

## **1. POLICY:**

APEX is committed to providing our services in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. We are also committed to giving people with disabilities the same opportunity to access our services and allowing them to benefit from the same services, in the same place and in a similar way as other customers.

## **2. DEFINITIONS**

- a) "Assistive Devices" are auxiliary aids such as communication aids, cognition aids, personal mobility aids and medical aids (e.g., canes, crutches, wheelchairs or hearing aids).
- b) "Disability", as per the Ontario Human Rights Code, means:
  - i. 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 coordination, 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;
  - ii. A condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability;
  - iii. A learning disability or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language;
  - iv. A mental disorder; or
  - v. An injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act.
- c) "Employees" means every person who deals with members of the public or other third parties on behalf of APEX, whether the person does so as an employee, agent, volunteer or otherwise.
- d) "Persons with Disabilities" are individuals who have a disability as defined under the Ontario Human Rights Code (and above).
- e) "Service Animals" are animals individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of a person with a disability.
- f) "Support Persons" are any persons, whether a paid professional, volunteer, family member, or friend, who accompany a person with a disability in order to help with communications, personal care or medical needs, or with access to goods or services.

### **3. PROCEDURES: PROVIDING SERVICES TO PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES:**

APEX is committed to excellence in serving all customers including people with disabilities and we will carry out our functions and responsibilities in the following areas:

#### **a) Communication**

We will communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability.

We will train staff who communicate with customers on how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities.

#### **b) Telephone Services**

We are committed to providing fully accessible telephone services to our clients' customers. We will train employees to communicate with customers over the telephone in clear and plain language and to speak clearly and slowly.

We will offer to communicate with customers by email or relay services if telephone communication is not suitable to their communication needs or is not available.

#### **c) Assistive Devices**

We are committed to serving people with disabilities who use assistive devices to obtain, use or benefit from our goods and services. We will ensure that our employees are trained and familiar with various assistive devices that may be used by customers with disabilities while accessing our goods or services.

#### **a) Billing**

We are committed to providing accessible invoices to all of our customers. For this reason, invoices will be provided in the following formats upon request: large print or email.

We will answer any questions customers may have about the content of the invoice in person, by telephone or email.

## **How Bell Relay service works for voice users**

**You can easily initiate home or mobile phone calls to TTY users using the Bell Relay service.** A Bell Relay operator will type your spoken words to TTY users and read back their replies.

### **Placing a Bell Relay service call for voice users**

1. Dial 1 800 855-0511. The Bell Relay operator will answer saying Bell Canada Relay
2. service, (operator's name) speaking, followed by GA (for go ahead).
3. Provide the Bell Relay operator the area code and number you would like to call.
4. Although you are not required to give the agent your name or the name of the person
5. you are trying to reach, doing so helps the agent connect to the person you are calling.
6. The Bell Relay operator will dial the number and keep you informed, as you will not be
7. able to hear the line ring. After a brief pause, the operator may tell you: "I'm just
8. explaining the Bell Canada Relay service, please hold."
9. The Bell Relay operator will let you know as soon as someone answers the call, i.e.
10. "John is on the line, GA" (if you provided a name), and read what is typed, followed by
11. "go ahead," which is your cue to begin speaking. Always finish by saying "go ahead" so
12. TTY users know it is their turn to respond.

### **General tips for voice users:**

1. Speak directly to the TTY user, not to the Bell Relay operator.
2. Talk a bit more slowly than usual as the Bell Relay operator is typing in word for word what you are saying.
3. Spell names.
4. Always say "go ahead" when you are finished.
5. Always wait for the Bell Relay operator to say "go ahead" before speaking.
6. Let the Bell Relay operator know at the beginning of the call if you are familiar with the service.

## **4. USE OF SERVICE ANIMALS AND SUPPORT PERSONS**

We are committed to welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal on the parts of our premises that are open to the public. We will also ensure that all employees who have direct interactions with our clients are properly trained in how to interact with people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal. We are also committed to welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person.

## **5. NOTICE OF TEMPORARY DISRUPTION**

APEX will provide our clients with notice in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in the facilities or services usually used by people with disabilities. This notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available.

The notice will be provided in advance, where possible, to the client by email or by telephone and will be posted at all public entrances and reception areas on our premises.

## **6. TRAINING FOR EMPLOYEES**

APEX will provide training to all employees who deal with our clients and/or their customers on their behalf.

This training will be provided within [30 days] of commencing employment.

Training will include the following:

- An overview of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and the requirements of the customer service standard
- How to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities
- How to interact with people with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or a support person
- What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing APEX goods and services
- APEX policies, practices and procedures relating to the customer service standard

Employees will also be trained on an ongoing basis when changes are made to these policies, practices and procedures.

APEX will maintain accurate records of training delivered to our employees and make these records available for inspection as may be required. All training will be conducted by an e-Learning video <http://accessforward.ca/front/customerService/>

## **7. FEEDBACK PROCESS**

Feedback regarding the way APEX provides goods and services to people with disabilities can be made by email to [hr@apexsound.com](mailto:hr@apexsound.com) or verbally.

All feedback will be directed to Human Resources. Complaints will be addressed according to APEX's established complaint management procedures.

## **8 ACCESSIBLE INFORMATION**

Public Information regarding policies, products and the company are available to any customer or employee upon request and will be provided in a timely manner. The information will be provided in a written form or an email, or in a format accessible by the personal with a disability. Large print will be available. This information includes and is not limited to:

1. Emergency and Public Safety information
2. Emergency Plans and Procedures – Health and Safety
3. Maps warning signs and evacuation routes (pointing out emergency exits
4. Information about alarms (i.e. fire) or other emergency alerts.
5. Employee job descriptions and workplace policies and procedures
6. Company newsletters and bulletins

#### **9. ACCESSIBLE EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES**

- a)** We will ensure when hiring that employees and the public will be aware that we will accommodate disabilities during the hiring process. We will include this information in job postings.
- b)** We will ensure that all employees have access to workplace information in an accessible format (job descriptions, manuals, policies and procedures, company bulletins and newsletters, etc.
- c)** When providing employee's feedback, we will ensure that any disabilities are accommodated in the feedback process and we will provide them with accommodation to acquire new skills or abilities (accessible training resources)
- d)** We will promote our policy to support individuals with disabilities to all employees within 30 days of hire.

#### **10. MODIFICATIONS TO THIS OR OTHER POLICIES**

We are committed to developing customer service policies that respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. No changes will be made to this policy before considering the impact on people with disabilities. Any policy to APEX that does not respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities will be modified or removed.

#### **11. QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS POLICY**

A copy of this and all other policies are available upon request by contacting Human Resources. In addition, a copy of this policy is available on the company's website at <https://apexsoundandlight.ca/> under <https://apexsoundandlight.ca/about/policies>.

The Policy document will be provided in a format that takes into account the person's disability.