



Vittoria Hotel and Suites
Accessibility Policy

Accessibility Policy

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

Vittoria Hotel and Suites 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.

Vittoria Hotel and Suites is committed to complying with both the *Ontario Human Rights Code* and the *AODA*.

Vittoria Hotel and Suites is committed to excellence in serving all customers including people with disabilities.

Our accessible customer service policies are consistent with the following principles:

- **Dignity** – provide service in a way that allows the person with a disability to maintain self-respect and the respect of other people.
- **Independence** – a person with a disability is allowed to do things on their own without unnecessary help or interference from others
- **Integration** – provide service in a way that allows the person with a disability to benefit from the same services, in the same place, and in the same or similar way as other customers, unless a different way is necessary to enable them to access goods, services or facilities.
- **Equal opportunity** – provide service to a person with a disability in such a way that they have an equal opportunity to access our goods, services or facilities as what is given to others.

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.

Tips:

- don't touch or handle any assistive device without permission
- don't move assistive devices or equipment (e.g., canes, walkers) out of your customer's reach
- let your customers know about accessible features in the immediate environment that are appropriate to their needs (e.g. accessible washrooms, elevator)

Communication

We will communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability. This may include the following:

People with physical/mobility disabilities

Only some people with physical disabilities use a wheelchair. Someone with a spinal cord injury may use crutches while someone with severe arthritis or a heart condition may have difficulty walking longer distances.

Tips:

- ask before you help; people with disabilities often have their own way of doing things
- if you need to have a lengthy conversation with someone who uses a wheelchair or scooter, consider sitting so you can make eye contact at the same level
- don't touch items or equipment (e.g., canes, wheelchairs) without permission
- if you have permission to move a person's wheelchair, don't leave them in an awkward, dangerous or undignified position, such as facing a wall or in the path of opening doors
- think ahead and remove any items that may cause a physical barrier

People with vision loss

Vision loss can restrict someone's ability to read, locate landmarks or see hazards. Some customers may use a guide dog or a white cane, while others may not.

Not everyone with vision loss is totally blind. Many have some vision.

Tips:

- when you know someone has vision loss, don't assume the individual can't see you; many people who have low vision still have some sight
- identify yourself when you approach and speak directly to the customer

- ask if they would like you to read any printed material out loud to them (e.g., guest folio, directions, menu or transportation schedule)
- when providing directions or instructions, be precise and descriptive
- offer your elbow to guide them if needed. If they accept, lead – don't pull
- if you need to leave the customer, let them know by telling them you'll be back, or saying goodbye
- don't leave the customer in the middle of the room – guide them to a comfortable location

People with hearing loss

People who have hearing loss may be deaf, deafened or hard of hearing. They may also be oral deaf – unable to hear, but prefer to talk instead of using sign language. These terms are used to describe different levels of hearing and/or the way a person's hearing was diminished or lost.

Tips:

- once a customer has identified themselves as having hearing loss, make sure you are in a well-lit area where they can see your face and read your lips
- as needed, attract the customer's attention before speaking; try a gentle touch on the shoulder or wave of your hand
- if your customer uses a hearing aid, reduce background noise or if possible, move to a quieter area
- if necessary, ask if another method of communicating would be easier (e.g., using a pen and paper)
- speak directly to your customer – not to their sign language interpreter – if they are accompanied by one

People who are deafblind

A person who is deafblind has some degree of both hearing and vision loss. People who are deafblind are often accompanied by an intervenor, a professional support person who helps with communication.

Tips:

- a customer who is deafblind is likely to explain to you how to communicate with them, perhaps with an assistance card or a note
- speak directly to your customer, not to the intervenor

People with speech or language disabilities

Cerebral palsy, stroke, hearing loss or other conditions may make it difficult for a person to pronounce words or express themselves. Some people who have severe difficulties may use a communication board or other assistive devices.

Tips:

- don't assume that a person who has difficulty speaking doesn't understand you
- whenever possible, ask questions that can be answered with "yes" or a "no"
- read visible instructions for communication devices, if the person uses one
- be patient; don't interrupt or finish your customer's sentences
- confirm what the person has said by summarizing or repeating – don't pretend if you're not sure
- speak directly to the customer and not to their companion or support person

People who have learning disabilities

The term "learning disabilities" refers to a range of disorders. One example is dyslexia, which affects how a person takes in or retains information. This disability may become apparent when a person has difficulty reading material or understanding the information you are providing.

Tips:

- be patient – people with some learning disabilities may take a little longer to process information, to understand and to respond
- try to provide information in a way that works for your customer (e.g. some people with learning disabilities find written words difficult to understand, while others may have problems with numbers and math)
- be willing to rephrase or explain something again in another way

People who have developmental disabilities

Developmental disabilities (e.g. Down syndrome) or intellectual disabilities, can mildly or profoundly limit a person's ability to learn, communicate, do every day physical activities and live independently. You may not know that someone has this disability unless you are told.

Tips:

- don't make assumptions about what a person can or cannot do
- use plain language
- provide one piece of information at a time

- ask the customer if they need help reading your material or completing a form

People who have mental health disabilities

Mental health disability is a broad term for many disorders that can range in severity. It can affect a person's ability to think clearly, concentrate or remember things. A person with a mental health disability may experience depression or acute mood swings, anxiety due to phobias or panic disorder, or hallucinations.

You may not know someone has a mental health disability unless you are told. Stigma and lack of understanding are major barriers for people with mental health disabilities.

Tips:

- if you sense or know that a customer has a mental health disability, treat them with the same respect and consideration you have for everyone else
- be confident, calm and reassuring
- respect your customer's personal space
- limit distractions that could affect your customer's ability to focus or concentrate
 - loud noise, crowded areas and interruptions could cause stress

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 excluding the pool area.

There are various types of service animals besides guide dogs that support people with various types of disabilities, such as:

- Vision loss
- Epilepsy
- Autism
- Anxiety disorder

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.

Tips:

- don't touch or distract a service animal, it is not a pet, it is a working animal and has to pay attention at all times
- if you're not sure if the animal is a pet or a service animal, ask your customer
- you can provide water for the service animal if your customer requests it, but the customer is responsible for the care and supervision of the animal
- if the service animal is prohibited by another law, explain why to your customer and discuss other ways to serve them, e.g. leaving the dog in a safe area or serving your customer in another area where the animal is allowed

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.

In certain cases, Vittoria Hotel and Suites 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, Vittoria Hotel and Suites 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

Tips:

- if you're not sure which person is the customer, take your lead from the person using or requesting your goods, services or facilities, or simply ask
- speak directly to your customer, not to their support person
- if your organization charges an admission fee or fare, be familiar with its policy on fees or fares for support persons

Notice of temporary disruption

In the event of a planned or unexpected disruption to services or facilities for customers with disabilities Vittoria Hotel and Suites 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.

Services/Facilities include:

- Elevators

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

- Notice posted next to elevators on all floors
- Told to guests upon check-in

Training

Vittoria Hotel and Suites 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 3 months after being hired.

Training will include:

- purpose of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and the requirements of the customer service standard
- Vittoria Hotel and Suites 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 Vittoria Hotel and Suites goods, services or facilities

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

Feedback process

Vittoria Hotel and Suites 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:

- Inform guests at check-in if they have any issues to contact front desk any time during their stay

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

- Speak to front desk at any time during their stay (in person, via telephone or email)
- Email front desk at resinfo@vittoriahotels.com

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

- Feedback will be directed to a member of management

Customers can expect to hear back in 3-5 days.

Vittoria Hotel and Suites 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

Vittoria Hotel and Suites will notify the public that documents related to accessible customer service, are available upon request by posting a notice in the following location(s)/way(s):

- This Policy will be printed and left in each department
 - Front Desk- located in the drawer behind the desk
 - Housekeeping- located on Supervisors desk

- Maintenance- located in the Maintenance Room
- Administration- located in the accounting office shelving unit
- F&B- located under the bar

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

People accessing goods, services or facilities

If you notice that your customer is having difficulty accessing your goods, services or facilities, a good starting point is to simply ask "How can I help you?"

Your customers are your best source for information about their needs. Being flexible and open to suggestions will help create a good customer experience. A solution can be simple and they will likely appreciate your attention and consideration.