

HEALTH & SAFETY

8.6.0 – ACCESSIBILITY FOR ONTARIANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (AODA)

PURPOSE & SCOPE

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) is Provincial Legislation with the purpose of developing, implementing and enforcing accessibility standards in order to achieve accessibility for persons with disabilities with respect to goods, services, facilities, accommodation, employment, buildings, structures and premises on or before January 1, 2025.

This policy applies to all employees and volunteers who deal with the public or other third parties on behalf of the Bernard Betel Centre.

COMMITMENT

The Betel Centre strives to provide its goods and services in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. We are also committed to giving people with disabilities the opportunity to access our services, allowing them to benefit from the same services, in the same place and in a similar manner as other individuals.

PROCEDURE

1. **Goods and Services** – The Betel Centre is committed to excellence in serving all individuals including people with disabilities and will carry out its functions and responsibilities in the following areas:
 - **Communication** – The Betel Centre will communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability and will train staff on how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities.
 - **Assistive Devices** – The Betel Centre will ensure that the staff is trained and familiar with various assistive devices the Betel Centre has on site or provides for use by participants with disabilities while accessing our goods or services.
2. **Service Animals** - A person with a disability is permitted to enter the Betel Centre premises with a service animal unless the animal is specifically excluded by law*. Other types of service animals are not included in this exception. In such rare cases that a service animal is excluded, the onus falls on the Betel Centre to provide other appropriate measures to enable the person with the disability to obtain, use or benefit from the good and/or services.
 - Section 4(9) of the Accessibility Standards on Customer Service states that an animal is a service animal if (1) it is readily apparent that the animal is being used for reasons related to a person's disability; or (2) if the person provides a letter from a doctor or nurse confirming that the animal is required for reasons relating to the disability.

*Ontario Regulation 562 under the Health Protection and Promotion Act states that animals are not allowed in places where food is manufactured, prepared, processed, handled, served, displayed, stored, sold or offered for sale (i.e. kitchen). It does make an exception for service dogs to allow them to go where food is normally served, sold or offered for sale (i.e. cafeteria).

EFFECTIVE DATE: September 2016

3. **Support Persons**

- The Betel Centre is committed to welcoming people with disabilities along with the support persons who may accompany them. At no time will a person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person be prevented from having access to his or her support person while on the premises.
- A support person will be charged fees for the following: when the support person accompanies the disabled person to a special event they pay the members rate; or when accompanying the disabled person on a trip, the support person pays the membership fee and the cost of the trip.
- Notification of support person's fees will be posted on the Betel Centre website and in The Monitor.

4. **Temporary Disruptions** – The Betel Centre will provide individuals with notice in the event of a planned, temporary, or unexpected disruption to services or facilities usually used by persons with disabilities. The notice will include the reason(s) for the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available. It will be posted in a prominent location at the facility and on The Betel Centre's website when appropriate.

5. **Staff Training** - The Betel Centre will provide training on the policy and accessible customer service training to employees, volunteers and others who deal with the public or other third parties on our behalf.

New employees and volunteers will be trained as part of their orientation within one month of placement.

The training includes the following:

- The purpose of Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and the requirements of Customer Service standard;
- How to interact and communicate with persons with a range of disabilities;
- How to handle situations where a person with a disability has difficulty accessing the Centre's goods and services;
- How to interact with persons with disabilities who use assistive devices, or require assistance from a support person or service animal;
- How to use the equipment or devices available on Betel Centre premises that may help serve persons with disabilities;
- How to assist persons with disabilities during an emergency;
- The Betel Centre's policies, practices and procedures relating to the customer service standard.

Updated information or training will be provided following any changes to the accessible customer services policy or process.

6. **Feedback Process** –The ultimate goal of the Betel Centre is to meet and surpass expectations while serving individuals with disabilities. Comments on its services regarding how well those expectations are being met are welcome and appreciated.

Feedback regarding the way the Betel Centre provides services to people with disabilities can be made verbally (in person or on the phone) or in writing (letter, email or suggestion box comment card) to the Executive Director. A reply will be provided within five working days.

7. **Notice of Availability** – The Betel Centre will notify the public that our documents related to accessible customer service, are available upon request by posting a notice on the Information Board; on our website and in the Monitor.
8. **Modifications to this or other Policies** – Any policy, practice or procedure of the Betel Centre that does not respect and promote the principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity for people with disabilities will be modified or removed.