

Accessibility (AODA) Policy

Board Policy
Under Review

Commitment

This policy is intended to reinforce Epilepsy Toronto's commitment to accessibility and outlines how the organization will meet the requirements of Ontario's *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* and the Regulations made under it (the "AODA").

Epilepsy Toronto is committed to ensuring equal access and participation for people with disabilities. ET is committed to treating people with disabilities in a way that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence. ET believes in integration and is committed to meeting the needs of people with disability in a timely manner by removing and preventing barriers to accessibility and meeting accessibility requirements under the AODA.

Scope

This Policy applies to Epilepsy Toronto Board members, employees and volunteers.

Definitions

"disability" in this policy is, as defined in the AODA, as:

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,

a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability,

a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,

a mental disorder, or

an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997; ("handicap")

"accessibility": means capable of being entered into or reached; approachable; capable of being attained; obtainable; able to be understood or appreciated.

"services" means services provided by Epilepsy Toronto to its members and clients.

Principles

In support of its commitment to excellence in serving its constituents including persons with disabilities, Epilepsy Toronto strives to ensure that its policies, practices and procedures are consistent with the following principles:

Epilepsy Toronto services will be provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities;

Epilepsy Toronto services will be provided to persons with disabilities in an integrated fashion with those who do not have disabilities unless an alternative measure is necessary to enable a person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from Services;

Epilepsy Toronto will give persons with disabilities opportunities to use services equal to those without disabilities;

Epilepsy Toronto encourages open communication and expects persons with disabilities to communicate their need for accommodation or assistance.

Policy

Communication

It is the policy of Epilepsy Toronto to communicate with people who have a disability in ways that take into account their abilities. This may include communication in the following ways:

Telephone

Text

Fax

Email

In Person

Print Copy

Electronic Copy

Website

Electronic Newsletters

Social Media

Every effort will be made to use methods of communication that best accommodate individuals whose disabilities present communication barriers.

Disruption of Services

If a planned or unexpected disruption to services or facilities occurs, Epilepsy Toronto will notify clients promptly. Notification will be by direct contact or by physical or virtual posting of the disruption and will include the reason for disruption, its anticipated length of time and a description of alternative services or facilities, if appropriate or available.

Assistive Devices

It is the policy of Epilepsy Toronto to serve people with disabilities who use their own assistive devices to obtain, use or benefit from its Services. An assistive device is an item a person with a disability may bring with them that is used in accessing goods and services. Some may be visibly apparent and some may not.

If a request for an assistive device by the person being served is not available from Epilepsy Toronto then an alternate accommodation will be suggested within available means.

Exceptions may occur in situations where Epilepsy Toronto determines that the Assistive Device may pose a risk to the health and safety of a person with a disability or of others on the premises. In these situations, Epilepsy Toronto will accommodate the person by providing an alternative where possible.

Service Animals

It is the policy of Epilepsy Toronto to welcome people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal on the parts of its premises that are open to the public. A service animal is an animal that is specially trained to assist a person who has a disability and it is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to disability, i.e. either for independent mobility or has a registration tag from an accredited training program.

If an animal is not easily identifiable as a service animal, the person may be required to provide a letter from a regulated health professional confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to disability.

A regulated health professional is defined as a member of one of the following colleges:

- College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists of Ontario
- College of Chiropractors of Ontario
- College of Nurses of Ontario
- College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario
- College of Optometrists of Ontario
- College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario
- College of Physiotherapists of Ontario
- College of Psychologists of Ontario

- College of Registered Psychotherapists and Registered Mental Health Therapists of Ontario

If service animals are prohibited by another law, we will do the following to ensure people with disabilities can access our goods, services or facilities:

- explain why the animal is excluded
- discuss with the customer another way of providing goods, services or facilities

Support Persons

It is the policy of Epilepsy Toronto to welcome people who have a disability who are accompanied by a support person. A support person is someone who accompanies a person who has a disability who may assist with communication, cognitive or memory augmentation, mobility, personal care or medical needs. This person may be a paid support worker, a family member or friend.

Epilepsy Toronto will obtain written consent from the person who has a disability, or their guardian, if confidential information is being shared while the support person is present.

In situations where Epilepsy Toronto may cover the cost of transportation or admission to an event or outing for a client, it will also be covered for the support person.

Training

It is the policy of Epilepsy Toronto to provide training for all employees (full-time, part-time, seasonal and contract), volunteers and others who deal with the public including third parties on behalf of Epilepsy Toronto. In addition, all those who are involved in the development and approvals of client service policies, practices and procedures must also complete client service training.

This training will be provided within four weeks of the individuals start date.

Training content, duration and how it is delivered, may vary depending on who is receiving the training and their roles and responsibilities.

Employees will also be trained on an ongoing basis when changes are made to these policies, procedures and practices. Written materials to be handed out to others will be updated as needed and contain a revision date.

A log will be maintained to reflect staff training and material revisions.

Training will include the following:

The purpose of the AODA.

A basic understanding of various types of disabilities and the impact they may have on individuals.

How to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities.

How to interact with people with disabilities who use assistive devices or require the assistance of a service animal or support person.

How to use the equipment or assistive devices on the premises that may help with the provision of goods and services to people with disabilities.

What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing goods and services

Internal policies, procedures and practices relating to the AODA.

Feedback Process

It is the goal of Epilepsy Toronto to meet and surpass service expectations while serving people with a disability. Comments on Epilepsy Toronto's service delivery regarding how well those expectations are being met are welcome and appreciated.

All clients can expect a response to feedback within 10 business days.

Information about the feedback process will be made readily available to the public.

Where possible, input from the feedback process will be made available to the public but Epilepsy Toronto reserves the right to withhold such information in the interest of protecting the privacy of individuals.

Feedback is welcome by all means including telephone, email, website, fax, in-person, print or digital media and employees are required to notify clients of this and of the fact that feedback can be provided anonymously but if the clients wish to be contacted, any personal information collected will be done pursuant to the AODA. If feedback is a complaint, clients shall be advised of Epilepsy Toronto's complaint management process.

Notice of Availability of Documents

Epilepsy Toronto notifies the public that documents related to accessible client service are available on request by posting a notice in the following location/way:

www.epilepsytoronto.org

When giving documents required under the AODA to a person with a disability, they will be provided in a format that takes into account the person's disability.

Epilepsy Toronto will consult with the person making the request in determining the suitability of an accessible format or communication support. If the organization determines that information or communications are unconvertible, the organization shall provide the requestor with:

- a) an explanation as to why the information or communications are unconvertible; and
- b) a summary of the unconvertible information or communications.

Employment

Epilepsy Toronto notifies employees, job applicants and the public that accommodations can be made during the recruitment and hiring process. We notify job applicants when they are individually selected to participate in an assessment or selection process that accommodations are available upon request. We consult with the applicants and provide or arrange for suitable accommodation.

We notify successful applicants of policies for accommodating employees with disabilities when making offers of employment.

We notify staff that supports are available for those with disabilities as soon as practicable after they begin their employment. We provide updated information to employees whenever there is a change to existing policies on the provision of job accommodation that take into account an employee's accessibility needs due to a disability.

We will consult with employees when arranging for the provision of suitable accommodation in a manner that takes into account the accessibility needs due to disability. We will consult with the person making the request in determining the suitability of an accessible format or communication supports specifically for:

information that is needed in order to perform the employee's job; and
information that is generally available to employees in the workplace

Where needed, we will also provide customized emergency information to help an employee with a disability during an emergency. With the employee's consent, we will provide workplace emergency information to a designated person who is providing assistance to that employee during an emergency.

We will provide the information as soon as practicable after we become aware of the need for accommodation due to the employee's disability.

We will review the individualized workplace emergency response information:
when the employee moves to a different location in the organization;
when the employee's overall accommodations needs or plans are reviewed; and
when the employer reviews its general emergency response policies.

Individual accommodation plans will be developed for employees with disabilities.
Individual plans will be developed for employees who have been absent from work due to a disability and require disability-related accommodations in order to return to work.
Our performance management, career development and redeployment processes take into account the accessibility needs of all employees.

This policy is publicly available. Accessible formats are available on request.