



Engineers

## **Accessible Customer Service at Read Jones Christoffersen Ltd.**

Read Jones Christoffersen Ltd. (RJC) has had a long-standing commitment to accessibility for customers with disabilities. The AODA Customer Service Standard now mandates a requirement to meet the needs of persons with disabilities with clearly defined policies and procedures by January 1, 2012.

To ensure compliance with the Customer Service Standard, RJC has:

- Reviewed existing policies and procedures and identified gaps;
- Revised and developed new policies and procedures, as required;
- Recommended long term priorities that continue to enhance the experience for customers with disabilities;

## **Customer Service Standard – Read Jones Christoffersen Ltd. Policies and Procedures**

In preparing for the compliance requirements, RJC has made reasonable efforts to ensure that its policies and procedures are consistent with the following principles, as defined by the Customer Service Standard, AODA:

- All goods and services at RJC will be provided in a manner that respects the dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity of people with disabilities.
  - Dignity: service is provided in a way that allows the person with a disability to maintain self-respect and the respect of other people.
  - Independence: when a person with a disability is allowed to do things on their own, without unnecessary help or interference from others.
  - Integration and Equal Opportunity: service is provided 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 an alternate measure is necessary to enable a person with disability to access goods or services. They should not have to make significantly more effort to access or obtain service. They should also not have to accept inconvenience or lesser quality. Sometimes this may mean that RJC has to treat individuals slightly differently so that they can benefit fully from the services.

## **Assistive Devices**

### Policy:

RJC is committed to serving people with disabilities, and ensuring that those who use assistive devices will benefit from enjoying a fulfilling experience.

### Procedures:

We ensure that:

- Our employees are aware of the various assistive devices that may be used by customers with disabilities while accessing our products and services. (Assistive devices are devices that are used to assist persons with disabilities in carrying out activities or in accessing the services of persons or organizations.)

### **Communication**

#### Policy:

RJC's policies and procedures take a person's disability into account when communicating with the individual. Two-way communication is a process of providing, sending, receiving and understanding information. To communicate in an effective way, RJC considers how the disability affects the way that the person expresses, receives or processes communication. Where possible, RJC asks the customer directly the best way to communicate with him/her.

#### Procedures:

RJC uses a variety of ways, wherever possible, to make communications more accessible by:

- Considering the needs of people with disabilities during the planning stage of services and communication development.
- Using plain language to make a document easier to read for people with certain learning disabilities.
- Offering information in alternate formats

### **Service Animals**

#### Policy:

RJC is committed to welcoming customers with disabilities who are accompanied by a trained, accredited service animal. A service animal may accompany a customer or any third party with a disability to all parts of our premises that are open to the public. Service animals may be used for, but not limited to, the following disabilities: vision loss, physical disability, hearing loss, autism, epilepsy etc. RJC ensures that all employees and others dealing with the public are properly trained in how to interact with people with disabilities, who are accompanied by a service animal.

#### Procedures:

To be considered a service animal under this standard, it must either be readily apparent that the animal is being used because of a person's disability or the person with a disability may be asked to provide a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that it is required because of his or her disability. RJC does enforce a general By-law that does not permit pets on the premises, including RJC property surrounding the building. Service animals are not pets - they are working animals. They are used by people with disabilities to overcome barriers much like assistive devices such as a white cane or a wheelchair.

Guide dogs or other service animals, including service animals in training, are allowed to accompany people with disabilities on RJC's premises open to the public.

If the service animal is causing a disturbance for other customers, the customer and accompanying service dog may be required to leave the area or RJC's premises.

RJC anticipates there will be special situations and is prepared to make every effort to accommodate the circumstances on an individual basis, as they arise, keeping safety to all customers and service animals in mind.

### **Support Persons**

#### Policy:

RJC is committed to welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person. Any person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person is allowed to enter RJC's premises with his or her support person. 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 RJC's premises.

A support person is an individual hired or chosen by a person with a disability to provide services or assistance with communication, mobility, personal care, medical needs or with access to goods or services.

### **Temporary Disruption of Service**

#### Policy:

RJC is aware that temporary disruptions of services (daily functions – elevators, physical operations) and programs may occur due to reasons that may or may not be within RJC's control or knowledge. RJC makes a reasonable effort to provide advance notice of the disruption to its customers, including information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration and a description of alternative facilities or services, if any, that may be available.

### **Customer Service Training**

#### Policy:

RJC provides training to employees who deal with the public on providing goods and services to customers with disabilities. RJC ensures that third parties or others, who deal with the public on their behalf, have the required AODA training.

#### Procedures:

Individuals in the following positions are trained by RJC:

- Team Leaders;
- Group Leaders;
- Project Engineers/Technologists
- Administrative Staff;
- Corporate Services;

After January, 2012, new staff will also receive training. This training will be provided as soon as practical or as soon as it can be done in the circumstances, after an employee commence their duties.

The training content, required by the Customer Service Standard, includes the following:

- The history of the legislation and the purposes of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and the requirements of 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 assistive devices available on RJC's premises or otherwise that may help with the provision of goods or services to people with disabilities.
- What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing the RJC's goods and services.
- RJC's policies and procedures relating to the customer service standard.
- On-going training in connection with any changes to RJC's policies and procedures governing the provision of goods and services to people with disabilities is provided.

Training is recorded for staff and includes name, date and content.

### **Process to Receive and Respond to Feedback**

#### Policy:

RJC has a process in place for receiving and responding to feedback about how goods and services are provided to customers with disabilities.

#### Procedures:

Customers can offer their feedback in the following ways:

- On-line at [www.rjc.ca](http://www.rjc.ca); through the general mailbox for the related office
- E-mail and telephone, (re-directed, as required, to the appropriate Managing Principal)
- In writing where correspondence is re-directed to the appropriate Managing Principal;
- In person to staff/ management.

The customer is requested to provide their name and contact information (phone, email).

Once feedback is received, the following actions are taken to respond:

- The feedback is directed to the appropriate person for action.
- The feedback is assessed for appropriate action. (Note: the customer service standard does not require a response to be provided for all feedback).
- Customers who provide feedback can expect an answer within 72 hours (three business days).

## **Posting of Documents**

### Policy:

Notices are posted, informing the public that the documents required by the Customer Service Standard are available upon request and will be provided in a format that takes a person's disability into account.

### Procedures:

Documents are available through the following networks, as appropriate.

- Company web site
- Intranet for staff
- Signage in the office

READ JONES CHRISTOFFERSEN LTD.