



Policy Category	Administration
Policy Classification	Human Resources
Policy Number	3012
Approving Authority	President
Policy Owner	Manager of Mission Communications and HR
Approval Date	August 21, 2026
Review Date	August 21, 2029
Last Updated	June 29, 2026

Accessible Customer Service Plan

Purpose:

This policy establishes Southdown Institute's (Southdown) commitment and requirements for providing accessible goods and services to people with disabilities in accordance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA), specifically the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (O. Reg. 191/11) and the Customer Service Standards (O. Reg. 429/07), as well as the Ontario Human Rights Code.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all individuals receive services in a manner that respects dignity, independence, integration, and equal opportunity.

Scope:

This policy applies to all Employees, volunteers, students, contractors, and any individuals acting on behalf of Southdown who provide goods, services, or interact with the public or service users.

Definitions:

"Accessible Formats" means alternatives to standard print, including but not limited to large print, electronic formats, and verbal communication.

"Assistive Device" means any device used to assist persons with disabilities in carrying out activities or accessing services.

"Disability" has the same meaning as defined in the Ontario Human Rights Code.

"Service Animal" means an animal that is used by a person with a disability for reasons relating to their disability, as recognized under Ontario law.

"Support Person" means a person who accompanies a person with a disability to assist with communication, mobility, personal care, or access to services.

Policy:

Southdown is committed to providing accessible customer service to people with disabilities in a manner that respects their dignity and independence. Southdown will make reasonable efforts to ensure that policies, practices, and procedures are consistent with the principles of the AODA and the Ontario Human Rights Code.

Southdown will provide accommodation to persons with disabilities up to the point of undue hardship.

General Principles:

1. Southdown is committed to providing services in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.
2. Persons with disabilities will be provided equal opportunity to access services.
3. Integration will be supported unless alternate measures are necessary to meet individual needs.
4. Southdown will respond to accommodation needs in a timely manner and in accordance with applicable legislation.

Policy Directives:

1. Assistive Devices

- a. Southdown will ensure staff are trained in the use and support of Assistive Devices commonly used in service delivery.
- b. Persons with disabilities are permitted to use their own assistive devices while accessing services.

2. Communication

- a. Southdown will communicate with persons with disabilities in ways that take into account their individual communication needs.
- b. Upon request, Southdown will provide or arrange Accessible Formats and communication supports in a timely manner.

3. Service Animals

- a. Persons with disabilities accompanied by Service Animals are welcome on Southdown premises where the public is permitted.
- b. Service Animals will be permitted unless otherwise excluded by law.

4. Support Persons

- a. Persons with disabilities may be accompanied by a Support Person while accessing services.
- b. Where admission, program, or service fees apply, any fees related to Support Persons will be clearly communicated in advance.
- c. Southdown will ensure that Support Persons are not unreasonably restricted from accompanying individuals with disabilities.

5. Notice of Temporary Disruption

- a. In the event of a planned or unexpected disruption to services or facilities affecting persons with disabilities, Southdown will provide notice as soon as possible.
- b. Notices will include the reason for the disruption, expected duration, and alternative arrangements if available.
- c. Notices will be posted at reception and on the Southdown website and communicated through additional channels where appropriate.

6. Training

- a. Southdown will provide accessibility training to all Employees, volunteers, and individuals involved in policy development or service delivery.

- b. Training will be provided within a reasonable timeframe after onboarding and when changes are made to policies or procedures.
- c. Training will include:
 - Overview of the AODA and Customer Service Standards
 - Ontario Human Rights Code obligations related to disability
 - Interaction and communication with persons with various disabilities
 - Use of Assistive Devices, Service Animals, and Support Persons
 - Procedures for reporting and responding to accessibility concerns

7. Feedback Process

- a. Southdown welcomes feedback regarding accessibility and customer service.
- b. Feedback may be provided by:
 - Email: administration@southdown.on.ca
 - Telephone: 905-727-4214
- c. Feedback will be reviewed by a designated manager and addressed in a timely manner.
- d. Where appropriate, Southdown will respond within 10 business days and document any corrective actions taken.

8. Notice of Availability

- a. This policy is available to the public upon request.
- b. Accessible Formats and communication supports will be provided upon request, where practicable.

9. Modifications to this or Other Policies

- a. Southdown will ensure that any policy, practice, or procedure that does not respect the dignity, independence, integration, or equal opportunity of persons with disabilities will be reviewed and modified or removed as required.
- b. This policy will be reviewed periodically to ensure compliance with applicable legislation and best practices.

Roles and Responsibilities:

1. Employees:

Employees are responsible for providing accessible customer service in accordance with this Policy and applicable legislation. Employees must complete required accessibility training, communicate with individuals with disabilities in an appropriate manner, and cooperate in the provision of accommodation measures when required.

2. Supervisors and Managers:

Supervisors and Managers are responsible for ensuring that Employees are aware of, trained on, and comply with this Policy. They are also responsible for supporting the implementation of accessibility and accommodation measures, addressing barriers to service delivery, and escalating accessibility concerns as appropriate.

3. Senior Leadership / Designated Authority:

Senior Leadership is responsible for the overall implementation of this Policy, ensuring compliance with applicable legislation, and supporting an accessible organizational environment. Where designated, a specific individual or department may coordinate accessibility training, reporting, and policy updates.

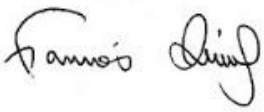
Applicable Legislation or Regulations:

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)
Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (O. Reg. 191/11)
Ontario Human Rights Code, R.S.O. 1990

Related Policy Documents:

3010 Employee Handbook
3011 AODA Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulation Customer Service Policy

Approved By:



President

August 21, 2026

Date

Accessible Customer Service Plan Acknowledgment

I acknowledge that I have received, read, and understood the Accessible Customer Service Plan, including the expectations outlined within. I agree to comply with the policy and understand it is my responsibility to seek clarification on any aspect I do not fully understand.

By signing below, I confirm that I have had the opportunity to ask questions and that I am encouraged to approach my supervisor with any concerns or if I require further information or clarification.

Employee Name: _____

Employee Signature: _____

Date: _____