

## 4.4 ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS FOR CUSTOMER SERVICE

<b>Policy Name:</b>	<b>Accessibility Standards for Customer Service</b>
Category:	Human Resources
Approved by:	Executive Director
Approval/Revision Date:	January 2012, June 2023
Review Date:	September 2016, June 2024
Scope:	All Staff

### PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy statement is to provide guidelines for the delivery of services to people with disabilities, in compliance with the requirements of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* and its regulations.

### POLICY

In fulfilling our mission, Canadian Mothercraft Society strives at all times to provide its services in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. We are also committed to preventing, identifying, and removing barriers that impede the ability of people with disabilities to access services. This includes children, families, staff, students, volunteers, and members of Mothercraft's community.

We will be guided with the following principles:

- **Dignity:** Refers to policies, procedures and practices that enforce and stress on treating a person with a disability as a valued client, who is entitled to receiving full and adequate services just like any other client.
- **Independence:** Freedom from control or influence of others. Freedom to make your own choices. Freedom to do things your own way.
- **Integration:** Integrated services allow people with disabilities to fully benefit from the same services, at the same place and in the same or a similar way that other client experience
- **Equal opportunity:** Having the same chances, options, benefits and results as others. In the case of services, it means that people with disabilities ought to have the same opportunity to benefit from the way you provide services to all people.

### DEFINITIONS

#### 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 coordination, 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 languages.
- 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*; (“handicapped”)

### **Assistive Devices and Measures:**

An auxiliary aid such as communication aids, cognition aids, personal mobility aids and medical aids. (ie: canes, crutches, wheelchairs, or hearing aids)

### **Service Animals**

An animal trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of a person with a disability.

### **Support Persons**

Any person whether a paid professional, friend, family member, who accompanies a person with a disability in order to assist and facilitate with communication, mobility, personal care, or medical needs or with access to goods and services.

### **Barriers to Accessibility**

Obstacles that prevent a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of the services provided by Mothercraft. This includes, but is not limited to, a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, information or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier.

### **Representatives of Mothercraft**

Every person who deals with members of the public or other third parties on behalf of Mothercraft, whether the person does so as, an employee, volunteer or otherwise.

## **RESPONSIBILITY**

The Human Resource Department is responsible for reviewing this policy annually and for recommending amendments to ensure on-going compliance with regulated accessibility standards and legislated obligations. It is the responsibility of Mothercraft’s employees, students, and volunteers to comply with said policy and ensure the organization meets the expectations and principles we have set ourselves through this policy.

The Human Resource Department shall provide advice and direction on the implementation of this policy.

The Executive Director and Senior Management will monitor current practices to ensure compliance and that their staff members are familiar with this policy.

### **Compliance**

The *Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Policy* shall apply to every person who deals with members of the public or other third parties on behalf of Mothercraft, whether the person is an employee, volunteer or otherwise.

### **Non-Compliance**

Failure to comply with the *Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Policy* may result in disciplinary action and possibly termination based on the severity of the action.

## **PROCEDURES**

- All staff will identify and remove accessibility barriers to people with disabilities by:

- Encouraging people with disabilities to use their own personal assistive devices to improve access to Mothercraft's services.
  - Communicating with persons with disabilities in a manner that considers his or her disability.
  - Allowing people with disabilities to bring their service animals with them on premise areas of Mothercraft that are open to the public unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law.
  - Permitting people with disabilities who use a support person to accompany them and ensuring that a person with a disability has access to his or her support person while on Mothercraft premises.
- Training will be provided to all staff regardless of position and or status. Training will include the following:
    - Purpose of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*.
    - Overview of the requirements of the customer service standard.
    - How to interact 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.
    - What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing Mothercraft's good service or facilities.
    - Providing informative notices when facilities or services that people with disabilities rely on to access Mothercraft are temporarily disrupted.
- If there is a temporary disruption of services used by persons with disabilities, Mothercraft will:
    - Give notice to the public of the reason for disruption.
    - Dates of disruption.
    - Anticipated duration and a description of alternative services, if needed.
    - Notices shall be provided in a variety of methods; letter, posting, phone, website and any other means that are available to Mothercraft.
- Establish a process for people to provide feedback on how services are delivered to people with disabilities and explain how Mothercraft will respond to any feedback and what action will be taken. It is the responsibility of every staff at Mothercraft to be attentive to the concerns of children, families, visitors, and to resolve concerns related to accessibility. Feedback on how services are delivered to people with disabilities will be forwarded to:
 

Michele Lupa, Executive Director  
 Phone: 416 920 3515 ext. 102  
 E-mail: [Michele.lupa@mothercraft.org](mailto:Michele.lupa@mothercraft.org)  
 Website: [www.mothercraft.ca](http://www.mothercraft.ca)  
 Mail to: Mothercraft - 32 Heath Street – Toronto ON
- Customers that provide formal feedback will receive acknowledgement of their feedback, along with any resulting action taken based on concerns or complaints that were submitted.
- Mothercraft shall notify customers that the documents related to the *Accessibility Standard for Customer Service* policy are available upon request and in a format that considers the customer's ability. Notifications will be given by posting the information in a conspicuous place owned and operated by Mothercraft, the Mothercraft' website;

and/or any other reasonable method.

**CROSS REFERENCE**

- *Employment Principles Policy*
- *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*
- *Human Rights Code*