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# Accessible Customer Service Policy Statement

## Providing Goods and Services to People with Disabilities

### 1. AGCO's Mission

The Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario (AGCO) is committed to conducting business in a manner that will:

1. Develop, implement and enforce fair policies and procedures.
2. Establish a framework of critical regulatory controls in the public interest that are sensitive to the economic viability of the alcohol and gaming industries.
3. Be client focused in the way we respond to and manage client and stakeholder needs.
4. Educate clients and stakeholders and develop partnerships.
5. Create a supportive work environment that respects and values AGCO staff contributions and provides them with opportunities for growth and professional achievement.

### 2. AGCO's Commitment to Accessibility

In fulfilling its mission, the AGCO strives at all times to provide accessible customer service to people with disabilities.

The AGCO is committed to providing its goods and services to people with disabilities in a way that respects their dignity and independence. It is also committed to giving people with disabilities the same opportunity to access its goods and services and allowing them to benefit from the same services, in the same place and in a similar way as other customers.

### 3. Background

The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA) was created with the goal of developing standards that would improve accessibility for people with disabilities across the Province. The AODA allows the Provincial Government to develop specific standards of accessibility and enforce them. The standards are made into regulations pursuant to the AODA.

*Ontario Regulation 429/07 - Accessibility Standards for Customer Service* (Ontario Regulation 429/07) came into force on January 1, 2008. The customer service regulation is the first standard developed under the AODA. The regulation requires designated public sector organizations, including the AGCO, to be in compliance with a number of accessible customer service standards by January 1, 2010.

#### **4. Objectives**

- a) This policy is intended to meet the requirements of Ontario Regulation 429/07 under the AODA. It applies to the provision of goods or services to the public, not the goods themselves.
- b) This policy aims to ensure that persons with disabilities are given equal opportunity to obtain, use and benefit from AGCO's goods or services. Reasonable efforts will be made to ensure that:
  - Goods or services are provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.
  - The goods or services provided to persons with disabilities are integrated with the provision of goods or services to others unless an alternate measure is necessary to allow a person with a disability to benefit from the goods or services. The alternate measure may be temporary or permanent.
  - Communications with a person with a disability are conducted in a manner that takes the person's disability into account.
  - People with disabilities may use assistive devices, service animals and support persons as is necessary to access the AGCO's goods or services. If a service animal is excluded by law from a premises or area of a premises, other measures will be made available for the person with a disability to access the goods or services.

#### **5. Definitions**

**Assistive Device** is a technical aid, communication device, or medical aid modified or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional abilities of people with disabilities.

**Barrier**, as defined by the AODA, 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, an information or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy or a practice.

**Disability** – As defined by the AODA and the *Ontario Human Rights Code*, is:

- 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 coordination, 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*.

**Service Animal** – As reflected in Ontario Regulation 429/07, 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 a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability.

**Support Person** – As reflected in Ontario Regulation 429/07, a support person means, 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 or services.

## 6. Scope

- a) This policy governs the provision of goods or services by the AGCO to persons with disabilities, which includes the provision of goods or services by AGCO employees, volunteers, and by agents and contractors who provide goods or services on behalf of the AGCO.
- b) The part of the policy that deals with the use of service animals and support persons applies only to goods or services provided by the AGCO at premises owned or operated by the AGCO.
- c) This policy may be supplemented by practices and procedures, as required by Ontario Regulation 429/07.

## **7. Providing Goods and Service to People with Disabilities**

- a) Requests for accommodation will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

### **7.1 Communication**

- a) AGCO employees and its agents and contractors will communicate with people who have disabilities in a manner that takes into account their disability.
- b) Customers, including those with disabilities, are able to communicate with the AGCO by telephone, including telephone relay services, in person, in writing through regular mail, facsimile, or by delivering an electronic text by email, or otherwise.

### **7.2 Telephone Services**

- a) AGCO staff will be trained to communicate with customers over the telephone in clear and plain language and to speak clearly and slowly.
- b) The AGCO will endeavor to provide a fully accessible telephone service to AGCO customers. If telephone communication is not suitable to the customer's communication needs or is not available, the AGCO will offer to communicate with customers by an alternative mode of communication, as listed in this policy under section 7.1 b).

### **7.3 Written Documentation**

- a) The AGCO will endeavour to ensure its documentation or the content of the documentation is made accessible to people with disabilities. For this reason, an alternative format will be provided upon request that takes into account a person's disability.
- b) The AGCO will make reasonable efforts to respond to requests for documents in alternate formats in a timely manner.
- c) The AGCO will provide alternative formats to people with disabilities at no additional fee. For example, if a publication is available for free, no fee will be charged for an alternative format version. If there is a fee associated with a publication, then the same fee will be charged for its alternate format version.
- d) Persons with disabilities may find information about how to request alternative formats on the AGCO website or through AGCO Customer Service.

## **7.4 Meetings and Hearings**

- a) The AGCO will endeavour to ensure meetings or hearings held with customers, either publicly or by invitation only, are made accessible to people with disabilities. For this reason, accommodations will be provided upon request that take into account a person's disability.
- b) If meetings or hearings with customers are held in locations or premises not owned or operated by the AGCO, the AGCO will endeavour to ensure these meetings or hearings are held in locations or on premises that support the AGCO's accessible customer service policies, especially in regards to the use of service animals, support persons and assistive devices.

## **7.5 Assistive Devices**

- a) Persons with disabilities may use assistive devices as required in accessing goods or services provided by the AGCO, unless otherwise prohibited by law.
- b) Persons with disabilities may find information about how to access AGCO assistive devices on the AGCO website or through AGCO Customer Service, as applicable.

## **7.6 Support Persons**

- a) Persons with disabilities are permitted to be accompanied by their support person in areas/premises that are open to the public, when accessing goods or services provided by the AGCO.
- b) Where admission fees for the support person are applicable, advance notice of the fee will be made available. Advance notice may be posted on AGCO's premises, through the AGCO internet website, or by another means of notification as appropriate.
- c) The AGCO may deem it necessary to require a support person for a person with a disability in order to protect the health and safety of that person or of others on the premises. This will only occur after consultation with the person with a disability and when it is the only means to allow the person with a disability to access the AGCO's goods or services.
- d) Where protection of privacy and confidentiality are concerns during an interaction with a customer, the AGCO will confirm with the person with a disability if they would like to continue with their support person present. In the event that a support person is present while private or confidential matters are being discussed, the AGCO may require him or her to sign a confidentiality agreement.

- e) At no time will a person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person be prevented from having access to his or her support person while on the AGCO's premises.
- f) Where it is necessary for a person with a disability to give a legally-binding decision or signature, but he or she requires the aid of his or her support person to do so, the AGCO may request legal documentation (e.g., power of attorney) giving the support person the authority to act on their behalf.

## **7.7 Service Animals**

- a) Persons with disabilities are permitted to be accompanied by their service animal and keep that animal with them in areas that are open to the public, when accessing goods or services provided by the AGCO, unless otherwise prohibited by law.
- b) In the event that a service animal is prohibited from the premises, the AGCO will ensure that other measures are available to enable the person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the AGCO's goods or services.
- c) Service animals must be supervised by their owners and kept in control when used to access the AGCO's goods or services.

## **8. Service Disruptions**

- a) In the event of a planned service disruption to facilities and services that are relied upon by people with disabilities to access AGCO goods or services, notice of the disruption shall be provided in advance.
- b) In the event of an unexpected disruption, notice will be provided as soon as possible.
- c) Notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration and a description of alternative facilities and services that may be available.
- d) Notice may be given by posting the information in a conspicuous place on premises owned or operated by the AGCO, at customer service counters located at the AGCO Head Office or regional sites, and/or posted on the AGCO's website or by such other method as is reasonable under the circumstances.

## **9. Availability of Documents**

- a) As required by Ontario Regulation 429/07, the AGCO will prepare one or more documents, describing the following, and provide them upon request to any person:

- AGCO's policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of goods or services to people with disabilities;
  - AGCO's policies, practices and procedures governing the use of service animals and support persons;
  - The steps the AGCO will take in connection with a temporary disruption of facilities or services usually used by people with disabilities;
  - AGCO's policy on providing training on accessible customer service; and,
  - AGCO's process for receiving and responding to feedback on the provision of goods or services to people with disabilities.
- b) If the AGCO is required by Ontario Regulation 429/07 to provide documents to a person with a disability, the document or the information contained in the document will be provided in a format that takes into account the person's disability.
- c) The AGCO will make reasonable efforts to respond to requests for documents in alternate formats in a timely manner.

## **10. Training**

- a) As required by Ontario Regulation 429/07, the AGCO will ensure the following individuals receive training on a number of topics outlined in the regulation:
- staff, volunteers, agents/contractors and any other individuals who interact with the public or other third parties on behalf of the AGCO; and,
  - staff, volunteers, agents/contractors and any other individuals who participate in the development of the AGCO's policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of goods or services to members of the public or third parties.
- b) The training will include the following topics:
- a review of the purposes of the AODA and the requirements of Ontario Regulation 429/07;
  - how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities;
  - how to interact with people with disabilities who use an assistive device, service animal or a support person;
  - how to use the equipment or assistive devices available on AGCO's premises;
  - what action to take if a person with a particular type of disability is having difficulty accessing AGCO's goods or services; and,

- AGCO's customer service policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of goods or services to people with disabilities.
- c) As required by Ontario Regulation 429/07, the AGCO will keep records of the training provided. The records will include the dates on which training was provided and the number of individuals who received the training.
  - d) Training will be provided as required to currently employed staff by December 31, 2009 or within six months of required staff commencing their duties.
  - e) Training will be provided on an on-going basis as deemed necessary or in connection to changes in AGCO policies, practices and procedures.

## **11. Feedback Process**

- a) The AGCO shall create and maintain a feedback process so that members of the public are able to comment on the provision of goods or services to people with disabilities.
- b) The feedback process will allow for comments in person, by telephone, in writing or by delivering an electronic text by email, or otherwise.
- c) The feedback process specifies the actions that will be taken by the AGCO, if complaints or suggestions are received. Customers can expect the following:
  - Upon receipt of the feedback, regardless of the format, customers will receive a response acknowledging receipt of the feedback and the actions that will be taken to address any issues.
  - Feedback received via the telephone, mail, email, or in-person (at either the Customer Service desk in Toronto or regional offices) will be acknowledged within two business days of receipt.
  - The acknowledgement will indicate when the matter will be addressed and when the customer will be notified.
  - The AGCO will follow up with any required action within the time frame noted. All feedback responses will be in a format that is accessible to the customer, upon request.
  - If the customer wishes to remain anonymous or if he/she indicates that receipt of acknowledgement or a response is not required, the AGCO will not acknowledge the feedback.
- d) Feedback relating to accessibility or the manner in which the AGCO provides its goods and services to people with disabilities will be collected and logged in the AGCO Record of Customer Feedback.
- e) Persons with disabilities may find information about the AGCO's feedback process on the AGCO website or through AGCO Customer Service.

## **12. Performance Measurement**

- a) The AGCO's Accessible Customer Service Policy Statement will be reviewed and/or amended when additional accessibility related regulations are enacted by the Government of Ontario, or as required.
- b) The AGCO will keep a record of all accessibility or accommodation requests and actions taken.

## **13. Questions about this policy**

- a) If anyone has a question about the AGCO's Accessible Customer Service Policy Statement, or if the purpose of a policy is not understood, they may contact AGCO Customer Service, who will forward the matter to the Corporate Policy and Communications Branch for response.

## **14. Related Documents**

Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001  
Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005  
Ontario Regulation 429/07 - Accessibility Standards for Customer Service  
Ontario Human Rights Code

## **15. Exclusion**

- a) The AGCO's Accessible Customer Service Policy Statement shall not apply during any period where an emergency, as defined under the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act, 1990*, has been declared.