



Red-D-Arc Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act: *Customer Service Policy*

Issued by: Human Resources Department

Effective Date: January 1, 2012

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1. Purpose and Background Information

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (“the AODA”) is a Provincial Act with the purpose of developing, implementing and mandating accessibility standards in order to achieve accessibility for persons with disabilities, with respect to goods, services, facilities, accommodation, employment, buildings, structures and premises. Under the AODA, Ontario Regulation 429/07, entitled “Accessibility Standards for Customer Service” (“the Regulation”), came into force on January 1, 2008. The Regulation establishes accessibility standards specific to customer service for any organization that provides goods and/or services to members of the public or other third parties.

The objective of this policy is to identify what the equal treatment provisions of the Ontario Human Rights Code, through the AODA and the Regulation, require as a minimum legal standard in program design and service delivery to persons with disabilities and addresses the following:

- The provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities;
- The use of assistive devices by persons with disabilities;
- The use of service animals by persons with disabilities;
- The use of support persons by persons with disabilities;
- Notice of temporary disruptions in services and facilities;
- Training;
- Customer feedback regarding the provision of goods and services to person with disabilities;
- Notice of availability and format of documents.

2. Scope

Red-D-Arc Ltd., (“the Company”) strives at all times to provide services in a way that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities. It applies to all members of the Company including



students, employees, volunteers, visitors, and third party contractors.

3. Policy Statement

In accordance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities, Ontario Regulation 429/07, Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, the Company is committed to providing a working environment that is accessible and inclusive to all persons who work, conduct business, and visit the Company. It is the policy of Red-D-Arc Ltd that its working and visiting environments will be free from discrimination and harassment as defined by the Ontario Human Rights Code.

4. General Principles

4.1 The Provision of Goods and Services to Persons with Disabilities

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

- i. **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.
- ii. **Independence** – Accommodating a person's with disability means respecting their right to do for themselves and to choose the way they wish to receive goods and services.
- iii. **Integration** – Persons with disabilities can access all goods and services. This may require alternative formats and flexible approaches. It means inclusive and full participation. This is a fundamental human right.
- iv. **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.

5. Components of the Policy

5.1 Communications with Persons with Disabilities

When communicating with a person with a disability, the Company will do so in a manner that takes into account the person's disability. The Company commits to provide training on customer service to all current and future employees. This training will, in particular, include how to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disabilities.

5.2 Notice of Planned or Unplanned Disruption in Services or Facilities

In the event of a service disruption affecting visitors, employees, third party contractors, it is the responsibility of the Branch Manager to take reasonable steps to report such disruptions in a timely manner through the appropriate information channels. Such channels include, but are not limited to, the Company website, intra-net site, physical postings (temporary signage) on or immediately adjacent to the affected area(s), and/or communication via email to affected individuals, departments or groups. In accordance with the AODA, notice must be evident and indicate any alternatives that exist to allow access to persons with disabilities during the disruption. The required information necessary for any communication of a temporary disruption may include:



- The time, date and location of the disruption;
- Information about the reason for the disruption;
- Anticipated duration of the disruption;
- Descriptions of alternative facilities or services, if any; and
- Contact information for the responsible service area.

5.3 Assistive Technology

Personal assistive technologies are permitted and unrestricted areas of the Company to which visitors and employees have access, except when subject to safety. The Company will train, on a continuous basis, current and future employees in the use of any assistive device technologies available to visitors and employees. It should be noted that the provision, use and safety of personal assistive devices is the sole responsibility of the person with a disability.

5.4 Service Animals

Persons with a disability who are accompanied by a service animal may access premises owned and operated by the Company, if the public has access to such premises and the animal is not otherwise excluded by law. If a service animal is excluded by law, the Company will ensure that alternate means are available within reasonable time and location to provided persons with a disability access to the Company's services.

There may be rare circumstances where, for reasons of health and safety of another person, allowing a person with a disability to enter a premises accompanied by a service animal needs to be considered. Example of such situations include but are not limited to, a) hazardous environments, where chemicals and/or equipment present hazards to other persons and /or to the service animal; and b) where a person is allergic to animals and adversely affected if they are in close proximity to a service animal. If deemed necessary, a risk assessment will be conducted by the appropriate management personnel, in consultation with Health and Safety Representatives. This assessment will identify: a) the risks inherent with the service animal being in the area of concern; and b) alternate measures available to enable the person with a disability to access this service.

If it is not readily apparent that an animal is a service animal, the Company reserves the right to request that the person with the service animal provide verification of the animal's duty. It should be noted that the use and safety of the service animal is the sole responsibility of the person with a disability.

5.5 Support Persons

The Company welcomes employees and visitors who are accompanied by a support person, when the support person has been hired or chosen by the person with a disability to accompany them in order to assist in accessing goods or services and/or for the purposes of providing support with mobility, personal assistance and/or communication. Persons with a disability who require a support person may access premises owned and/or operated by the Company with their support person, provided the



interaction between the person and their support person does not compromise health and safety.

Support persons are permitted to accompany visitors and employees with disabilities to their work environments. Individuals who are accompanied by a support person are encouraged to inform relevant persons of their participation (e.g. supervisors, managers, etc).

There may be rare circumstances where, for reasons of health and safety of another person, allowing a person with a disability to enter a premises accompanied by their support person needs to be considered. Examples of such situations include potential fire code violations. If deemed necessary, a risk assessment will be conducted by the appropriate management personnel, in consultation with Health and Safety Representatives. This assessment will identify: a) the risks inherent with the service animal being in the area of concern; and b) alternate measures available to enable the person with a disability to access this service.

Support persons shall be permitted entry to all Company facilities and meeting rooms that are open to the public, except when there are fees applied against participants by a third party. Where there are admissions fees for an event organized by the Company, persons with a disability shall be expected to pay the same fee as other attendees, but no admission fee shall be charged to their support person.

5.6 Feedback

Feedback about the delivery of services to persons with disabilities is welcomed, as it may identify areas that require change and assist in continuous service improvement. Such feedback may be by telephone, in person, in writing, or by delivering an electronic text via email. The Company will make best efforts to provide a response in the same format in which the feedback was received.

Where possible, feedback will be addressed immediately. Some feedback may, however, require more effort to address and may need to be reviewed prior to taking action. The Company will respond within 10 working days. Information about the feedback process will be available by telephone, in person, in writing, or by delivering an electronic text via email. Feedback is accepted in the accessible format/medium of an individual's choice.

Feedback may be provided directly to the department concerned and/or to:

Mail: Human Resources

667 South Service Road
Grimsby, ON
L3M 4G1

Telephone: 905-643-4212

Fax: 905-963-7941

Email: Pam Snell, HR Manager



Pam.Snell@airgas.com

Heather Kelly, Safety & Compliance Manager

Heather.Kelly@airgas.com

In Person: Human Resources

667 South Service Road
Grimsby, ON
L3M 4G1

5.7 Training

The Company shall provide training on AODA Customer Service to all current employees and, in particular, those providing services and who are involved in the development and approval of customer service policies, procedures and practices. New employees will be provided such training as part of their orientation.

Such training will include:

- A review of the purposes of the AODA and the requirements of the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service
- How to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disabilities; · How to interact with persons with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or a support person;
- How to use the available equipment or devices that may assist with the provision of services to persons with disabilities;
- What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing Company goods and/or services;

Documentation of training of employees shall be maintained by the Human Resources department and submitted to Connie Carrey, HR Director.

5.8 Availability and Format of Documents (Alternative Formats)

This policy may be made available in alternative formats upon request.

6. Definitions

Accessible means obtainable, usable, readable, audible, visible, understandable, clear, able to be entered and exited, flexible, etc. To be accessible to all people, a variety of accessibility plans are necessary. Ensuring inclusive practices will ensure that all goods and services can be accessed by a larger audience.

Alternative Formats refers to alternate ways to provide goods and services. This may be through forms of communication such as speech or writing, or methods such as in person or over the phone. Other examples are large print, electronic text (Word or html), Braille, sign language interpretation, communication devices,



media caption, etc.

Assistive Devices are equipment that people with disabilities utilize to assist in their daily lives at home, work, school, etc. Such devices could be a walker, scooter, cane, magnification or specialized learning software, communication board, etc.

Assistive Technology is equipment or software such as screen reading, audio recording and voice recognition which people with disabilities use to obtain information and communicate with others.

Customer is the term used in the AODA Legislation to describe patrons, stakeholders or anyone in receipt of goods and services.

Disability Under the AODA, the definition of “disability” is the same as the definition in the Ontario Human Rights code:

(a) 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;

(b) A condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability;

(c) A learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language;

(d) A mental disorder; or

(e) An injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997.

Employee refers to any Red-D-Arc Ltd employees, managers and contract or temporary employee.

Service Animal The Regulation defines a “service animal” as an “animal for a person with disability.” In this policy, a service animal is any animal used by a person with a disability for reasons relating to the disability or where the person provides a letter from a physician confirming that they require the animal for reasons relating to their disability; or where the person provides 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.

Support Person is someone who accompanies a person with a disability in order to assist them. Their assistance may include, but is not limited to, communication, mobility, personal care, medical needs or with access to goods or services.

Business Premises are any buildings and/or lands owned, leased, operated, controlled or supervised by the organization.

Volunteer is a person who provides services to Red-D-Arc Ltd for which they are not being paid. Where a volunteer is also an employee, she/he will be treated as an “employee” under this policy.



Working Days are Mondays to Fridays, excluding Saturdays, Sundays, statutory holidays, and any shutdowns observed by the organization.

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