

<b>Canadian Mental Health Association Thunder Bay Branch</b>  <b>POLICIES &amp; PROCEDURES MANUAL</b>	<b>SECTION:</b> Service Delivery	<b>NUMBER: F.24</b>
	<b>POLICY:</b> <u>Accessibility -Client Service</u>  Page 1 of 9	<b>DATE:</b> May 19, 2011  <b>Revised:</b> June 20, 2021  <b>Approved:</b> October 23, 2011

**POLICY:**

**CMHA Thunder Bay is committed to providing accessible client service. CMHA Thunder Bay will ensure it takes all reasonable measures to provide accessible services to clients with a disability ensuring compliance with Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07 under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disability Act, 2005.**

**Application & Scope:**

This policy applies to the provision of services at premises owned and operated by CMHA Thunder Bay where there is a service component at the physical location. The AODA and the customer service standards do not replace or change the Ontario Building Code Act or other requirements for safety and building requirements.

This policy applies to employees, students on placement, clients, volunteers, agents and/or contractors, who deal with the public or other third parties that act on behalf of CMHA Thunder Bay, such as in delivery of service.

The section of this policy that addresses the use of guide dogs, service animals and service dogs only applies to the provision of services that take place at premises owned and operated by CMHA Thunder Bay.

**Definitions:**

**Assistive Device** – refers to a technical aid, communication device or other instrument that is used to maintain or improve the functional abilities of people with disabilities. Personal assistive devices are typically devices that clients bring with them such as: wheelchair, walker, or a personal oxygen tank, or devices that might assist the person in hearing seeing, communicating, moving, breathing, remembering and/or reading.

**Disability** – the term disability as defined by the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, and the Ontario Human Rights Code, refers to:

- 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 epilepsy, a brain injury, a 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 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.

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**Definitions cont'd:**

**Guide Dog** – is a highly-trained working dog that has been trained at one of the facilities listed in Ontario Regulation 58 under the Blind Persons' Rights Act, to provide mobility, safety and increased independence for people who are blind.

**Service Animal** – as reflected in Ontario Regulation 429/07, an animal is a service animal for a person with a disability if:

- It is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to his or her disability; or
- 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 Dog** – as reflected in Health Protection and Promotion Act, Ontario Regulation 562 a dog other than a guide dog for the blind is a service dog if:

- It is readily apparent to an average person that the dog functions as a service dog for a person with a medical disability;
- Or the person who requires the dog can provide on request a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires a service dog.

**Support Person** – as reflected in Ontario Regulation 429/07, a support person means, in relation to a person with a disability, another person who accompanies him or her in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care, medical needs or access to goods and services.

**General Principles:**

In accordance with the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07, this policy addresses the following:

- A. The Provision of Services to Persons with Disabilities;
- B. The Use of Assistive Devices;
- C. The Use of Guide Dogs, Service Animals and Service Dogs;
- D. The Use of Support Persons;
- E. Notice of Service Disruptions;
- F. Client Feedback;
- G. Training;
- H. Notice of Availability and Format of Required Documents

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**Procedures and General Principles:**

**A. The Provision of Services to Person with Disabilities:**

CMHA Thunder Bay will make every reasonable effort to ensure that its policies, practices and procedures are consistent with the principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity by:

- Ensuring that all clients receive the same value and equality;
- Allowing clients with disabilities to do things in their own way, at their own pace when accessing services as long as this does not present a safety risk;
- Using alternative methods when possible to ensure that clients (customers) with disabilities have access to the same services, in the same place and in a similar manner;
- Taking into account individual needs when providing services; and
- Communicating in a manner that takes into account the client’s disability.

**B. Assistive Devices:**

Client’s own assistive device(s):

Persons with disabilities may use their own assistive devices as required when accessing services provided by CMHA Thunder Bay.

In cases where the assistive device presents a safety concern or where accessibility might be an issue, other reasonable measures will be used to ensure the access of services. For example, open flames and oxygen tanks cannot be near one another. Therefore, the accommodation of a client with an oxygen tank may involve ensuring the client is in a location that would be considered safe for both the client and business. Or, where elevators are not present and where an individual requires assistive devices for the purposes of mobility, service will be provided in a location that meets the needs of the client.

**C. Guide Dogs, Service Animals and Service Dogs**

A client with a disability that is accompanied by a guide dog, service animal or service dog will be allowed access to premises that are open to the public unless otherwise excluded by law. “No pet” policies do not apply to guide dogs, service animals and/or service dogs.

Food Service Areas:

A client with a disability that is accompanied by a guide dog or service dog will be allowed access to food service areas that are open to the public unless otherwise excluded by law.

Other types of service animals are not permitted into food service areas due to the Health Protection and Promotion Act, Ontario Regulation 562, Section 60.

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Procedures and General Principles continued.....

Exclusion Guidelines:

If a guide dog, service animal or service dog is excluded by law (see applicable laws below) CMHA Thunder Bay will offer alternative methods to enable the person with a disability to access services, when possible (for example, securing the animal in a safe location and offering the guidance of an employee).

Applicable Laws:

Dog Owner’s Liability Act, Ontario. If there is a conflict between a provision of this Act or of a regulation under this or any other Act relating to banned breeds (such as pittbulls) and a provision of a by-law passed by a municipality relating to these breeds, the provision that is more restrictive in relation to controls or bans o these breeds prevails.

Recognizing a Guide Dog, Service Dog and/or Service Animal:

If it is not readily apparent that the animal is being used by the client for reasons relating to his or her disability, CMHA Thunder Bay may request verification from the client.

Verification may include:

- A letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons related to the disability;
- A valid identification card signed by the Attorney General of Canada; or
- A certificate of training from a recognized guide dog or service animal training school.

Care and Control of Service Animal:

The client that is accompanied by a guide dog, service dog and/or service animal is responsible for maintaining care and control of the animal at all times.

Allergies:

If a health and safety concern present itself for example in the form of a severe allergy to the animal, CMHA Thunder Bay will make all reasonable efforts to meet the needs of all individuals.

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Procedures and General Principles continued.....

**D. Support Persons:**

If a client with a disability is accompanied by a support person, CMHA Thunder Bay will ensure that both persons are allowed to enter the premises together and that the client is not prevented from having access to the support person.

There may be times where seating and availability prevent the client and support person from sitting beside each other. In these situations CMHA Thunder Bay will make every reasonable attempt to resolve the issue.

In situations where confidential information might be discussed, consent will be obtained from the client, prior to any conversation where confidential information might be discussed.

Admission Fees:

If payment is required by a support person for admission to the premises CMHA Thunder Bay will ensure that notice is given in advance by posting notice of admission fees for support persons where CMHA Thunder Bay fees are posted.

**E. Notice of Disruption in Service:**

Service disruptions may occur due to reasons that may or may not be within the control or knowledge of CMHA Thunder Bay. In the event of any temporary disruptions to facilities or services that client's with disabilities rely on to access or use CMHA Thunder Bay's services, reasonable efforts will be made to provide advance notice. In some circumstances such as in the situation of unplanned temporary disruptions, advance notice may not be possible.

Notifications will include:

In the event that a notification needs to be posted the following information will be included unless it is not readily available or known:

- Service Site that is disrupted or unavailable
- Reason for the disruption
- Anticipated duration
- A descriptive of alternative services or options

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Procedures and General Principles continued.....

**Notification Options:**

When disruptions occur, CMHA Thunder Bay will provide notice by:

- Posting notices in conspicuous places including at the point of disruption, at the main entrance and the nearest accessible entrance to the service disruption and/or on the CMHA Website;
- Contacting clients with appointments;
- Verbally notifying clients when they are making a reservation or appointment; or
- By any other method that may be reasonable under the circumstances.

**F. Feedback Process:**

CMHA Thunder Bay shall provide clients with the opportunity to provide feedback on the service provided to clients with disabilities. Information about the feedback process will be readily available to all clients and notice of the process will be made available by publicizing through posters and website. Feedback forms along with alternate methods of providing feedback such as; verbally (in person or by telephone), written or completed and delivered through website and email, will be available upon request.

**Submitting Feedback:**

Clients can submit feedback to:

- Janice Kirychuk, Director of Business Services
- 807-345-5564, Ext. 243
- 200 Van Norman Street, Thunder Bay, ON P7A 4B8
- [cmhatb@cmha-tb.on.ca](mailto:cmhatb@cmha-tb.on.ca)
- [www.cmha-tb.on.ca](http://www.cmha-tb.on.ca)

Clients who wish to provide feedback by completing an onsite client feedback form or verbally, can do so to any CMHA Thunder Bay employee.

Clients that provide formal feedback will receive acknowledgement of their feedback, along with any resulting actions based on concerns or complaints that were submitted.

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**G. Training:**

Training will be provided to:

- a) All employees, volunteers, board members, agents and/or contractors who deal with the public or other third parties that act on behalf of CMHA Thunder Bay.
- b) Those who are involved in the development and approval of client service policies, practices and procedures.

Training Provisions:

**As reflected in Ontario Regulation 429/07, regardless of the format, training will cover the following:**

- A review of the purpose of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005.
- A review of the requirements of the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07.
- Instructions on how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities.
- Instructions on how to interact with people with disabilities who:
  - Use assistive devices;
  - Require the assistance of a guide dog, service dog or other service animal; or
  - Require the use of a support person (including the handling of admission fees).
- Instructions on how to use equipment or devices that are available at our premises or that we provide that may help people with disabilities.
- Instructions on what to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing your services.
- CMHA Thunder Bay’s policies, procedures and practices pertaining to providing accessible service to clients with disabilities.

Training Schedule:

CMHA Thunder Bay will provide training as soon as practicable. Training will be provided to new employees, volunteers, agents and/or contractors who deal with the public or act on our behalf. Revised training will be provided in the event of changes to legislation, procedures and/or practices.

Record of Training:

CMHA Thunder Bay will keep a record of training that includes the dates training was provided and the number of employees who attended the training.

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**H. Notice of Availability and Format of Documents:**

CMHA Thunder Bay shall notify clients that the documents related to the Accessibility Standard for Customer Service are available upon request and in a format that takes into account the client’s disability. Notification will be given by posting the information in a conspicuous place owned and operated by CMHA Thunder Bay, CMHA Thunder Bay’s website and/or any other reasonable method.

**Administration:**

If you have any questions or concerns about this policy or its related procedures please contact:

- Janice Kirychuk, Director of Business Operations
- 807-345-5564, Ext. 243
- 200 Van Norman Street, Thunder Bay, ON P7A 4B8
- [cmhatb@cmha-tb.on.ca](mailto:cmhatb@cmha-tb.on.ca)
- [www.cmha-tb.on.ca](http://www.cmha-tb.on.ca)

This policy and its related procedures will be reviewed as required in the event of legislative changes.

**I. Procurement**

CMHA Thunder Bay will review accessibility criteria when acquiring or procuring services, goods or facilities. If it is not practical to do so, then we will provide an explanation, upon request.

**Referenced Documents:**

- Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005
- Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07
- Blind Person’s Rights Act, 1990
- Dog Owner’s Liability Act, Ontario
- Ontario Human Rights Code, 1990

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## Acknowledgement & Agreement

I (Employee Name), acknowledge that I have read and understand the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Policy of CMHA Thunder Bay. Further, I agree to adhere to this Policy and will ensure that employees working under my direction adhere to these guiding principles. I understand that if I violate this Policy, I may face corrective action, up to and including termination of employment.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Witness: \_\_\_\_\_