

Union Gas Accessibility Customer Service Policy

This document can be provided to any member of the public upon request in an accessible format.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to address the accessibility requirements of *Ontario Regulation 429/07, Accessibility Standards for Customer Service* under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*.

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act became law in 2005. Its goal is to identify, remove and prevent barriers for people with disabilities in key areas of daily living, so that Ontario is accessible to people with disabilities by 2025.

POLICY STATEMENT

We are committed to identifying, removing and preventing barriers that may impede accessibility to our services and to provide customer service in a manner that respects the principles of dignity and independence of persons with disabilities. Union Gas is committed to providing an equal opportunity to all customers to obtain, use and benefit from our services.

PRINCIPLES

We will use reasonable efforts to ensure that:

- Services are provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.
- The provision of services to persons with disabilities and others are integrated unless an alternate measure is necessary, whether temporarily or on a permanent basis, to enable a person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from our services.
- Persons with disabilities are given an opportunity equal to that given to others to obtain, use and benefit from the services.
- 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may use assistive devices, service animals and support persons, as is necessary, to access our services, unless superseded by other legislation.

SCOPE

This policy applies to the management and all employees of the Union Gas as well as volunteers, agents, contractors, third parties or any other individuals who interact with the public or other third parties, who represent or act on behalf of Union Gas in any manner.

DEFINITIONS

Barrier, as defined by the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, means 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, any information or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy, or a practice.

Union Gas Accessibility Customer Service Policy

Disability, as defined in the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* and the *Human Rights Code (Ontario)*, defines “disability” as follows:

- 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;
- a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability;
- a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language;
- a mental disorder; or
- an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997*.

Person with Disabilities shall mean those individuals that are afflicted with a disability as defined under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*.

Service Animal - the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* provides that an animal is a service animal for a person with a disability if it is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to his or her disability; or if the person provides documentation from a regulated health professional confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability.

Support Person, as defined by the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, shall mean any person whether a paid professional, volunteer, family member or friend who accompanies a person with a disability in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs or with access to goods or services.

PROCEDURES

6.1 Assistive Devices

The use of assistive devices by persons with disabilities to obtain, use or benefit from our services is recognized unless otherwise prohibited due to health and safety or privacy issues.

It is the responsibility of the person with a disability to ensure that his or her assistive device is operated in a safe and controlled manner at all times.

6.2 Communications

When communicating with a person with a disability, we will do so in a manner that takes into account the person’s disability.

Union Gas Accessibility Customer Service Policy

This means that we will communicate in an effective way that enables persons with disabilities to communicate effectively with us for purposes of providing, sending, receiving and requesting services.

Union Gas Accessibility Customer Service Policy

6.3 Telephone Services

We are committed to providing fully accessible telephone service to our customers. Our staff is trained to communicate with customers over the telephone in clear and plain language and to speak clearly and slowly.

We also offer to communicate with customers by email, TTY relay services or appropriate alternate methods if telephone communication is not suitable to their communication needs, or is not available.

6.4 Billing

We are committed to providing accessible bills to all of our customers. Bills will be provided in alternate format to support reading with assistive technologies and we will answer any questions customers may have about the content of the bill by telephone or email.

6.5 Service Animals

Persons with a disability that are accompanied by a guide dog or other service animal (on the parts of our premises that are open to the public) are permitted to enter the premises with the animal unless it is otherwise excluded by law from the premises.

If a service animal is excluded by law from the premises, we will ensure that other measures are available to enable the person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from our services.

It is the responsibility of the person with a disability to ensure that his or her service animal is kept in control at all times.

6.6 Support Persons

Persons with a disability are permitted to be accompanied by a support person in the areas that are open to the public. We will ensure that both persons are permitted to enter our premises together and that the person with a disability will not be prevented from having access to the support person while on our premises.

If there is confidential information to be disclosed, consent must be received from the account holder in order to disclose such confidential information in the presence of the support person.

Before making a decision, we will consult with the person with a disability to understand their needs; consider health or safety reasons based on available evidence; determine if there is no other reasonable way to protect the health or safety of the person or others on the premises.

6.7 Training

We are committed to establishing, implementing and maintaining a training program for all Union Gas employees and members of our organization, to enable them to effectively provide customer service to persons with disabilities.

Union Gas Accessibility Customer Service Policy

The training includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Review of the purpose of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* and the requirements of *Ontario Regulation 429/07 Accessibility Standards for Customer Service*;
- How to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities;
- How to interact with people with disabilities who use assistive devices or require the assistance of a guide dog, other service animal or a support person;
- How to use Union Gas equipment or devices that may help with the provision of services to a person with a disability;
- What to do if a person with a particular type of disability is having difficulty accessing Union Gas services;
- Union Gas Accessible Customer Service policies, procedures and practices relating to the customer service standard; and

Training shall be provided to all members of our organization as soon as practical as well as on an ongoing basis as changes occur to our company's policies, procedures and practices governing the provision of our services to persons with disabilities.

We will keep detailed records of the training provided for reporting purposes.

Union Gas Accessibility Customer Service Policy

6.8 Feedback and Accessibility Requests

We will maintain a feedback process to enable customers to comment on the provision of our services to persons with disabilities. We welcome your feedback as it encourages continuous in improvement in accessibility to our services.

You may provide feedback or submit requests for information and communications by telephone, email or in writing.

Telephone: 1-888-774-3111
Email Customerrelations@uniongas.com;
Bell Relay: 1-800-855-0511
Mail: Union Gas Limited
Attention: Customer Relations
P.O. Box 2001
50 Keil Drive North
Chatham, On N7M 5M1

We will respond to all written correspondence (unless otherwise agreed to by the customer) within 10 calendar days.

All feedback will be kept in strict confidence and used to improve customer service.

6.9 Safety

Union Gas employees will request your permission before touching or handling any assistive device¹. In the event we are required to, or asked to move an assistive device, such as a cane or walker, we will return it to its original position.

Some customers with disabilities may use a service animal². Service animals are welcome on the parts of our premises that are open to the public.

¹ An assistive device is a tool, technology or other mechanism that enable a person to do everyday tasks and activities, such as moving, communicating or lifting. This includes such items as wheelchairs, hearing aids, white canes or speech amplification devices.

² Some examples of service animals include guide dogs to assist with visual impairment, hearing alert animals to help people who are deaf, deafened, oral deaf, or hard of hearing and other service animals that are trained to alert and individual to an oncoming seizure

Union Gas Accessibility Customer Service Policy

7.0 Notice of Disruptions

We are aware that the operation of our services and facilities is important to the public. However, temporary disruptions in our services may occur due to reasons that may or may not be within our control or knowledge.

We will make reasonable efforts to provide notice of the disruption to the public, including information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration and a description of alternative services, if available.

In the situation of an unplanned temporary disruption, advance notice will not be possible. In such cases, we will provide notice as soon as possible, as required.

7.1 Responsibilities

We will continue to review this policy to make sure the needs of all employees and customers are met and that this policy meets the requirements of applicable legislation.

Union Gas executives, directors, managers and supervisors will make every reasonable effort to prevent and remove any barrier to a person with disabilities by:

- Demonstrating commitment and leadership to the removal of barriers
- Ensuring all staff have been trained and are familiar with the various barriers, tools and techniques available to overcome and or remove those barriers.
- Understanding and upholding the principles of this policy and procedure, and ensuring that all customers are treated fairly and equitably under this policy and procedure;
- Actively communicating our objective to create and maintain a culture of customer service to people with disabilities guided by the principles of dignity, integration and equality internally and to the public; and
- Treating customer feedback regarding barriers to service with respect.

Union Gas will continue to review this policy to make sure the needs of all customers are met and that this policy meets the requirements of applicable legislation.

Union Gas Accessibility Customer Service Policy

7.2 References and Related Documents

A Guide to the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation

http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/documents/en/mcass/accessibility/iasr_guidelines/complete_guidelines.pdf

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005

http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/statutes/english/elaws_statutes_05a11_e.htm

Accessibility Standard for Customer Service: employer handbook

http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/documents/en/mcass/accessibility/Tools/AO_EmployerHandbook.pdf

Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07

http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/regs/english/elaws_regs_070429_e.htm

AccessON

www.accesson.ca

Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation Guidelines - Part 2 – Information and Communications Standard

http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/documents/en/mcass/accessibility/iasr_guidelines/Part2_IASR_2012.pdf

Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001

http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/statutes/english/elaws_statutes_01o32_e.htm

Ontario Human Rights Code

http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/statutes/english/elaws_statutes_90h19_e.htm