

Accessible Employment Policy

Purpose

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

We aim to remove barriers in our workplace. If a barrier cannot be removed, we seek to provide reasonable accommodations to affected employees.

The following policy statements, organizational practices and measures are intended to meet the requirements of Manitoba's Accessibility Standard for Employment.

This policy applies to Church Council, Pastors, and the Office Administrator.

Responsibility

Church Council is responsible for the administration of this policy.

Policy

Pre-employment Accessibility Requirements

1: Remove barriers to recruitment and selection.

Policy Statement:

During recruitment, we inform potential applicants that reasonable accommodations are available during the selection process, and we respond to requests for accommodations.

Practices and Measures:

- We include a statement on all job postings that reasonable accommodations are available to applicants with disabilities, and we seek their advice on how best to accommodate their needs.
- When making interview arrangements in writing or verbally, we inform applicants that reasonable accommodations are available during the assessment and selection processes.
- When an applicant has made a request for an accommodation during the selection process, we:
 - Consult with the applicant to determine the appropriate accommodation.
 - Put the appropriate accommodation in place during the assessment or selection process.

2: Mention workplace accommodations when offering employment.

Policy Statement:

When hiring, we inform selected applicants of our measures, policies and practices for accommodating employees with disabilities.

Practices and Measures:

- We include information about workplace accommodations in our letter of offer to new employees.
- We include information about workplace accommodations in our new employee orientation materials.

Employment Accessibility Requirements

3: Inform employees about accommodation policies and practices.

Policy Statement:

We keep employees informed about our accommodation measures, policies and practices for employees with disabilities. We also provide updates to employees when this information changes.

Practices and Measures:

- We provide information to employees about our policies for employees with disabilities and any updates in multiple ways, such as:
 - through staff emails
 - through discussions with Church Council (in person, by phone or through email)
 - during staff meetings

4: Communicate in a way that meets employees' needs.

Policy Statements:

We aim to meet the communication needs of our employees by providing workplace information and communications in ways that are easy to access for everyone.

If requested by an employee with a temporary or permanent disability, we:

- Consult with the employee to identify the accessible formats, or communication supports needed when providing information to the employee.
- Ensure that identified accessible formats or communication supports are continually used when providing information to the employee.

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Practices and Measures:

- To meet an employee's communication needs, we ask the employee what accessible format or communication support is most appropriate for them.
- We provide information to employees in multiple ways to meet everyone's needs, including providing printed information, circulating information electronically by email in accessible formats.

5: Provide individualized accommodation plans.

Policy Statement:

Our policy is to provide reasonable accommodations by developing and documenting individualized accommodation plans for employees with disabilities who request them.

Practices and Measures:

The individualized accommodation plan includes:

- accessible formats and communication supports, if requested
- workplace emergency response information, if requested
- details of how and when any other accommodations will be provided
- when the plan will be reviewed

Our employees will participate and cooperate in the accommodation process by:

- providing related information and taking part in assessments, if requested by the employer
- complying with the individualized accommodation plan
- offering ongoing feedback related to modifications, including whether the accommodation is no longer required

We will review the accommodation plan on the three-month anniversary date and in combination with regular annual employee reviews.

We will also review an employee's individualized accommodation plan, and update if required, when:

- the employee's workspace is modified or relocated
- the employee's responsibilities have changed
- other workplace changes have occurred that affect the accommodation
- the employee has made a request to review and update the accommodation plan

6. Manage performance.

Policy Statements:

We ensure our performance management process takes into account:

- that an employee may be temporarily or permanently disabled by one or more barriers in the workplace

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- an employee's individualized accommodation plan
- that the accommodations provided for an employee may not fully address a workplace barrier

Practices and Measures:

- We meet with new staff six months into employment and at least once annually to discuss progress, new goals and any challenges. Existing or newly required workplace accommodations are discussed, including individualized accommodation plans and any assistance required during emergencies.
- We speak with employees when they do not follow company policy or meet expectations, and offer a spoken and written warning of consequences, including disciplinary action.
- We discuss existing workplace accommodations and propose modifications or new workplace accommodations if we believe this could help improve the performance of an employee with a disability.
- Prior to imposing disciplinary measures, we consider whether there is a connection between concerns about job performance and workplace barriers.

7. Put return to work processes in place.

Policy Statements:

Our return to work policy reflects our commitment to providing a safe and healthy working environment for employees who are, or have been, absent from work due to a disability or health condition, and require reasonable accommodations to return to work.

We include a description of the process we will follow in determining the accommodations necessary to facilitate the return to work of employees who have been absent due to a disability or health condition.

Our return to work policy ensures reasonable accommodations for employees who are at work or absent due to a disability or health condition. We will make efforts to modify employees' duties and work schedule based on their functional abilities. Our aim is to increase duties safely to help employees reach their full potential.

Practices and Measures:

- We keep in touch with absent employees throughout the employees' recovery to help them maintain a connection with their workplace and to show they are valued.
- We offer meaningful and productive modified or alternate duties that are safe and within the employee's functional abilities.
- We are flexible and tailor the return to work plan to the employee's needs.
- We ensure employees who have been absent due to a disability are supported, and we participate in the return to work process.

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- We educate staff on why returning to work is good for business and outline the expectations for supporting an employee in a modified role.
- We recognize that pandemics, like COVID-19, pose serious health threats to people with pre-existing conditions, and we accommodate affected employees.

8. Provide workplace emergency response information.

Policy Statements:

We notify all employees of steps to be taken during emergencies, to ensure the safety of employees who are temporarily or permanently disabled. We ensure workplace emergency response information is specific to each employee's needs and the physical nature of the employee's workspace.

Once we learn an employee requires assistance during a workplace emergency, we offer the employee individual workplace emergency response information as soon as possible.

We review the workplace emergency response information provided to an employee each time:

- the employee is moved to a different workspace
- the employee's workspace is modified
- we review or general emergency response plans and make changes that would affect the employee's response to an emergency in the workplace

If an employee who receives workplace emergency response information requires the assistance of another person during an emergency, we obtain consent from the employee on who will assist, and we inform that person how to assist.

Practices and Measures:

- We annually send a memo to all employees to inquire whether they need assistance during an emergency and to remind them of the Church's emergency plan.
- We regularly discuss general accessibility and identify barriers.
- Any staff member who would be unable to ascend the basement stairs to exit the building during an evacuation would be given a key to the elevator which they would be required to keep on their person at all times whenever they are in the basement.
- The Office Administrator, who acts as fire marshal, ensures communication with these employees during the emergency by cellphone.
- The Office Administrator notifies the fire department about the number and location of employees who remain in the building.
- In the event there is only one staff member on-site, this employee notifies the fire department.
- In the event there is only one staff member on-site and they are in need of assistance to exit the building, they would notify the fire department of their circumstance.

9. Maintain privacy.

Policy Statements:

We protect the privacy and confidentiality of employee's personal information and personal health information. We only collect, use, and disclose information as required for the purpose of the Accessibility Standard for Employment, unless otherwise agreed to by the employee.

We also follow the requirements of other privacy legislation, including The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (Manitoba) and The Personal Health Information Act (Manitoba).

Practices and Measures:

- We follow proper protocol when storing confidential employee information.
- We protect our employees' personal information and personal health information at all times by taking the following steps – files are kept in locked cabinet with access limited to human resources staff only.

10. Provide training

Policy Statements:

We provide training on how to accommodate employees with a disability to any staff with the following responsibilities:

- recruiting, selecting or training employees
- supervising, managing or coordinating the work of employees
- promoting, redeploying or terminating employees
- developing and implementing employment policies and practices

Training content includes:

- how to make employment opportunities accessible to people with disabilities
- how to interact and communicate with applicants or employees who face barriers, use assistive devices, or are assisted by a support person or service animal
- an overview of the Accessibility for Manitobans Act, The Human Rights Code (Manitoba), and the Accessible Employment Standard
- our organization's accessible employment policies, practices and measures, including updates or changes

Practices and Measures:

- We train new employees and management as soon as reasonably possible, and no later than three months after hiring.
- We provide refresher training regularly, including informing staff about updates to policies, practices and measures. Training is offered every year, or as needed, following updates.
- The Office Administrator maintains records of who has taken training and when.

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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://goodshepherdsekirk.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.

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Revision History:

Original: Accessible Employment Policy, May 11, 2022