

Accessible Customer Service Policy

Purpose

We are committed to complying with the Accessibility Standard for Customer Service under The Accessibility for Manitobans Act. Our policies, practices and measures reflect the principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity for people with disabilities.

If a barrier to accessing our services cannot be removed, we seek to provide alternate ways to access these services.

The following policy statements, organizational practices and measures are intended to meet the requirements of the Accessibility Standard for Customer Service.

This policy applies to services offered by Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, 106 Sawchuk Dr., St. Andrews, MB.

This policy applies to employees and volunteers who interact with the public or other third parties that act on our behalf.

This policy shall also apply to all persons who participate in the development of our policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of services to members of the public.

Responsibility

Church Council is responsible for the administration of this policy.

Policy:

In accordance with the *Accessibility Standard for Customer Service, Manitoba Regulation 171/2015*, this policy addresses the following:

- Communication
- The Use of Assistive Devices
- The Use of Support Persons
- The Use of Service Animals
- Maintain Barrier-Free Access
- Notice of Temporary Service Disruptions
- Customer Feedback
- Training

Communication

Policy Statement:

We meet the communication needs of our members and visitors.

Practices and Measures:

- To meet communication needs, when appropriate we offer to communicate in different ways, such as writing things down, reading things out loud, and taking extra time to explain things.
- We also:
 - keep paper and pens available to write things down
 - offer a chair when longer conversations are needed
 - offer a quieter space
 - sit down to engage with someone using a wheelchair.
- All of our publications include the statement: "This information is available in alternate formats on request." We also specify how a person can request an alternate format.
- We use signs and documents that are easy to read, including using larger fonts, and ensuring messages are not printed on images.
- We write signs and documents in plain language.
- We strive to use inclusive language.

Assistive Devices

Policy Statement:

We accommodate the use of assistive devices when members and visitors are accessing our services or facilities.

Practices and Measures:

- We do not touch or move members' and visitors' assistive devices without permission.
- We are trained in how to use the assistive devices that we provide, including:
 - elevators
 - headsets for audio during worship services
 - doorbells.

In cases where the assistive device presents significant and unavoidable health or safety concerns, we attempt to use other measures to ensure the person with disabilities can access our services or facilities.

Support Persons

Policy Statement:

We welcome support persons and we let the public know in advance if support persons have to pay admission or service fees.

Practices and Measures:

- We address the member or visitor, not the support person, unless requested by the member or visitor to do otherwise.
- We make space for support persons on-site and ensure members or visitors have access to their support persons at all times.
- In many (most) cases we waive admission or service fees for support persons. If payment is required by a support person for admission to any event we host, we will ensure that notice is given in advance by posting notice of admission fees for support persons where our fees are posted.

Service Animals

Policy Statement:

We allow service animals on our premises.

Practices and Measures:

- We:
 - treat a service animal as a working animal
 - do not distract a service animal from its job by petting, feeding or playing with it, unless given permission by the person with the service animal to do so
 - know how to identify a service animal by its harness or vest and by the assistance the animal is providing.
- If we have concerns, we may ask if the animal has been trained to help a person with a disability-related need.
- We do not inquire about the disability.
- We expect the person who is handling the service animal to maintain control of the animal physically or through voice, signal or other means.
- If the service animal is showing signs of not being controlled (i.e., by barking, whining or wandering), we may provide a warning to the handler to control the animal.
- If the service animal continues to misbehave, we may ask the handler to leave.
- If another law prohibits service animals (e.g. food preparation areas), we explain why the animal cannot enter the space and discuss with the person another way of providing services.
- If a health and safety concern presents itself, for example in the form of a severe allergy to the animal, we will make all reasonable efforts to meet the needs of all individuals. Reasonable assessment of the situation will be required and a decision would be applied in favour of the party who would experience the greater discrimination.

Maintain Barrier-Free Access

Policy Statement:

To ensure barrier-free access to our services or facilities, we maintain our accessibility features so they can be used as intended.

Practices and Measures:

- We organize our space so that there is room for people with wheelchairs, electric scooters and walkers.
- Our seating accommodates people of varying sizes and abilities.
- We keep hallways, aisles, entrance and reception areas, waiting rooms and meeting rooms clear of clutter.
- We keep our entrance area clear of ice and snow.
- We place any standing signs out of the way to avoid tripping hazards.
- We make visits as needed by our members and visitors when our premises and structures are not accessible.
- Alternatives to our accessibility features include:
 - pastoral care and visitation as requested
 - providing service at alternate locations, such as personal care homes.
- Our accessibility features affected by this policy include hallways, aisles, entrance and reception areas, meeting rooms, accessible washrooms, elevators, and doorbells.

Notice of Disruptions in Service

Policy Statement:

We let the public know when and why an accessibility feature is temporarily unavailable, how long it will be unavailable, and other ways to access our services.

Practices and Measures:

- If one of our accessibility features becomes temporarily unavailable, we prepare and post a notice and/or announcement about the disruption, the reason for the disruption, how long it will last, and whether there are other ways we can provide access to our services (e.g., by using an alternate entrance).
- If requested, we work with members and visitors to find other ways to provide services.
- We let the public know about disruptions in the following ways:
 - posted on website, on social media, and/or in newsletters
 - posted at our building entrance and in high traffic areas
 - included in bulletins
 - through employees.

Feedback Process

Policy Statements:

We welcome and respond promptly to feedback we receive on the accessibility of our services.

We document the actions we take to respond to the feedback we receive, and that information is available on request in a format that meets the individual's communication needs.

Practices and Measures:

- We invite feedback in the following ways:
 - Visit our reception or service desk, or contact us by phone, email, website or feedback form.
- All feedback is directed to the Office Administrator, or Church Council, who determines what action, if any, should occur.
- If the feedback requires us to follow-up, the member or visitor is notified that the request is being reviewed and when they can expect a response.
- We let the member or visitor know what action we will take to address their feedback, if any.
- We respond to feedback in a way that meets the communication needs of the individual.

Training

Policy Statements:

We provide the required training on accessible customer service to employees, volunteers and management. We are trained on:

- How to interact and communicate with people who face barriers to accessing services, use assistive devices, are assisted by a support person and/or are assisted by a service animal.
- How to use any equipment or assistive devices that are available on-site.
- An overview of The Accessibility for Manitobans Act, The Human Rights Code (Manitoba), and the Customer Service Standard.
- Our organizational policies, practices and measures, including updates or changes.

Practices and Measures:

- We train new employees and applicable volunteers within 90 days of hiring/being assigned the applicable duties.
- We provide refresher training regularly, including updates to policies, practices and measures. Training is offered every year.
- The Office Administrator records who has taken training and when.
- Feedback on the accessibility of our services is addressed in regular staff or council meetings.

Administration

If you have any questions or concerns about this policy or its related procedures, please contact us by phone at (204) 482-5592 or by email at goodshep@mymts.net. Information on this policy can be found on our website at <http://goodshepherdseelkirk.com>

This policy and its related procedures will be reviewed as required in the event of legislative changes.

This information is available in alternate formats on request. Please contact us by email at goodshep@mymts.net or by phone at (204)482-5592.

Revision History:

Original: Accessible Customer Service Policy, October 28, 2018

Acknowledgement and Agreement

I, _____, acknowledge that I have read and understand this Accessible Customer Service Policy. Further, I agree to adhere to the Policy and will ensure that any employees or volunteers working under my direction are also aware of these guiding principles. I understand that if I violate this Policy, I may face corrective action.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Notice of Service Disruption

Dear: _____

The (insert services that are unavailable) will be out of service for (insert reason for disruption) from (insert appropriate date) until (if known, insert appropriate date).

The following alternative services and options are available:

(List options)

We regret any inconvenience this may cause. If you have questions or concerns, please contact us by phone at (204)482- 5592 or by email at goodshep@mymts.net

Thank you for your understanding and patience.

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church

Customer Service Feedback Form

Thank you for visiting Good Shepherd Lutheran Church. We value your opinion and will strive to meet everyone's needs.

Please tell us the date of your visit: _____

1. Were you satisfied with the customer service we provided you?

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat
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Comments

2. Was our customer service provided to you in an accessible manner?

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat
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Comments

3. Did you experience any problems accessing our services?

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat
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Comments

Contact Information (optional)

Name: _____ Phone Number: _____
Email: _____

Thank-you,
Donna Perfanick
Office Administrator

Compliance Checklist

Requirement	Person Responsible	Date Completed
Develop a policy that complies with the <i>Accessibility Standard for Customer Service</i> , Manitoba Regulation 171/2015: Communication needs The use of assistive devices The use of support persons The use of service animals Maintain barrier free access Notice of service disruptions Customer feedback Training		
Develop practices and procedures that follow policy guidelines (see above) and that are consistent with the core principles of independence, dignity, integration and equal opportunity.		
Develop communication plans and strategies that consider members and visitors and take into account individual disabilities.		
Allow members and visitors to use their own personal assistive devices when accessing services.		
Develop other measures to enable members and visitors to access services in the event that the assistive device presents a safety concern or where accessibility might be an issue.		
Allow members and visitors with disabilities to be accompanied by a guide dog, service dog and/or service animal unless prohibited by law.		
If an animal is prohibited by law, consider reasonable measures that could be taken to ensure the member or visitor has access to services.		
Allow members or visitors who are accompanied by a support person to bring that person with them while accessing services.		
If admission fees are charged, provide notice ahead of time on what a support person will be charged.		
Provide notice of service disruptions that include the reason, anticipated duration, and alternative options to access services.		
Develop a process for accepting feedback, including how it will be recorded, responded to and handled.		
Make information about the feedback process readily available to members and visitors.		

Compliance Checklist

Requirement	Person Responsible	Date Completed
<p>Train employees and volunteers who interact with the public, or third parties that act on our behalf on the provisions required by the <i>Accessibility Standard for Customer Service</i>, Manitoba Regulation 171/2015:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instructions on how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities. Instructions on how to interact with people with disabilities who: use assistive devices; require the assistance of a guide dog, service animal or service dog; or require the use of a support person. Instructions on how to use equipment or devices that are available at our premises or that may help members or visitors with disabilities. Instructions on what to do if a member or visitor with a disability is having difficulty accessing your services. Developed policies, procedures and practices surrounding the legislation. 		
<p>Train those who are involved in the development and approval of customer service policies, practices and procedures on the required provisions (see above).</p>		
<p>When requested, provide documents in a format that takes into consideration the member's or visitor's disability.</p>		
<p>Complete the online report by November, 2018.</p>		