



# Co-op Accessible Customer Service: Manitoba

## Purpose

Co-op is committed to developing policies, practices, and procedures which promote and respect dignity, independence, integration, and equal opportunity for all. If a barrier to accessing our goods or services cannot be removed, Co-op seeks to provide alternate ways to access the goods or services.

Co-op is dedicated to ensuring all programs and services are accessible to clients in accordance with the Accessibility Standard for Customer Service under *The Accessibility for Manitoba Act* and associated regulations.

## Application

This policy applies to the provision of goods and services at premises owned and operated by Co-op.

This policy applies to all team members, agents and/or contractors, including those who deal with the public or other third parties that act on behalf of Co-op, such as when the provision of goods and services occurs off the premises of Co-op such as in: delivery services, vendors, drivers, and third-party agencies.

The section of this policy that addresses the use of guide dogs, service animals and service dogs only apply to the provision of goods and services that take place at premises owned and operated by Co-op.

## Definitions

- a) **Act:** *The Accessibility for Manitobans Act*
- b) **Service Animal:** a service animal as defined in *The Human Rights Code*
- c) **Support Person:** in relation to a person who is disabled by a barrier, a person who accompanies the person to:
  - a. Support the person obtaining, using or benefiting from a good or service provided by an organization; or
  - b. Assist the person in addressing the person's communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs



## Policy Details

### Communications

Co-op meets customers' communication needs by:

- Offering communications in different ways that take into consideration varying disabilities (i.e., writing things down, reading things out loud, and taking extra time to explain things).
- Providing alternative communication methods as requested. Co-op also specifies how customers can request an alternate format.
- Training team members on how to interact and communicate with clients with disabilities in a manner that is respectful of a client's dignity and independence.
- Offering a quieter space to serve customers, where possible.

### Assistive Devices

Co-op accommodates the use of assistive devices (i.e., wheelchairs, communication or hearing devices) by:

- Not touching or/and moving customers' assistive devices without their permission.
- Making every effort to ensure that the person with a disability has access to our goods, services, or facilities through other means in circumstances when the assistive technology has considerable and unavoidable health or safety risks.
- Training team members on how to properly interact with customers with disabilities who are accompanied by assistive devices.

### Support Persons

Assistive devices, service animals and/or support persons may be used by customers to assist in accessing Co-op goods and services. Co-op may require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person where it is necessary to protect the health or safety of the person with a disability or the health or safety of others on the premises. Co-op welcomes support persons by:

- Ensuring that both individuals are permitted to enter the premises together and guaranteeing that customers have constant access to their support person.
- Making reasonable attempts to resolve the situation where seating and availability prevent the customer and support person from sitting next to one another at all times.
- Prior to any communication in which sensitive information may be disclosed, the customer's agreement/consent will be sought.
- Training team members on how to properly interact with customers with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal and/or support person.



## **Service Animals**

Co-op allows service animals on our premises. At Co-op, we:

- Treat a service animal as a working animal.
- Will not distract a service animal from its duty by petting, feeding, or playing with it, unless given permission by the person with the service animal.
- Understand how to recognize a service animal by its harness or vest as well as the support the animal provides.
- May inquire whether the animal has been trained to assist a person with a disability if we have concerns.
- Expect the person handling the service animal to remain physically in control of the animal or through voice, signal, or other methods.
- May provide a warning to the handler to control the service animal if the animal is showing signs of not being controlled.
- May ask the handler to leave if the service animal continues to misbehave.
- Will explain why the animal cannot enter the space and discuss with the individual another way to provide goods or services where law prohibits service animals from entering (e.g., food preparation areas).
- Make all reasonable attempts to meet the needs of all persons, if a health and safety issue arises, such as a significant allergy to the animal.

## **Maintain Accessibility Features**

To ensure barrier-free access to our goods, services or facilities, Co-op maintains our accessibility features so they can be used as intended. Practices and measures include:

- Organizing our space to provide a place for those using wheelchairs, electric scooters, and walkers.
- Keeping our entrance area clear of ice and snow, plus placing any standing signs out of the way to prevent tripping.
- Ensuring automatic doors are working properly and/or keeping aisles and entryways clear of clutter.
- Using both audio and visual cues to inform customers it is their turn to be served.
- Alternatives to our accessibility features include our online service with pick up.

## **Notice of Disruptions in Service**

Co-op will let the public know when and why an accessibility feature is unavailable physically, verbally, and/or electronically, including:

- Placing signs on-site at building entrances, service counters, and other high traffic areas.
- Employees and managers verbally announcing.
- Pushing notifications on the Co-op mobile app including notifying customers of the:



- goods or services that are disrupted or unavailable
- reason for the disruption
- anticipated duration
- description of alternative services or options
- Any other method that may be reasonable under given circumstances.

### **Feedback**

Co-op welcomes and responds promptly to feedback we receive on the accessibility of our goods and services. We will:

- Receive customers' feedback in multiple methods, including in-person, by telephone, in writing or/and electronically.
- Direct all feedback to the person who can take action, if required.
- Follow-up on any feedback so the customer has up to date information about the feedback process. Notification of the procedure will be posted on the premises.

### **Training**

We will provide the required training on accessible customer service to team members, volunteers, and management, including:

- How to interact and communicate with people facing barriers to access goods and services, people using assistive devices, people assisted by a support person and/or are assisted by a service animal.
- How to use 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.
- Co-op policies, practices, and measures, including updates or changes.

### **Record of Policies**

Co-op keeps a written record of accessibility and training policies. This includes records of the training delivered, including the training program, the dates the training is offered, and the number of persons to whom the training is provided, will be kept in compliance with the Act's requirements.

- We inform the public about our accessibility and training policies in the following ways:
  - Posted internally and externally (website, bulletin boards, social media, and/or newsletters).
  - Informing team members and managers in person, verbally, electronically and/or in recorded messages.
  - Posted at our building entrance or customer service counter and/or in high traffic areas.



- We deliver Co-op policies in a timely manner, at no cost, and in a format that meets the needs of the individual.