



Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities (AODA)

Statement of Commitment

Prime Hires is committed to treating all people in a way that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence. We believe in integration and equal opportunity. We are committed to meeting the needs of people with disabilities in a timely manner, and will do so by preventing and removing barriers to accessibility and meeting accessibility requirements under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA).

Prime Hires will strive to ensure that its policies, practices and procedures are consistent with the following core principles as outlined in the AODA.

- Dignity – goods and services are provided in a manner that is respectful to persons with a disability and does not diminish the person’s importance.
- Independence – Accommodating a person’s disability means respecting their right to do for themselves and to choose the way they wish to receive goods and services.
- Integration – Wherever possible, services will be provided in a manner that enables people with disabilities to fully benefit from the same services, in the same place and in the same or similar way as other customers. This may require alternative formats and flexible approaches. It means inclusiveness and full participation. This is a fundamental human right.
- Equal Opportunity – Service is provided to persons with disabilities in a way that their opportunity to access goods and services is equal to that given to others.

Since 2013 Prime Hires has been in compliance with the Accessible Customer Service Standard under the AODA, and will continue to comply with the standard. Additional information and the complete AODA policy is located in PCRecruiter and our shared folders.

We encourage feedback from our employees and our clients regarding the AODA and invite feedback via:

Mail/in person:

Prime Hires

3100 Steeles Avenue East, Suite 1003

Markham, Ontario L3R 8T3

Telephone: 416-929-4570; **Fax** 416-929-5549

E-mail: HR@primehires.com

Training: Accessibility Standards for Customer Service

In accordance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) Standards, Prime Hires is committed to providing training to all its employees, temporary assignment employees and contractors who provide the provision of goods and services to the public.

All new employees of Prime Hires are required to read the attached training document and provide formal acknowledgement of understanding when signing the Employee Manual and policy acknowledgement.

What is the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and Accessibility Standards for Customer Service?

In 2005, Ontario passed into law the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA). Under the AODA, business and organizations that provide goods and services will have to meet accessibility standards with the goal of making Ontario fully accessible by 2025.

What is the purpose of the AODA?

The purpose of the AODA is to develop, implement, and enforce accessibility standards in key areas of daily living to address barriers for people with disabilities.

Committees that include people with disabilities, the provincial government, and representatives of various industries and sectors developed the Standards. The first standard developed under the AODA is the *Accessibility Standards for Customer Service*.

The Customer Service Standard applies to all organizations both public and private that provide goods and services either directly to the public or to other organizations in Ontario.

Why is it important?

We all benefit when everyone has access to places, people and experiences. Ontario benefits daily from the many contributions made by people with disabilities. Greater accessibility will also help prepare Ontario for the future. As our population ages, the number of people with disabilities will increase. If we can make our businesses more accessible to people with disabilities, we commit to making Ontario a place where everyone has the opportunity to succeed.

Training Requirements

This training is a legal requirement of the Customer Service Standard and focuses on serving people with disabilities. The complete list of training topics include:

- Purpose of the Act
- Requirements of the Customer Service Standard
- Service customers with disabilities
- Service animals
- Support persons
- Assistive devices
- If there are difficulties accessing your services

Policies, Practices and Procedures

The Customer Service Standard requires that policies, practices, and procedures be set up to ensure services are accessible to people with disabilities. Prime Hires ensures that its policies, practices and procedures are consistent with the following core principles as outlined in the AODA

- Dignity – goods and services are provided in a manner that is respectful to persons with a disability and does not diminish the person’s importance.
- Independence – Accommodating a person’s disability means respecting their right to do for themselves and to choose the way they wish to receive goods and services.
- Integration – Wherever possible, services will be provided in a manner that enables people with disabilities to fully benefit from the same services, in the same place and in the same or similar way as other customers. This may require alternative formats and flexible approaches. It means inclusiveness and full participation. This is a fundamental human right.
- Equal Opportunity – Service is provided to persons with disabilities in a way that their opportunity to access goods and services is equal to that given to others.

General Customer Service Tips

Some of the best tips for providing better customer service to people with disabilities are the simplest. Here are a few examples:

- Ask, “May I help you?”
 - If you’re not sure how to help a person with a disability, ask, “May I help you?” People with disabilities know if they need help and will tell you how you can provide it.
- Speak directly.
 - Speak directly to the person. If you can’t understand what the person is saying, politely ask them to repeat it.
- Understand their needs.
 - Try to understand the person’s needs. Focus on meeting those needs as you would with anyone.
- Don’t assume.
 - Remember, some disabilities are non-visible and not everybody with the same disability experiences the same things.
- Above all...be patient.

Recognizing and Responding Accordingly

DISABILITY	DESCRIPTION	TIP
Deaf/Hard of Hearing	People with hearing loss may be deaf, oral deaf, deafened, or hard of hearing.	Attract the person's attention before speaking by a gentle touch on the shoulder or a wave of your hand. Never should to try to make yourself understood.
Deaf blind	A person who is deaf blind cannot see or hear to some degree.	Speak directly to the person.
Speech/Language	Difficulty in communicating verbally such as word-finding difficulties or stuttering.	Be patient. Give the person the time they need to get their point across.
Intellectual/ Developmental	Developmental or intellectual disabilities, ranging from mild to profound, can limit a person's ability to learn, communicate, perform everyday activities, and live independently.	Use plain language and make sure the person understands what you've said. You can direct and ask: "Do you understand this?"
Learning	A variety of disorders that affect how a person processes information.	Take your time – people with learning disabilities may require more time to understand and respond.
Mental Health	Includes several disorders ranging widely in severity, including; anxiety, depression, schizophrenia, and bipolar disorder.	Reassure the person and listen carefully. Focus on meeting the person's needs. Remember, not all disabilities are visible.
Physical/Mobility	A wide range of disabilities that restrict body movement to varying degrees.	People with physical disabilities often have their own way of doing things. Ask them how you can help. Remove items that are in the way.
Vision Loss	Don't assume people with this disability are blind. While most individuals with this disability have some residual vision, they may have trouble reading signs, locating landmarks, or seeing hazards.	Identify yourself when you approach the person and speak directly to them.
Other	Other disabilities, which may be temporary or permanent, visible or non-visible, may include fibromyalgia, chronic fatigue syndrome, arthritis, kidney disease, allergies, cardiovascular problems, seizure disorders, cancer, diabetes, and HIV.	Be patient when communicating.

Support for People with Disabilities

· Service Animals

Most of us are used to seeing a guide dog accompany people with vision loss. But service animals also can be helpful to people with other disabilities. Service animals may help alert an individual who is deaf or hard of hearing to event around them. They can also warn a person of a seizure before it happens. Service animals must be allowed to go everywhere with their owners. This includes restaurants, elevators, and offices. The owner has supervision of the animal at all times. Remember, service animals are working animals. You should never touch, call, or make eye contact with the animals. Don't distract them from their important job.

· Support Persons

Some people with disabilities will be with a support person. The support person might be a personal support worker, a volunteer, a family member, or a friend. Support persons may assist with speaking, mobility, personal or medical needs of a person with a disability. If you are not sure which person is the support person, simply ask. Always speak directly to the person with the disability and not the support person. Support persons can go anywhere with the person with a disability. If you discuss confidential matters with the person with a disability, make sure they want the support person present.

· Personal Assistive Devices

People with disabilities may use devices such as wheelchairs, walkers, canes, or hearing aids. Always remember that these devices belong to the person using them and are part of their personal space. Do not lean on, reach over, or restrict the movement of a device.

· Difficulties Accessing Services

If a person with a disability has trouble accessing your services, be patient, positive, and flexible. Begin by asking how you can best help them. Service disruptions can be significant challenges for people with disabilities. Disruptions may affect general services such as when elevators are out of order, computer networks are down, or access to building is restricted. Disruptions can also affect services designed to meet the needs of people with disabilities, such as accessible washrooms, ramps and TTY services.

Considerations should be made to provide public notice when facilities, services or technologies are unavailable due to planned or unexpected disruptions.

Here are a few typical situations and possible solutions:

A person who is...	Ask if...
Deaf without an interpreter	Using a pen and paper would help
In a wheelchair or with limited mobility	You can help by bringing the books, food, or other items to them
With vision loss unable to read signs	You could read the information to them
With a physical disability unable to use doors	You can hold the door open for them

Communications and Feedback

The Customer Service Standard requires implementing an accessible feedback process to receive and respond to comments on services provided. People with disabilities should be able to provide feedback on services in person, by telephone, in writing or by email.

All feedback can be directed to:

Mail/in person:

Prime Hires

3100 Steeles Ave E #1003

Markham, ON L3R 8T3

Telephone: 416-929-0226; Fax: 416-929-5549

E-mail: HR@primehires.com

Your response, if it is to a person with a disability, should be communicated in a way that takes into account his or her disability. The response should indicate how the comments will be addressed and what action will be taken on any complaints.