

MERX

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)

Policy Statement

MERX is committed to the provision of services to people with disabilities in a manner consistent with the principles of dignity, independence, integration, and equal opportunity.

Furthermore, such services will be provided in accordance with the spirit and intent of all applicable legislation including the AODA, the Ontario Human Rights Code, the Occupational Health and Safety Act, and the Ontario Building Code Act.

Definitions

Disability:

For the purpose of this policy, the term “disability” includes:

- 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.

Employee:

For the purposes of this policy, the term “employee” refers to any person regarding whom MERX pays wages or a salary, has control over their assigned work and has a right to control the details of their work. This includes, but is not limited to:

- a. fulltime employees
- b. part-time employees
- c. contract employees

Service Animal:

For the purposes of this policy, an animal is a service animal for a person with a disability:

- a. if it is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to his or her disability; or
- b. if the person provides a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability.

“Service animal” also includes a guide dog as defined under the Blind Persons’ Rights Act Section 1.

Support Person:

For the purposes of this policy, a “support person” is a person who accompanies a person with a disability in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs or with access to goods or services. The support person could be a paid personal support worker, a volunteer, a friend or a family member. He or she does not necessarily need to have special training or qualifications.

Operating Principles

Accessible Communication

MERX and its employees will communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account each person’s particular disability.

Service Animals and Support Persons

Unless otherwise prohibited by law, persons with disabilities will be permitted to be accompanied by a service animal or support person:

- a. where services are provided at premises owned or operated by MERX and
- b. where the public or third parties have normally have access to such premises

Assistive devices

MERX is committed to serving people with disabilities that use assistive devices. We will endeavor to become familiar with the various assistive devices used by people with disabilities and will be flexible in facilitating their use by people with disabilities to access our services.

Disruption in Service

MERX will post a timely public notice of a current or anticipated disruption in any facilities or services we provide to enable people with disabilities to access our services. This notice will include information regarding the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available.

Training

MERX will provide training to:

- a. All its employees who could reasonably be expected to interact with the public on behalf of MERX.
- b. All those who are involved in the development, approval, monitoring or implementation of MERX customer service policies, practices and procedures about the provision of goods and services to the public and/or third parties.

This training will be provided within 1 week of when the individual commences performing duties for MERX. Additional training will be provided within 2 weeks of any revisions made to this policy and/or related procedures and practices.

Such training will include the following:

- a. A review of the purposes of the AODA and the requirements of its Customer Service Standard.
- b. How to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disability.
- c. 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.
- d. How to use equipment or devices available on MERX's premises or otherwise provided by MERX that may help with the provision of goods or services to a person with a disability.
- e. What to do if a person with a particular type of disability is having difficulty accessing the provider's goods or services.

Responsibilities

MERX is responsible for reviewing this Policy annually and recommending amendments to ensure on-going compliance with regulated accessibility standards and legislated obligations. MERX will provide advice and direction on the implementation of this Policy. Supervisors and managers will ensure that they and their employees are familiar with this Policy.

Monitoring and Contraventions

Supervisors and managers will monitor current practices to ensure compliance.