

 E R T H CORPORATION	<b>Policy</b>	Approved By: Board of Directors
		Approved Date: January 22, 2015
Springboard #2001360	<b>Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities</b>	Page: 1 of 6
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## 1. **PURPOSE:**

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (“the AODA”) is a Provincial Act with the purpose of developing, implementing and mandating accessibility standards in order to achieve accessibility for persons with disabilities, with respect to goods, services, facilities, accommodation, employment, buildings, structures and premises.

Under the AODA, Ontario Regulation 429/07, entitled “Accessibility Standards for Customer Service” (“the Regulation”), came into force on January 1, 2008. The Regulation establishes accessibility standards specific to customer service for public sector organizations and other persons or organizations that provide goods and services to members of the public or other third parties.

The objective of this policy is to identify what the equal treatment provisions of the Ontario Human Rights Code, through the AODA and the Regulation, require as a minimum legal standard in program design and service delivery to persons with disabilities and addresses the following:

- The provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities;
- The use of assistive devices by persons with disabilities;
- The use of service animals by persons with disabilities;
- The use of support persons by persons with disabilities;
- Notice of temporary disruptions in services and facilities;
- Training;
- Customer feedback regarding the provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities, and;
- Notice of availability and format of documents.

## 2. **SCOPE:**

ERTH Corporation Group of Companies strives at all times to provide services in a way that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities. This policy applies to all Employees, third part contractors, Officers and Directors of the ERTH Corporation Group of Companies.

## 3. **DEFINITIONS**

See Schedule A.

## 4. **POLICY**

In accordance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities, Ontario Regulation 429/07, Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, ERTH Corporation Group of Companies is committed to providing a working environment that is accessible and inclusive to all persons who work, or visit ERTH Corporation Group of Companies facilities. It is the policy of ERTH Corporation Group of Companies that its working environments will be free from discrimination and harassment as defined by the Ontario Human Rights Code.

### **General Principles:**

The Provision of Goods and Services to Persons with Disabilities – ERTH Corporation Group of Companies will strive to ensure that its policies, practices and procedures are consistent with the following core principles as outlined in the AODA.

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Dignity – Goods and services are provided in a manner that is respectful to persons with a disability and does not diminish the person’s importance.

Independence – Accommodating a person’s disability means respecting their right to do for themselves and to choose the way they wish to receive goods and services.

Integration – Persons with disabilities can access all goods and services. This may require alternative formats and flexible approaches. It means inclusiveness and full participation. This is a fundamental human right.

Equal Opportunity – Service is provided to persons with disabilities in a way that their opportunity to access goods and services is equal to that given to others.

## **5. PROCEDURES**

### Communication with Persons with Disabilities

When communicating with a person with a disability, ERTH Corporation Group of Companies will do so in a manner that takes into account the person’s disability. ERTH Corporation Group of Companies commits to provide training on customer service to all current and future employees who require this training. This training will, in particular, include how to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disabilities.

### Notice of Planned or Unplanned Disruption in Services and Facilities

In the event of a service disruption affecting employees, visitors, contractors or members of the general public, it is the responsibility of individual service areas (i.e. Erie Thames Powerlines, ERTH Holdings, ERTH Business Technologies and ERTH Corporate) to take reasonable steps to report such disruption in a timely fashion through appropriate information channels. Such channels include, but are not limited to, the company websites, physical postings (temporary signage) on or immediately adjacent to the affected area, and/or communication via email to affected individuals, departments or groups. In accordance with the AODA, notice must be conspicuous and indicate any alternatives that exist to allow access to persons with disabilities during the disruption. The required information necessary for any communication of a temporary disruption may include:

- The time, date and location of the disruption;
- Information about the reason for the disruption;
- Anticipated duration of the disruption;
- Descriptions of alternative facilities or services, if any; and
- Contact information for the responsible service area.

### Assistive Technology

Personal assistive technologies are permitted and unrestricted in all areas of ERTH Corporation Group of Companies to which employees and the public have access, except when subject to operator safety. ERTH Corporation Group of Companies will train, on an ongoing basis, current and future employees in the use of various assistive devices and related policies. It should be noted that the provision, use and safety of personal assistive devices is the responsibility of the person with a disability.

### Service Animals

Persons with a disability who are accompanied by a service animal may access premises owned or operated by ERTH Corporation Group of Companies, if the public has access to such premises and the animal is not otherwise excluded by law.

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There may be rare circumstances where, for reasons of health and safety of another person, allowing a person with a disability to enter a premises accompanied by a service animal needs to be considered. Examples of such situations include but are not limited to: a) an environment, where chemicals and/or equipment present hazards to other persons and/or to the service animal; and b) where a person is allergic to animals and adversely affected if they are in close proximity to a service animal. If a service animal is excluded by law or for reasons of health and safety, ERTH Corporation Group of Companies shall ensure that measures are available to permit persons with disabilities to access our goods and services through other means.

Support Persons

ERTH Corporation Group of Companies welcomes staff and visitors who are accompanied by a support person, when the support person has been hired or chosen by the person with a disability to accompany them in order to assist in accessing goods or services and/or for the purposes of providing support with mobility, personal assistance and/or communication. Persons with a disability who require a support person may access premises owned and/or operated by ERTH Corporation Group of Companies with their support person.

Support persons are permitted to accompany employees with disabilities to their work environments. There may be rare circumstances where, for reasons of health and safety of another person, allowing a person with a disability to enter a premises accompanied by their support person needs to be considered. In this situation alternate measures available will be reviewed to enable the person with a disability to access the service.

Support persons shall be permitted entry to all ERTH Corporation Group of Companies facilities and meeting rooms that are open to the public, except when there are fees applied against participants. Where there are admission fees for an event organized by ERTH Corporation Group of Companies, persons with a disability shall be expected to pay the same fee as other attendees, but no admission fee shall be charged to their support person.

Feedback

Feedback about the delivery of services to persons with disabilities is welcomed, as it may identify areas that require change and assist in continuous service improvement. Such feedback may be by telephone, in person, in writing, or by delivering an electronic text via email, on diskette or otherwise. ERTH Corporation Group of Companies will make best efforts to provide a response in the same format in which the feedback was received.

Feedback may be provided directly to the department concerned and/or to:

Mail:

ERTH Corporation  
 Attn: Jenn Start  
 200-295 Wolfe St  
 London ON N6B 2C4

Telephone: 519-518-6117 ext. 263

Fax: 519-518-6120

Email: [jstart@erthcorp.com](mailto:jstart@erthcorp.com)

[www.erthcorp.com](http://www.erthcorp.com)

In person at company address above: Jenn Start

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Training

ERTH Corporation Group of Companies shall provide training on AODA customer service to all current employees and, in particular, to those providing services and who are involved in the development and approval of customer service policies, procedures and practices. New employees will be provided such training as part of their orientation.

Such training shall include:

- A review of the purposes of the AODA and the requirements of the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service;
- How to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disabilities;
- How to interact with persons with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or a support person;
- How to use the available equipment or devices that may assist with the provision of services to persons with disabilities;
- What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing OCAD services;
- How to develop and review policies, procedures and practices relating to the provision of services to persons with disabilities.



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**Jeff Pettit, President & CEO**

January 22, 2015

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**Date**

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**Schedule A: Definitions**

**“Accessible”** means obtainable, usable, readable, audible, visible, understandable, clear, able to be entered and exited, flexible, etc. To be accessible to all people, a variety of accessibility plans are necessary. Ensuring inclusive practices will ensure that all goods and services can be accessed by a larger audience.

**“Alternative Formats”** refers to alternate ways to provide goods and services. This may be through forms of communication such as speech or writing, or methods such as in person or over the phone. Other examples are large print, electronic text (Word or html), Braille, sign language interpretation, communication devices, media caption, etc.

**“Assistive Devices”** are equipment that people with disabilities utilize to assist in their daily lives at home, work, school, etc. Such devices could be a walker, scooter, cane, magnification or specialized learning software, communication board, etc.

**“Assistive Technology”** is equipment or software such as screen reading, audio recording and voice recognition which people with disabilities use to obtain information and communicate with others.

**“Barrier”** is anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of his or her disability, including a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, an information or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy or a practice; (“obstacle”)

**“Customer”** is the term used in the AODA Legislation to describe patrons, stakeholders or anyone in receipt of goods and services.

**“Disability”** Under the AODA, the definition of “disability” is the same as the definition in the Ontario Human Rights code:

- (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.

**“ERTH Corporation Group of Companies”**: means ERTH Corporation and all of its wholly owned subsidiaries

**“Employee”** refers to any ERTH Corporation Group of Companies employee, manager and contract or temporary employee.

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**“Service Animal”** Means the Regulation defines a “service animal” as an “animal for a person with disability.” In this policy, a service animal is any animal used by a person with a disability for reasons relating to the disability or where the person provides a letter from a physician confirming that they require the animal for reasons relating to their disability; or where the person provides a valid identification card signed by the Attorney General of Canada or a certificate of training from a recognized guide dog or service animal training school.

**“Support Person”** is someone who accompanies a person with a disability in order to assist them. Their assistance may include, but is not limited to, communication, mobility, personal care, medical needs or with access to goods or services.

**“ERTH Corporation Group of Companies Premises”** are any buildings and/or lands owned, leased, operated, controlled or supervised by ERTH Corporation Group of Companies.

**“Working Days”** are Mondays to Fridays, excluding Saturdays, Sundays, statutory holidays, and any ERTH Corporation Group of Companies shutdowns observed by the company.