



## AODA POLICY & CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARD

### Policy Statement

Provincial Store Fixtures Ltd. (the “Company”) is committed to eliminating barriers and improving accessibility for persons with disabilities in a manner that respects dignity, independence, integration and also ensuring equal opportunity.

The Company recognizes the diverse needs of all our clients and the public that may be affected by the goods and services that we provide and will respond by striving to provide services and facilities that are accessible to all.

### Scope

This policy will apply to the management and all employees of the Provincial Store Fixtures Limited Company as well as volunteers, contractors, third parties or any other individuals who interact with the public who represent or act on behalf of the Company in any manner.

### Definitions

**Accessible Formats:** May include but not limited to large print, recorded audio and electronic formats, Braille, and other formats usable by persons with disabilities.

**Assistive Devices:** Devices and technologies that increase mobility, hearing, vision and communication capacities of persons with disabilities.

**Communications:** The interaction between two or more persons or entities, or any combination of them, where information is provided, sent or received.

**Communication Supports:** May include but not limited to captioning, alternative and augmentative communication supports, plain language, sign language and other supports that facilitate effective communications.

**Conversion ready:** An electronic or digital format that facilitates conversion into an accessible format.

**Disability:** (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.

**Guide Dog:** A “guide dog” is a dog trained as a guide for a blind person, and which has the qualifications prescribed under the Blind Persons’ Rights Act

**Service animals** are animals that have been trained to perform tasks that assist disabled people. Service animals may also be referred to as assistance animals, assist animals, or helper animals.

**Support Person:** In relation to a person with a disability, another person who accompanies him or her in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs, or with access to goods, services or facilities.

### **Policy Details**

Provincial Store Fixtures LTD. is committed to excellence in serving all customers including people with disabilities. Reasonable efforts will be made to ensure that:

- Persons with disabilities are provided equal opportunity to obtain, use and benefit from the Company goods and services.
- Goods and services are provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.
- Communications with a person with a disability are conducted in a manner that takes the person’s disability into account.
- Persons with disabilities may use assistive devices, service animals and support persons as is necessary to access the company goods and services unless superseded by other legislation.
- Persons with disabilities are accommodated during the recruitment and employment process, up to the point of undue hardship and without sacrificing safety.

Although not a requirement, Visitors and new entrants into the facility should be informed to disclose if they are arriving with any assistive devices, service animals, or require any accommodation on the premises in advance to arrival, as an individual accommodation plan may need to be prepared.

### **Assistive Devices**

PSF will ensure that staff are trained and familiar with various assistive devices that may be used by customers with disabilities while accessing our facility. Some examples of Assistive devices include hearing aids, speech amplification devices, wheelchairs, walkers, oxygen tanks, assistive sticks, screen readers, crutches and orthidic devices. Employers in Ontario are not required to provide the assistive devices under the Customer Service standard but are responsible for ensuring

all employees are properly trained in case of providing assistance. Assistive devices are always permitted in the facility. In addition, service animals and support persons are welcomed. Feedback should be welcomed and encouraged through the process.

The Human Resources Manager should be contacted for support through any matter requiring accommodation to persons with disabilities. Matters will be handled with as much confidentiality as reasonably possible.

### **Communication**

The interaction between two or more persons or entities, or any combination of them, where information is provided, sent or received. Communication occurs in a variety of ways – in person, by phone, in writing and online. PSF will communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability.

### **Employment**

PSF will notify its employees and the public about the availability of accommodation for applicants with disabilities in the recruitment process.

PSF will notify job applicants when they are individually selected to participate in an assessment or selection process that accommodations are available upon request in relation to the materials or processes to be used, .PSF will consult with the applicant to provide or arrange for the provision of a suitable accommodation that takes into account the applicant's accessibility needs due to disability.

PSF will inform all new and existing employees of its policies used to support its employees with disabilities including those on the provision of job (workplace) accommodations that take into account an employee's accessibility needs due to disability.

The Company promotes an inclusive workplace and is committed to eliminating barriers and improving accessibility for persons with disabilities in a manner that respects dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity.

#### **New Employees – Duty to Disclose before Start Date**

If any staff have any disabilities, illnesses, injuries or other limitations **which may impact your job duties, responsibilities or job capabilities** that may require accommodation during your employment, please inform The Human Resources Manager as soon as possible, no later than two business days before your start date, to ensure an individual accommodation plan is in place for your start date. You are **NOT** required to disclose any details of the diagnosis, but only

the limitations relating to your job duties and responsibilities, including attendance. All information will be kept as confidential as possible.

### Staff Duty to Disclose during Employment

Please be advised that if you develop any disabilities, illnesses or injuries that may impact your job duties, responsibilities or job capabilities during the course of your employment, you have the duty to disclose your limitations to your Supervisor and/or Human Resources, as an individual accommodation plan may be required. You are **NOT** required to disclose any details of the diagnosis, but only the limitations relating to your job duties and responsibilities, including attendance. All information will be kept as confidential as possible.

Contact information for Human Resources Manager: Katharina Walt, [hr@psfltd.com](mailto:hr@psfltd.com)

905-564-6700 ext 297

### **Upon Disclosure of Limitations**

A Functional Abilities Form may be required to submit, completed by a medical practitioner. For physical disabilities, a standard "FAF" form is required to help the Employer create an individual accommodation plan. For mental disabilities, or more complex limitations that do not relate to physical limitations, a customized FAF Form will be prepared by Human Resources for a medical practitioner to complete.

Human Resources may also include the assistance of an AODA specialist from a third party, Workplace Safety and Prevention Services (WSPS) in the creation and progression of the individual accommodation plan.

### **Return to Work**

In the event of any injury that an employee experiences (work-related or not) to ensure safe return to work, medical documentation from a medical practitioner may be required. Human Resources will advise if a standard doctor's note will be sufficient, authorizing a return to work date to regular pre-injury duties, or if a modified duties plan should be created in conjunction with Human Resources and the employee's Supervisor. The employee may be restricted from attending work until medical documentation is received, and an individual accommodation / modified duties plan is prepared.

Any short-term and long term disabilities will be accommodated, up until undue hardship, and without sacrificing anyone's safety

If the injury is work related, The Employer and Employee will cooperate with a Return to Work Specialist from WSIB to help prepare the RTW Plan.

See "Return to Work Policy" for more information on PSF's RTW

### **Service Animals**

Service Animals are trained to carry out certain tasks that help people with disabilities. PSF welcome people with disabilities and their service animals. Service animals are allowed on the parts of our premises that are open to the public.

PSF will welcome all service animals into our workplace used by persons for reasons relating to their disability, if the person provides a letter from a regulated health professional, confirming the need for the service animal or If service animal is wearing a green identifier jacket.

There are three types of Assistive animals that have been categorized by the International Assistance Animal Community.

Guide Animals: Helpful in helping the persons with Blindness.

Hearing Animals: Helping in signaling the Hearing Impaired.

Service Animals: Used to do work for persons with disabilities other than Blindness and Deaf.

### **Support persons**

A person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person will be allowed to have that person accompany them on our premises. PSF may require a person with a disability to be accompanied by the support person on premises but only if required to protect the health and safety of a person with a disability or to protect the others on the premises. PSF will consult the supporting persons to understand the needs of a disable person.

Fees will not be charged for support persons or for admission to Provincial Store Fixtures LTD. premises. We will notify customers of this through a notice posted on our premises.

### **Notice of Temporary disruption**

In the event of a planned or unexpected disruption to services or facilities for customers with disabilities: Provincial Store Fixtures LTD. will notify customers promptly. This clearly posted notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated length of time, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available.

### **Training for staff**

Provincial Store Fixtures LTD. will provide training to employees, volunteers and others who deal with the public or other third parties on their behalf. Individuals in the following positions will be trained: All Provincial Store Fixtures LTD. employees.

This training will be provided to staff within two weeks of hire. Training will include:

- An overview of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 including all PSF AODA Policies and Procedures
- Training in respect to Customer Service Standard.
- Training in respect to Information and Communication Standard.
- Review of Provincial Store Fixtures LTD. AODA Policies and Program, and multi-year plan.
- Employees will be trained after being hired/retained in the event that changes are made to the policy and the records will be maintained for the same.

### ***Training***

This section covers:

- How to interact with people with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or a support person.
- How to use the equipment or devices that may help with providing goods or services to people with disabilities.
- What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing Provincial Store Fixtures LTD. goods and services and how to approach and ask the right questions in order to best assist them.

What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing Provincial Store Fixtures LTD. goods and services and how to approach and ask the right questions in order to best assist them.

- If you notice that your customer is having difficulty accessing your goods or services, a good starting point is to simply ask how you can best help.

How to interact and communicate with someone who is visually impaired.

- **Identify yourself** - don't assume the person will recognise you by your voice.
- **Speak naturally and clearly**. Loss of eyesight does not mean loss of hearing.
- **Continue to use body language**. This will affect the tone of your voice and give a lot of extra information to the person who is vision impaired.
- **Use everyday language**. Don't avoid words like "see" or "look" or talking about everyday activities such as watching TV or videos.
- **Name the person** when introducing yourself or when directing conversation to them in a group situation.

- Never leave a conversation with a person without saying so.
- Use accurate and specific language when giving directions. For example, "the door is on your left", rather than "the door is over there".
- Avoid situations where there is competing noise.

How to interact and communicate with someone who has hearing impairment.

- **Face the hearing-impaired person directly**, on the same level and in good light whenever possible. Position yourself so that the light is shining on the speaker's face, not in the eyes of the listener.
- **Do not talk from another room.** Not being able to see each other when talking is a common reason people have difficulty understanding what is said.
- **Speak clearly, slowly, distinctly, but naturally, without shouting or exaggerating mouth movements.** Shouting distorts the sound of speech and may make speech reading more difficult.
- **Say the person's name before beginning a conversation.** This gives the listener a chance to focus attention and reduces the chance of missing words at the beginning of the conversation.
- **Avoid talking too rapidly or using sentences that are too complex.** Slow down a little, pause between sentences or phrases, and wait to make sure you have been understood before going on.
- **Keep your hands away from your face while talking.** If you are eating, chewing, smoking, etc. while talking, your speech will be more difficult to understand. Beards and moustaches can also interfere with the ability of the hearing impaired to speech read.
- If the hearing-impaired listener hears better in one ear than the other, try to make a point of remembering which ear is better so that you will **know where to position yourself.**
- **Be aware of possible distortion of sounds for the hearing-impaired person.** They may hear your voice, but still may have difficulty understanding some words.
- Most hearing-impaired people have greater difficulty understanding speech when there is background noise. **Try to minimize extraneous noise when talking.**
- Some people with hearing loss is very sensitive to loud sounds. This reduced tolerance for loud sounds is not uncommon. **Avoid situations where there will be loud sounds when possible.**
- If the hearing-impaired person has difficulty understanding a particular phrase or word, **try to find a different way of saying the same thing**, rather than repeating the original words over and over.
- If you are giving specific information -- such as time, place or phone numbers -- to someone who is hearing impaired, **have them repeat the specifics back to you.** Many numbers and words sound alike.
- Whenever possible, **provide pertinent information in writing**, such as directions, schedules, work assignments, etc.

- **Recognize that everyone, especially the hard-of-hearing, has a harder time hearing and understanding when ill or tired.**
- **Pay attention to the listener.** A puzzled look may indicate misunderstanding. Tactfully ask the hearing-impaired person if they understood you, or ask leading questions so you know your message got across.
- **Take turns speaking** and avoid interrupting other speakers.

How to interact with people with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or a support person.

- **Don't touch** or handle any assistive device without permission.
- **Don't move** assistive devices or equipment, such as canes and walkers, out of your customer's reach.
- **Let your customer know** about accessible features in the immediate environment that are appropriate to their needs
- **Remember** that a service animal is not a pet. It is a working animal.
- **Avoid touching** or addressing service animals they are working and have to pay attention at all times.
- **Avoid making assumptions** about the animal. If you're not sure if the animal is a pet or a service animal, ask your customer.
- A support person might help your customer with a variety of things from communicating, to helping with mobility, personal care or medical needs.
- If you're not sure which person is the customer, take your lead from the person using or requesting your goods or services, **or simply ask.**
- **Speak directly** to the person, not to their support person.

How to use the equipment or devices that may help with providing goods or services to people with disabilities.

If the Company provides equipment or devices for customers with disabilities, staff must be trained on how to use them. Instruction manuals will be kept handy at the reception desk with an instruction sheet posted where the device is located or stored. Instructions will be made available on request in alternate formats.



**Feedback Process:**

PSF customers who wish to provide feedback on the way we provide our services or facilities to people with disabilities are welcome to provide via:

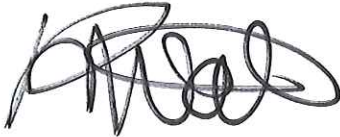
Email: [hr@psfltd.com](mailto:hr@psfltd.com)

Phone: (905) 564-6700 ext. 297

All feedback including complaints, will be coordinated by Katharina Walt, Human Resources Manager and you can expect to hear back within ten (10) business days after the complaint has been submitted. If you require accessible formats or communication supports to provide or receive feedback, please notify PSF using the contact information above.

**Modifications to this or other policies**

Any policy of Provincial Store Fixtures LTD. that does not respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities will be modified or removed.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Walt', with a stylized, cursive script.

Katharina Walt, Human Resources Manager

Last Update: November 10<sup>th</sup>, 2021