available to enable the person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from KWH's goods and services.

If it is not readily apparent that the animal is a service animal, KWH may ask the person with a disability for a letter from a physician or a nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to his or her disability.

It is the responsibility of the person with a disability to ensure that his or her service animal is kept in control at all times.

e) Support Persons

A person with a disability may be accompanied by a support person. KWH may require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person while on KWH premises in situations where it is necessary to protect the health and safety of the person with a disability or the health and safety of others on the premises.

If, in the presence of a support person, personal information is being discussed, KWH staff must ensure that the individual consents to the support person being present. Consent can be given verbally or in writing.

f) Assistive Devices

KWH shall use reasonable efforts to allow persons with disabilities to use their own assistive devices to access goods and/or services.

It is the responsibility of the person with a disability to ensure that his or her assistive device is operated in a safe and controlled manner at all times.

g) Notice of Service Disruptions

KWH is aware that the operation of its services and facilities is important to the public. However, temporary disruptions in KWH's services and facilities may occur.

KWH will make reasonable effort to provide notice to the public of the disruption of facilities operated by KWH such as elevators and websites. The notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration and a description of alternative facilities or services, if any, that may be available. KWH will make reasonable effort to provide advance notice of planned disruption. In situations of unplanned disruption, advance notice may not be possible. In such instances, KWH will provide notice as soon as possible. KWH will provide notice by posting the information at the front entrance of its offices.

h) Feedback

KWH values the feedback from its customers. Feedback from a member of the public about the delivery of goods and services to persons with disabilities may be submitted by telephone, in person, in writing, in electronic format or through other methods to the Manager of Customer Services and Conservation.

KWH staff will respond within two weeks to the author of the feedback. The author of the feedback will be provided with a response that will outline the actions taken to resolve the concern, if any.

i) Availability of Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Documents

This policy and any other documents key to the delivery of goods and services will be made available upon request from KWH's Customer Services Department. This document can be provided in alternate formats, upon request.