

Section: Guest & Site Operations

Subject: **SERVING AND ACCOMMODATING
GUESTS WITH DISABILITIES**

PURPOSE

Our Toronto Zoo strives to provide a positive and enjoyable experience for every guest. This policy is intended to provide information and direction to Zoo staff on how to service and accommodate our guests with disabilities, while remaining compliant with current and applicable legislation.

POLICY

Our Zoo delivers a wide range of programs and services to satisfy our vision statement, “a world where wildlife and wild spaces thrive”. Our Zoo aims to provide programs and services in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of our guests with disabilities. We are also committed to promoting a supportive and accessible environment to meet and/or exceed current legislative standards.

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act

The purpose of the [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act](#) (AODA) is to develop, implement and enforce accessibility standards in order to achieve accessibility for Ontarians with disabilities. In the context of our Zoo, this applies to our goods, services, facilities, employment, buildings, structures, and premises. The standards will be phased in gradually, with the customer service standard being implemented first.

[Ontario Regulation 191/11](#) (Integrated Accessibility Standards) under the AODA is the regulation that applies to customer service and is the basis for the procedures developed under this policy.

DEFINITIONS

Disability

The definition of disability under the AODA is the same as the definition of disability in the [Human Rights Code](#). This is the definition of disability that applies to the customer service standard:

- 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 service 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.

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PROCEDURE

Provision of Services

- An injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the [Workplace Safety and Insurance Act](#).

The definition includes disabilities of different severity; visible as well as non-visible disabilities, and disabilities the effects of which may come and go.

Our Zoo is committed to excellence in serving all our guests, including guests with disabilities. Departments which serve the public shall develop and maintain Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) with clearly outlined procedures for staff and volunteers to follow when serving guests with disabilities. These Departments include, but are not strictly limited to:

- Guest Operations
- Guest Relations
- Health & Safety Services
- Learning & Engagement
- Membership
- Partnerships & Events
- Retail Operations
- Strategic Communications
- Wildlife Care

Every Manager is held responsible for documenting procedures, while ensuring that all developed/implemented procedures are consistent with the principles of dignity, independence, integration, and equitable opportunity. Procedures must be reviewed annually and updated as deemed required.

Personal Assistive Device Availability

Our Zoo permits assistive devices, such as electric scooters, wheelchairs, walkers, white canes, oxygen tanks, portable chalk boards, electronic communication devices, etc., for [guests with disabilities](#) to use on Zoo site. Wheelchairs are provided to our guests free of charge while Electric Conveyance Vehicles (ECVs) require a \$35.00 fee for use. ECVs are not available during winter months due to health and safety considerations.

Service Animals

Our Zoo permits trained and accredited service animals, and their owner(s) access to Zoo site under specified conditions, in designated areas, with consideration of the health and welfare of the animals in our care and respecting the safety and enjoyment of our other guests.

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<i>Admission Discounts</i>	Accredited, trained service animals may be permitted on Zoo site, provided certain procedures are followed as set out on our website and outlined in policy WILDHEALTH-009 (Service Animals on Zoo Site). Our Zoo welcomes guests with disabilities and provides all legally required and reasonable accommodations to allow said guests to enjoy their Zoo experience. Guests with disabilities are entitled to receive an admission discount of 50% while their support person, only if required, shall receive complimentary admission.
<i>Rides and Attractions</i>	Under this policy, guests with disabilities are expected to pay for all rides or attractions they wish to enjoy with no applied discount. However, support persons shall be admitted to the ride or attraction at no charge if they are required to accompany the guest with a disability on a ride or attraction.
<i>Staff Training</i>	Human Resources shall ensure management are made aware of the compulsory requirement to have all staff complete the Toronto Zoo Core Legislative Training Program, which includes a module focused on AODA. Managers and Supervisors shall ensure that staff are trained on specific job procedures and assistive devices.
<i>Volunteer Training</i>	The Manager, Learning & Engagement shall ensure all volunteers who are primarily front facing to our guests and the general public are trained regarding the AODA as it pertains to servicing our guests with disabilities. The Manager, Learning & Engagement shall appropriately document AODA training provided to volunteers.
<i>Contracted Services Training</i>	The Director, Guest & Site Operations shall ensure that any contracted services who are primarily front facing to our guests and the general public are trained regarding the AODA as it pertains to servicing guests with disabilities. The Director, Guest & Site Operations shall appropriately document AODA training provided to all contracted staff.
<i>Temporary Service Disruption</i>	If there is a temporary disruption to services, facilities, or amenities that is likely to impact guests with disabilities, the Manager responsible for the service disruption shall post notices with information for reference. For example, a service disruption occurs if an accessible washroom is required to close for maintenance. This information shall include: • Reason(s) for the disruption. • Anticipated duration of disruption. • Directions to alternative facilities, services, or amenities that may be available.

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Notice of the service disruption shall be posted in a conspicuous place near the service disruption and may also be posted at our front entrance and/or our Zoo's website as deemed required.

Accessibility comments and/or complaints shall be addressed according to established Zoo procedures and prescribed law. Guests who wish to provide feedback about their Zoo experience are invited to write their comments on the Guest Comment form (Appendix 1) at the admissions area. Alternatively, guests may opt to provide feedback in person, by telephone, in writing, by email, through our website or other means. For more detailed information, please refer to policy GUEST-001 (Guest Feedback Protocols).

Additional comment mechanisms may be implemented by program area. For example, some education programs ask participants to complete an evaluation form at the conclusion of the session. Similarly, group event organizers receive a comment form by mail after their event and are asked to return this to our Zoo.

*Documentation
and Public Access*

Under the customer service standard, the public has the right to access our Zoo's documentation which would outline the following:

- Policies, best practices, and procedures governing the provision of services to guests with disabilities.
- Specific policies and procedures that apply to service animals and support persons.
- Procedures for a temporary disruption of service.
- Training policies on accessible customer service.
- A feedback process for guests to provide feedback.

The Manager, Guest Relations shall assemble this information as a package, to be available to the public upon request. It is the responsibility of every Zoo Manager to provide the Manager, Guest Relations with current and accurate information for their area(s) of responsibility.

The Manager, Guest Relations shall ensure our Zoo's website accurately communicates our accommodation processes where required [CLICK HERE](#)

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REFERENCES

- Appendix 1 (Guest Comment Form) *care of Guest Relations*
- GUEST-001 (Guest Experience Feedback Process)
- HR-001 (Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility)
- HR-002 (Workplace Respect and Anti-Harassment)
- HR-011 (Workplace Violence)
- OHS-001 (Occupational Health, Safety, and Wellness)
- WILDHEALTH-009 (Service Animals on Zoo Site)
- [Toronto Zoo Accessibility](#)
- [Toronto Zoo Code of Conduct](#) (from Toronto Zoo website)
- [Toronto Zoo By-law 24-88](#) (Site Rules and Regulations)
- [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act](#)
(Ontario Regulation 191/11 - AODA)
- [Human Rights Code](#)
- [Workplace Safety and Insurance Act](#)