

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES



Title: Customer Service Standard

Effective: October 25, 2021

Approved by Council: October 25, 2021

1. Purpose

- 1.1. To define standards for staff when providing service to their customers. Standards have been developed for each of the five communication options our customers may use to obtain information / service from the Township of Scugog.
- 1.2. To ensure a fair and consistent level of service for our customers, independent of the Department providing the service. Further, communication of these standards will assist managing customer expectations.
- 1.3. To establish accessibility standards for customer service in accordance with the the *Integrated Accessibility Standards (I.A.S.R.) Ontario regulation 191/11* created under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*.
- 1.4. To provide clear performance expectations and accountability for staff to further enhance the Township of Scugog customer service culture.

2. Standards

- 2.1. To ensure that staff are aware and adhere to the following Customer Service Standards:
 - 2.1.1. **Customer Commitment**
 - Instinctively think about customer needs and customer service
 - Understand the value of the customer
 - Be visible, attentive and accessible to customers
 - Focusing on anticipating and responding to customer's needs; listen with an open mind
 - Demonstrate personal responsibility for outstanding customer service
 - Look after the customer yourself without handing them off to someone else whenever possible

- Make customers always come first
- Demonstrate that you enjoy the opportunity to serve customers

2.1.2. **Respect and Inclusiveness**

- Demonstrate pride in self and in our organization
- Show care and respect for customers and fellow employees
- Treat customers in a fair and equitable manner
- Respect, encourage and celebrate diversity
- Be accessible

2.1.3. **Competence and Knowledge**

- Ensure that we have the knowledge, skills and tools to fully respond to customers
- Take the opportunity and seek to expand knowledge regularly by identifying development opportunities
- Demonstrate competence and knowledge in all that you do
- Be committed to achieving goals

2.1.4. **Integrity, Accountability and Ethics**

- Communicate openly and honestly with customers and staff
- Behave with integrity, honesty and respect
- Hold ourselves to the highest ethical standards in our work
- Be accountable: take responsibility for the consequences of our actions
- Support new change and ideas and react well to change
- Promote and support the Township of Scugog Strategic Plan

2.1.5. **Quality and Excellence**

- Continually strive for excellence
- Produces quality work, all the time

- Understand the Township of Scugog business and strive to improve it
- Evaluate procedures on a regular basis to look for improvement in the way we do business
- Communicate with customers well and at all levels of the organization

2.1.6. **Creativity, Innovation and Recognition**

- Fill needs creatively and seek new ways at looking at old problems
- Support advancements in quality initiatives by seeking, facilitating and promoting learning, research and education
- Value contribution and commitment to excellence
- Recognize “tries” and results of others
- Take initiative; understand what needs to be done and take appropriate action

2.1.7. **Sustainability**

- Balance the services we provide with the resources we have available
- Invest in what is effective in meeting customer needs
- Ensure that services are managed with efficiency

3. Definitions

- 3.1. **Accessibility:** The degree with which people with disabilities are able to access the functionality and possible benefit of some system or entity. Refers to the potential for a product or service to be beneficial to as many people as possible.
- 3.2. **Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA):** Provincial legislation enacted in June 2005 which provides the framework by which certain accessibility standards will be developed to ensure that businesses and organizations maintain practices and provide goods and services in a manner that is accessible to everyone including people with disabilities. The legislation is comprised of five core standards which will be developed by Standards Development Committees and enacted as Ontario Regulations under the AODA: Customer Service, Transportation, Information and Communications, Built Environment and Employment. The goal of the AODA is to build on the framework of the Ontarians with Disabilities Act (ODA) 2001, and establish qualitative standards in order to assist in developing a “fully accessible” province by 2025.

- 3.3. **Assistive Device:** Any auxiliary tool, aid, technology or other mechanism that enables a person with a disability to do everyday tasks and activities such as moving, communicating or lifting; assist in accessing goods or services and helps the person to maintain their independence. Examples include but are not limited to, communication aids, cognition aids, personal mobility aids, and medical aids.
- 3.4. **Barrier:** Anything that stops, impedes, prevents or causes difficulty for a person to obtain use or benefit from a provider's goods or services. A barrier can be physical, architectural, attitudinal, technological, relate to information and communications, etc.
- 3.5. **Customer:** Customer includes external customers, internal staff and council. Customer groups are listed in Section 4.
- 3.6. **Disability:**
- 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.
 - An injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997*.
- 3.7. **Integrated Accessibility Standards (I.A.S.R.) Ontario regulation 191/11:** establishes the accessibility standards for each of information and communications, employment, transportation, the design of public spaces and customer service.
- 3.8. **Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, (MFIPPA):** Came into effect January 1, 1991 and requires municipal institutions to protect the privacy of an individual's personal information existing in government records. The Act creates a privacy protection scheme, which the government must follow to protect an individual's right to privacy. The scheme includes rules regarding the collection, use, disclosure and

- disposal of personal information in the custody and control of a municipal institution.
- 3.9. **One Business Day:** One business day refers to the 24-hour period after an inquiry is made during operating hours, taking into consideration weekends and holidays. Individual Departments, and / or Divisions that have extended regular operating hours are also subject to providing a response within one business day as prescribed in the standards.
 - 3.10. **Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA):** Legislation enacted by the Province in November of 2001 to “improve opportunities for persons with disabilities and provide for their involvement in the identification, removal and prevention of barriers”. The ODA requires municipalities with more than 10,000 residents to develop an Accessibility Advisory Committee and to draft and maintain an annual Accessibility Plan.
 - 3.11. **Response:** Staff acknowledges receipt of the customer request. This may include responding to the request at this time or, as required, providing a suitable response time frame.
 - 3.12. **Service Animal:** 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 their disability; or if the person provides a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to their disability. Service animals may include, but are not limited to, guide dogs, therapy animals and others which may alert a person with a visual disability or one who is deafened or deaf. Service animals may also be used to alert an individual of an oncoming seizure, pull wheelchairs or otherwise assist people with mobility impairments.
 - 3.13. **Staff or Employees:** Township of Scugog full-time, part-time or seasonal employees, volunteers, students and contractors.
 - 3.14. **Support Person:** A support person could be a hired or trained personal support worker, family member or friend, selected by a person with a disability to provide assistance with their mobility, communication and/or other medical needs. A support person is necessary if a person with a disability is unable to otherwise access goods or services and/or maintains the safety of their own person and/or others on the premises.
 - 3.15. **Temporary Disruption of Service:** Any disruption to a service or facility that may create a barrier for a person with a disability in that they would be otherwise able to fully use or access such service or facility.
 - 3.16. **Third Party:** An individual or group who is not a member of the public or service user. A third party may be a volunteer or agent of the municipality, a temporary support staff, a technician, a business associate and/or any other stakeholder who is not an employee or service user.

4. General

Responsibilities

- 4.1. All staff are responsible for adherence to the standards and are expected to provide feedback and suggestions to their immediate Supervisor regarding their ability to meet and / or exceed these expectations.
 - 4.1.1. All staff are to ensure customer requests are responded to in a timely manner.
- 4.2. Supervisors are responsible for providing leadership to promote and monitor adherence to service standards by:
 - implementing and managing customer service focused processes
 - measuring and reporting against quality measures
 - identifying and coordinating training needs (i.e. accessibility, phone system use)
- 4.3. All documents shall be developed using the Township of Scugog Accessibility Standards Policy and Township of Scugog Guide to creating accessible documents.

Customer

- 4.4. External Customers:
 - 4.4.1. Residents of Scugog
 - 4.4.2. Business Owners
 - 4.4.3. Community Groups / Organizations
 - 4.4.4. Visitors to Scugog
 - 4.4.5. Volunteers
 - 4.4.6. Contractors / Vendors
 - 4.4.7. Other Levels of Government
- 4.5. Internal Customers:
 - 4.5.1. Township of Scugog Employees
 - 4.5.2. Council

Records

- 4.6. Customer Service Feedback Form
- 4.7. Accessible Customer Service Training Confirmation Form
- 4.8. Notice of Service Disruption Template

5. Procedure / Guidelines

5.1. Customer Service Standards

5.1.1. Telephone / Mobile Device Standards

Calls from customers are responded to within two (2) business days, to acknowledge receipt of the inquiry.

Desktop telephones are to be answered promptly.

Staff will assess the caller's need(s) to eliminate unnecessary transferred calls.

- If staff assess the caller should be transferred the staff will remain on the telephone until the call is answered (warm transfer).
- If the call is answered by voicemail staff will provide the caller the options of leaving a message or providing the direct telephone number should they wish to call back.

Employees will maintain a personal outgoing voicemail message and update it when the employee is scheduled to be away for more than one (1) day. All greetings at a minimum should include name, date and alternate contact.

The following sample script can be used for general outbound voicemail message:

- Hello, thank you for calling, you have reached <employee name>, <employee title>. I am unable to take your call at this time. Please leave a message and I will return your call as soon as possible. If you require immediate assistance, please call <alternate's name> at <extension>. Thank you.

The following sample script can be used when the employee will be away:

- Hello, thank you for calling, you have reached <employee name>, <employee title>. Please be advised that I will be away from the office <from XX date to XX date> and will return all calls and emails

as soon as possible. If you require immediate assistance, please call <alternate's name> at <extension> Thank you.

If the feature is available, staff will place their telephone on "Do Not Disturb" (DND), when not available so incoming calls go directly to their voicemail.

Every reasonable effort will be made to adhere to this standard including Departments / Divisions who experience high call volumes from time to time.

5.1.2. Written / Fax Correspondence Standards

Staff will respond to written / fax correspondence as soon as possible but no longer than five (5) business days, unless special circumstances require additional time.

5.1.3. E-mail Correspondence Standards

A response to e-mail correspondence is to be provided within two (2) business days. If additional information is required, an acknowledgment of the e-mail is provided including a date the response / information can be anticipated. This standard applies to both internal and external e-mail received.

Staff are expected to set-up their "Out-of-Office" notification when scheduled to be away for one (1) or more days during the employees' normal work hours. An alternative contact person will be provided as part of the automatic reply.

For security reasons, staff should always state in their automatic reply that they are out of the office even when they are away on vacation.

The following sample script can be used when the employee will be away:

"Thank you for your email. I am currently away from the office until (enter date). If you require immediate assistance, please contact _____@scugog.ca and someone will contact you as soon as possible.

Staff are to use the Corporate signature template.

5.1.4. In-person Visit Standards

Staff are available during the core business hours of their department to manage customer inquiries and requests.

Customers are to be served in the order that they appear. The only exception is for customers who have scheduled appointments with Township staff. Where front counter staff are responsible for managing both walk-in as well as customers on the telephone, walk-in customers should always be responded to directly and given priority. Telephone calls are then to be responded to as soon after as possible.

5.1.5. Website / Intranet / Publications Standard

Staff are responsible for ensuring content on the Township of Scugog Website and Intranet are up-to-date, as required.

Website Customer Feedback systems will be monitored daily and redirected to the appropriate staff within one (1) business day.

Every effort will be taken to ensure that Township of Scugog / External publications made available to the public will be reviewed and updated on a regular basis.

5.1.6. Communicating with Customers in Other Languages

The Township of Scugog utilizes a service “Language Line Solutions” to assist staff who take calls and in-person visits from customers who do not speak or have difficulty speaking and understanding English. Language Line is an over-the-phone interpretation service.

5.2. Accessibility Guidelines

5.2.1. Customer Service Policies, Practices and Procedures

This content is intended to meet the requirements of the AODA, 2005 and all related provisions relative to the Accessibility Standard for Customer Service in order to ensure that persons with disabilities are provided equal opportunities within a standardized service delivery model.

This document applies to all persons who deal with members of the public on behalf of the Township of Scugog, whether the person does so as an employee or agent of the municipality. The application of this document is also relevant to all persons who participate in the development of Township of Scugog policies, practices and procedures guiding service delivery. Township of Scugog staff are to be trained on how to provide customer service to people with disabilities in accordance with the core principles of the AODA, 2005 and Accessible Customer Service Standard.

The Township of Scugog will make reasonable efforts to ensure that its policies practices and procedures are consistent with the following core principles of the AODA, 2005 standard:

- **Dignity and Independence**
- **Integration**
- **Equal opportunity**

By considering these principles when developing policies, practices and procedures, accessibility planning becomes entrenched within the decision making process and satisfies the spirit with which the AODA, 2005 was enacted.

5.2.1.1. **Dignity and Independence**

Customer service will be provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. People with disabilities should not be forced to accept lesser service, quality or convenience as a result of their disability. Service delivery must consider how people with disabilities can effectively access and use services provided. Awareness and respect of any individual is paramount when providing customer service.

5.2.1.2. **Integration**

Service provision and associated procedures will be inclusive of all customers and clients, in order to allow people with disabilities to benefit from the same services, in the same place and in the same or similar manner as other customers.

There are occasions, however, when customer service must be provided using alternative measures. Alternative measures will only be employed when a service cannot be integrated and is the only means of providing customer service to a person with a disability.

5.2.1.3. **Equal Opportunity**

Persons with disabilities will be given an equal opportunity to use and benefit from all services provided by the Township of Scugog. People with disabilities shall not be required to put forth a greater effort in order to access, use and / or benefit from a service. As a result, additional services may be extended to people with disabilities in order to ensure that there is no need to put forth a greater effort.

5.2.2. **Accessible Customer Service Mission Statement**

The Township of Scugog is committed to being responsive to the diverse needs of all its residents by eliminating barriers and providing accessible,

quality customer service, in a manner that respects dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity.

5.2.3. **Communication**

Communication will be provided in a manner that takes into account an individual's disability. Consideration is given to the way in which individuals express, receive and process information without making assumptions about a particular disability. Individuals with the same disability may process information in different ways. The Township of Scugog will continue to review the nature, manner and methods with which it communicates to people with disabilities in an attempt to improve the accessibility of information and services.

5.2.4. **Notice of Temporary Disruptions**

Temporary disruptions to services or facilities are a reality; however, they can create additional barriers for people with disabilities. In an effort to minimize the impact of temporary disruptions, public notice will be provided for anything that may reasonably prohibit or limit use of a service or facility by a person with a disability. Such notice may relate to facility renovations or construction including maintenance to elevators, accessible pool lifts, washrooms etc.

Whether or not a disruption is predetermined or unplanned the departmental manager, program / facility coordinator or individual otherwise responsible will post a Notice of Service Disruption onsite and notify the Manager of Communications and Strategic Planning and all other relevant front line staff.

Notice will be posted in a conspicuous place on the premises in which the disruption has occurred or will occur. Entrance doors, hallways leading to the disruption area as well as an adjacent service desk are optimal locations. Where applicable, public notice will also be posted on the Township's website and communicated by various other means as deemed necessary. The content of the Notice of Service Disruption shall contain the following information:

- Reason for disruption of service
- Anticipated duration of disruption
- Any alternative facilities or services available
- Additional information such as a contact person or time with which the notice will be updated may also be included where reasonable

5.2.5. **Service Animals**

People requiring service animals are permitted to be accompanied by a service animal when in areas open to the public, except where excluded by applicable law (e.g. *Health Protection and Promotion Act, 1990* or the *Food Safety and Quality Act, 2001*). Where a service animal is excluded by law, the Township of Scugog will make reasonable efforts to ensure goods and services are provided by alternative means. A customer who is accompanied by a service animal shall be considerate of the health and safety of themselves and others.

5.2.6. Support Persons

People with disabilities are permitted to be accompanied by a support person in any area that is open to the public. If a person with a disability requires the accompaniment of a support person, the Township of Scugog will ensure that both persons are permitted to enter the premises at the same time and that the person with a disability is not prevented from having access to the support person while on the premises.

Township of Scugog staff may offer assistance or accompaniment to a customer when necessary to protect the health or safety of the person with a disability or the health or safety of others on the premises. In some cases, it may be necessary for the support person to provide consent to regulations specific to the service provided or, if necessary, agree to a confidentiality clause. All personal information will be collected in accordance with the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, 1990* (MFIPPA). If any admission fee is applicable to the support person, notice of the amount payable will be posted and provided in advance.

5.2.7. Assistive Devices

The Township of Scugog will make reasonable efforts to ensure that any person with a disability may utilize their own assistive device for the purpose of obtaining, using and / or benefiting from Township of Scugog services unless otherwise prohibited by law. A person with a disability shall ensure that their assistive device is operated with consideration for the health and safety of themselves and others.

Township of Scugog staff may offer reasonable alternative measures in order to accommodate and assist a person with a disability in obtaining, using and/or benefiting from a service. Where the Township of Scugog has such alternative measures available, staff will ensure to appropriately explain to the customer the reason for its use.

5.2.8. Notice of Availability and Alternate Format of Documents

All documents required by the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, including the Township of Scugog Accessible Customer Service

policies, procedures and practices, notices of temporary disruptions, training records and written feedback process are available upon request, subject to the MFIPPA. When providing a document to a person with a disability, the Township of Scugog will make reasonable efforts to provide the document or information contained in the document, in a format that takes into account the person's disability.

Notice of availability of all documents required by the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service will be posted on the Township of Scugog website and available through the Corporate Services Department.

All documents should bare the following disclaimer:

Alternative formats available upon request by contacting:
accessibility@scugog.ca or 905-985-7346 ext. 115

5.3. Staff Training

Customer service training is provided to every employee or agent who interacts with the public on behalf of the Township of Scugog as well as those who participate in developing policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of customer service. This training program shall include an accessibility component in order to comply with Ontario Regulation 191/11 created under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*. A form of ongoing training will be provided to individuals and / or groups as soon as practicable after that individual or group is assigned the applicable duties. Any substantive amendment to a policy, practice and procedure with respect to the provision of accessible customer service including accessibility standards may also necessitate further training.

5.3.1. Accessibility Training Component

Accessible customer service training shall be provided to every employee or agent who interacts with the public on behalf of the Township of Scugog, including those who participate in developing policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of customer service, as a component of the Customer Service Standards.

The level and format of the training will be tailored to suit the person's interactions with the public and their involvement in the development of policies, practices and procedures pertaining to the provision of customer service. Training will be made available as soon as practicable after an individual or group assumes some responsibility over the provision of customer service to persons with disabilities on behalf of the Township of Scugog.

Training will also be provided on an ongoing basis in connection with changes to the policies, practices and procedures governing the provision

of accessible customer service. Training is generally included as part of an employee's orientation to the Township of Scugog and may be conducted in a one-on-one or group training session, by way of a written procedure manual, and / or through an audio-visual component. All training, regardless of the format, shall include:

- An overview of the purpose of the AODA, 2005 and Ontario Regulation 191/11.
- Instruction on Township of Scugog policies, practices and procedures pertaining to the provision of customer service to persons with disabilities.
- Instruction on how to communicate with persons with various types of disabilities.
- Instruction on how to interact with persons with disabilities who use assistive devices or who require the assistance of a support person or service animal.
- Instruction on the use of assistive devices available on Township of Scugog premises that may help with the provision of customer service to persons with disabilities, if applicable.
- Instruction on what to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing Township of Scugog services.

The Township of Scugog will keep records of training materials provided and delivered, including the date on which the training is provided and the number of individuals who participated. The name of individuals trained will be recorded for the purpose of training administration. Information maintained with respect to training records are subject to the MFIPPA.

5.4. Feedback

Any individual will have the opportunity to submit feedback including the provision of accessible customer service. The process provides details concerning the application and review process as well as what actions will be undertaken when feedback is received. A specific point of contact with respect to feedback relating to accessibility issues will be communicated to service users through various channels. Individuals may provide feedback in person (orally), by telephone, in writing, or electronically by diskette or e-mail.

5.4.1. Accessibility Feedback

Any individual has the opportunity to submit feedback regarding the provision of accessible customer service through regular mail, email, telephone, facsimile and via the Township of Scugog website. Feedback

shall be addressed to the Director of Corporate Services/Municipal Clerk. An Accessible Customer Service Feedback Form, as contained in Appendix A, has been developed that can be used for individuals to submit accessible customer service feedback.

Upon receipt, the Director of Corporate Services/Clerk shall investigate the matter with the appropriate staff, including the Director of Community Services, and provide a written response within thirty (30) days.

6. Related Documentation

6.1. Customer Service Feedback Forms

- Bylaw
- General – Report It
- Pothole
- Road Sign
- Sidewalk
- Snow Clearing
- Street Light
- Accessible Customer Service Feedback Form

Scugog.ca/report.it



Accessible Customer Service Feedback Form

The Township of Scugog strives to meet the needs of all our citizens and is committed to providing high quality customer service. We welcome your comments to help us monitor and improve our services.

What Township of Scugog facility did you visit?
What part of the facility did you visit?
What was the purpose of your visit?
When did you visit the facility? Date: _____ Time: _____
Did we respond to your customer service needs? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
If no, please explain why:
Was customer service provided to you in an accessible manner? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat
Please provide the details of your experience:
Please provide any other comments or suggestions you may have:

Would you like to be contacted by the Township? Yes No

Note: If yes, upon receipt, the Township shall investigate the matter and provide a written response within 30 days.

Please provide your contact information:

Name:	
Mailing Address:	
Phone:	Email:

Please indicate your preferred method of contact: Phone Mail Email

Thank you for your feedback!

Please return your complete form:

Attention: Director of Corporate Services/Clerk

Mail or deliver form to:

Township of Scugog, 181 Perry Street, PO Box 780, Port Perry, ON, L9L 1B7

Fax to: 905-985-9914

Email to: accessibility@scugog.ca

Submit online to: www.scugog.ca/accessiblefeedback

For Township Use Only:	
Date Received:	Received by:
Referred to:	Date Referred:
Follow up completed by:	Date follow-up completed:
Comments:	

Note: Personal information contained in this form is being collected under the authority of the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, R.S.O. c.F.31, s. 39(2). Questions should be directed to the Clerk, Township of Scugog, 905-985-7346, extension 119.