

Accessibility Policy

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Effective date: January 8, 2025

Compliance date: January 8, 2025

Introduction

Governed by the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2005 (AODA), EnviroCentre is required to identify and remove barriers to improve accessibility for people with disabilities in key areas of daily living. EnviroCentre's policy focuses on three main accessibility standards:

- Customer Service Standard, which helps remove barriers for people with disabilities so they can access EnviroCentre's goods and services.
- Information and Communications Standard, which guides EnviroCentre to make information accessible to people with disabilities.
- Employment Standard, which ensures hiring and employee support practices are more accessible.

Policy Statement

EnviroCentre is committed to providing a barrier-free environment for our customers, employees, job applicants, suppliers, and other stakeholders who access our information or use our services. EnviroCentre operates using a virtual office and we are committed to making our remote workplace accessible for everyone. We respect the standards and requirements established by the AODA and strive to uphold them every day. EnviroCentre affirms that improving accessibility for people with disabilities creates positive changes throughout our greater community.

EnviroCentre will provide a safe, dignified, and welcoming environment for our customers and staff, and work diligently to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities in a timely and efficient manner. EnviroCentre understands that the needs of individuals with disabilities are not always visible and can emerge over time.

Purpose

In compliance with AODA, the purpose of this policy is to outline EnviroCentre's responsibilities in providing goods, services, and opportunities to people with disabilities.

Application

This policy applies to all people employed by EnviroCentre, as well as its volunteers.

Training

EnviroCentre trains all staff and volunteers in accessible customer service, other Ontario accessibility standards, and aspects of the Ontario Human Rights Code that relate to persons with disabilities. Training includes:

- Purpose of the AODA and the requirements of the Customer Service Standards.
- How to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities.
- How to interact with people with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or support person.
- Any accessibility requirements that apply to a person's role within EnviroCentre.

EnviroCentre staff will also be trained on an ongoing basis when changes are made to policies, practices, and procedures. EnviroCentre maintains records of the training provided that include the date on which the training was completed.

Customer Service Standard

Assistive Devices

EnviroCentre is committed to serving people with disabilities who use assistive devices to obtain, use, or benefit from our services. EnviroCentre will ensure all staff are trained and familiar with various assistive devices that people with disabilities may use while accessing our services or opportunities.

Communication

EnviroCentre is committed to meeting the needs of people with disabilities and will consult with the people with disabilities to determine their information and communication needs. We train our customer service team to communicate over the phone in clear and plain language and to speak clearly and slowly.

Billing

EnviroCentre is committed to providing accessible invoices to all customers. Invoices will be provided in an alternative accessible format upon request. EnviroCentre will answer any questions customers may have about the content of the invoice by telephone or email.

Service Animals

EnviroCentre operates through a virtual office, but on occasion the organization hosts in-person meetings and events in private spaces. EnviroCentre will make reasonable effort to rent out event spaces that allow for the use of service animals. In the event a space cannot accommodate service animals due to exclusions by law, EnviroCentre will discuss with the person with disabilities another way they can obtain the goods/services, such as a member of EnviroCentre accompanying the person with disabilities in the absence of their service animal.

Support Persons

When EnviroCentre hosts an in-person meeting or event in a private, rented space, the organization will allow a person with disabilities to be accompanied by a support person. EnviroCentre may require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person where it is necessary to protect the health and safety of the person with a disability or the health and safety of others in the event space. Before making a decision to require a support person, EnviroCentre will:

- Consult with the person with the disability to understand their needs.
- Consider health and safety reasons based on available evidence.
- Determine if there is any other reasonable way to protect the health and safety of the person with the disability or others in the event space.

In such a situation where a support person accompanies the person with a disability, any admission fee or fare will be waived for the support person.

For any instances where confidential matters will be discussed with a person with a disability, a support person may be asked to sign a confidentiality agreement, and/or the person with the disability will be required to consent to discuss the confidential matters in front of their support person prior to initiating the conversation.

Notice of Temporary Disruption

In the event of disruptions to EnviroCentre's technology or services that customers with disabilities rely on, EnviroCentre will provide notice to the public through its website and social media channels. Information will include what the disruption is, when the service is expected to resume, and alternatives that can be utilized during the disruption, if available.

EnviroCentre will provide advance public notice of any scheduled service descriptions; however, unplanned and/or emergency disruptions may not allow for advanced notice.

Notice of Availability of Documents

This policy will be continuously maintained by EnviroCentre's Corporate Operations team and is available on the organization's website and internal SharePoint. Upon request from an individual, EnviroCentre will provide this policy in an alternate/accessible format or with communication support, as required.

Information and Communications Standard

EnviroCentre is committed to meeting the communication needs of people with disabilities. EnviroCentre wants to achieve the most effective and efficient access to information for everyone.

Website and Content

EnviroCentre's website and its contents conform to the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0, Level A. EnviroCentre commits to conform to WCAG 2.0, Level AA by January 2025. EnviroCentre employs website developers who are knowledgeable about AODA compliance.

Accessible Formats and Communication Supports

EnviroCentre provides accessible formats and communications supports to persons with disabilities upon request. Requests for accessible formats and communication supports are dealt with in a timely manner and will take into account individual accessibility needs by consulting with the person making the request. EnviroCentre will provide accessible formats and communication supports to persons with disabilities at a cost that is no more than the regular cost charged to other persons.

Feedback Process

EnviroCentre seeks to meet and exceed expectations of people with disabilities. Comments on our services are welcomed and appreciated from members of the public and EnviroCentre employees. Feedback can be provided in the following ways:

- By telephone at 613-656-0100
- By email to info@envirocentre.ca
- In writing to EnviroCentre, 347-1554 Carling Ave, Ottawa, ON K1Z 7M4 (please note that we work from a virtual office and this is strictly a mailing address)

If alternative accessible formats for feedback are required, the person with a disability can request such, and EnviroCentre will work to arrange it, if reasonable. All feedback will be reviewed and addressed by EnviroCentre's Operations Supervisor within 5 business days.

Employment Standards

EnviroCentre is committed to fair and accessible employment practices. EnviroCentre will make every effort to identify, remove, and prevent barriers by adhering to inclusive employment practices that support persons with disabilities through all stages of recruitment and employment, including training and career development/progression.

Recruitment, Assessment, and Selection Process

EnviroCentre will notify employees and the public about the availability of accommodations for applicants with disabilities during the recruitment process. This information will be included on all job postings and posted under "Opportunities" page on EnviroCentre's website.

Individuals selected for an interview will be notified that accommodations are available upon request via phone and/or in writing (email). EnviroCentre will consult with applicants who request accommodations and will make reasonable effort to provide or arrange accommodations in a timely manner that take into account the applicant's accessibility needs due to disability.

EnviroCentre's interview process will focus on experience and skills and be free of discrimination against candidates who have a disability or require accommodations. EnviroCentre is committed to hiring decisions that are unbiased and based on qualifications and experience.

Successful applicants will be notified about EnviroCentre's policies for accommodating employees with disabilities as part of their offer of employment.

Employee Support

EnviroCentre will inform all employees of the organization's policies that support employees with disabilities.

Where an employee with a disability requests it, EnviroCentre will consult with the employee to provide or arrange suitable accessible supports that are required to perform job functions.

Accommodation Plans and Return to Work

EnviroCentre has developed and put in place an Accommodation and Return to Work process (see Appendix A) for individual employees who have been absent from and are returning to work following an illness or injury where disability-related accommodations are required.

Performance Management, Career Development, and Redeployment

EnviroCentre is committed to ensuring employees with disabilities are provided equitable access to performance management and career development. Managers within the organization will consider the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities and individual accommodation plans when conducting performance reviews, providing career development/advancement opportunities, or when redeploying employees.

Change to Existing Policies

Any EnviroCentre policies that do not respect and promote the principles of dignity, independence, integration, and equal opportunity for people with disabilities will be modified or removed.

This document is publicly available. Accessible formats are available upon request.

Definitions

Accessibility: design characteristics of products, devices, information, services, facilities, or public spaces that are absent of barriers that would prevent people with disabilities from fully participating in all social, economic, political, and cultural aspects of society, either independently or with support when required.

Accommodations: preventing and removing barriers that impede a person with disabilities from fully participating in all aspects of society in a way that is responsive to their own unique circumstances.

Assistive Device: a technical aid, communication device, or other instrument that is used to maintain or improve the functional abilities of people with disabilities

Accessible Formats: includes, but not limited to, large print, recorded audio, electronic formats, braille, and other formats used by persons with disabilities

Accessibility Standard: an accessibility standard made by regulation under section 6 of the AODA

Barrier: means anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of his or her disability, including a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, an information or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy or a practice

Communications Supports: captioning, alternative and augmentative communication supports, plain language, sign language, and other supports that facilitate effective communications.

Disability: (a) 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, (b) a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability, (c) a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language, (d) a mental disorder, or (e) an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997

Performance Management: a way for employers to help workers succeed by assessing their effectiveness and productivity.

Service Animal: an animal that is used by an individual with a disability for reasons related to the person's disability.

Support Person: an individual who accompanies a person with a disability to help with communication, mobility, personal care, medical needs, or access to goods and services.

Appendices

Appendix A – [EnviroCentre Return to Work Process](#)

Appendix B – [EnviroCentre Return to Work Plan](#)

Appendix C – [EnviroCentre Accessibility Plan](#)