

Accessibility – Customer Service Policy

Providing goods, services or facilities to people with disabilities

Vermeulens is committed to meeting its current and ongoing obligations under the Ontario Human Rights Code respecting non-discrimination.

Vermeulens understands that obligations under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)* and its accessibility standards do not substitute or limit its obligations under the Ontario Human Rights Code or obligations to people with disabilities under any other law.

Vermeulens is committed to complying with both the *Ontario Human Rights Code* and the *AODA*.

Vermeulens is committed to excellence in serving all customers including people with disabilities.

Our accessible customer service policies are consistent with the principles of independence, dignity, integration and equality of opportunity for people with disabilities.

Assistive devices

People with disabilities may use their personal assistive devices when accessing our goods, services or facilities.

In cases where the assistive device presents a significant and unavoidable health or safety concern or may not be permitted for other reasons, other measures will be used to ensure the person with a disability can access our goods, services or facilities.

We will ensure that our staff are trained and familiar with various assistive devices we have on site or that we provide that may be used by customers with disabilities while accessing our goods, services or facilities.

Currently we have no assistive devices on site.

Communication

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

We will work with the person with a disability to determine what method of communication works for them.

Service animals

We welcome people with disabilities and their service animals. Service animals are allowed on the parts of our premises that are open to the public.

When we cannot easily identify that an animal is a service animal, our staff may ask a person to provide documentation (template, letter or form) from a regulated health professional that confirms the person needs the service animal for reasons relating to their disability.

A service animal can be easily identified through visual indicators, such as when it wears a harness or a vest, or when it helps the person perform certain tasks.



A regulated health professional is defined as a member of one of the following colleges:

- College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists of Ontario
- College of Chiropractors of Ontario
- College of Nurses of Ontario
- College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario
- College of Optometrists of Ontario
- College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario
- College of Physiotherapists of Ontario
- College of Psychologists of Ontario
- College of Registered Psychotherapists and Registered Mental Health Therapists of Ontario

If service animals are prohibited by another law, we will do the following to ensure people with disabilities can access our goods, services or facilities:

- explain why the animal is excluded
- discuss with the customer another way of providing goods, services or facilities

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.

We will notify customers of this by posting a notice in the following locations:

- on our website
- head office main entrance

In certain cases, Vermeulens might require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person for the health or safety reasons of:

- the person with a disability
- others on the premises

Before making a decision, Vermeulens 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

If Vermeulens determines that a support person is required, we will waive the admission fee or fare [if applicable] for the support person.

Notice of temporary disruption

In the event of a planned or unexpected disruption to services or facilities for customers with disabilities Vermeulens 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.

The notice will be made publicly available in the following ways:

- on our website
- head office main entrance



Training

Vermeulens will provide accessible customer service training to:

- all employees and volunteers
- anyone involved in developing our policies
- anyone who provides goods, services or facilities to customers on our behalf.

Staff will be trained on accessible customer service within one month after being hired.

Training will include:

- purpose of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and the requirements of the customer service standard
- Vermeulens' policies related to 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
- how to use the equipment or devices available on-site or otherwise that may help with providing goods, services or facilities to people with disabilities.
- what to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing Vermeulens' goods, services or facilities

Staff will also be trained when changes are made to our accessible customer service policies.

Feedback process

Vermeulens welcomes feedback on how we provide accessible customer service. Customer feedback will help us identify barriers and respond to concerns.

Customers will be notified of how to provide feedback in the following ways:

- on our website

Customers who wish to provide feedback on the way Vermeulens provides goods, services or facilities to people with disabilities can provide feedback in the following way(s):

- on our website

All feedback, including complaints, will be handled in the following manner:

- on our website

Customers can expect to hear back in 2 business days.

Vermeulens will make sure our feedback process is accessible to people with disabilities by providing or arranging for accessible formats and communication supports, on request.



Notice of availability of documents

Vermeulens will notify the public that documents related to accessible customer service, are available upon request by posting a notice in the following location/way:

1. on our website

Vermeulens will provide this document in an accessible format or with communication support, on request. We will consult with the person making the request to determine the suitability of the format or communication support. We will provide the accessible format in a timely manner and, at no additional cost.

Modifications to this or other policies

Any policies of Vermeulens that do not respect and promote the principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity for people with disabilities will be modified or removed.

