

Accessibility for Manitobans Act (AMA)

Accessible Customer Service Policy



Introduction and Purpose

Barriers to accessibility affect more than 200,000 Manitobans. Hatch is dedicated to complying with The Accessibility for Manitobans Act and the standards it includes. Improving or eliminating barriers benefits everyone.

Hatch's policies, measures and practices are intended to reflect the principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity for all people including people with disabilities.

The Accessibility for Manitobans Act does not provide a definition for disability. For the purpose of this policy statement Hatch will use the definition provided by Ontario Human Rights Commission/ Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005. However, the definition is not limited to this interpretation.

“Disability” means,

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

The Accessibility for Manitobans Act

The Accessibility for Manitobans Act (AMA) became law on December 5, 2013. This landmark legislation provides a proactive process to remove barriers affecting persons with disabilities and many other citizens. The Manitoba Government is committed to achieve significant progress by 2023, making Manitoba more inclusive for everyone.

The AMA affects all Manitobans—individuals confronting barriers every day, as well as those in a position to identify, remove and prevent barriers to accessibility. The Manitoba Government is working with representatives from the disability community, as well as public and private sector organizations to develop accessibility standards.

Accessibility standards are building blocks for making real, measurable and effective changes to accessibility. Each standard will outline specific requirements and timelines for organizations that have a responsibility to eliminate barriers.

Accessibility Standards focus on five key areas of daily living:

- The Customer Service accessibility standard addresses business practices and training requirements to provide better customer service to people with disabilities.
- The Employment accessibility standard addresses practices related to employee recruitment, hiring and retention.
- The Information and Communications accessibility standard will address barriers to accessing information—information provided in print, in person, on websites or in other formats.
- The Design of Public Spaces accessibility standard will deal with access to those areas outside the jurisdiction of the Manitoba Building Code, such as sidewalks, pathways, parks and other aspects of the environment that we design and construct.
- The Transportation accessibility standard will apply to public transportation to address barriers Manitobans might encounter while getting to work or school, shopping, socializing and other aspects of daily life.



The Customer Service Accessibility Standard (AMA)

The Accessibility Standard for Customer Service came into effect November 1, 2015. Businesses, non-profits and smaller municipalities were required to comply as of November 1, 2018. The standard addresses business practices to provide better customer service to people with disabilities.

Hatch is committed to complying with the Accessibility Standard for Customer Service under The Accessibility for Manitobans Act. Our policies, practices and measures reflect the principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity for people with disabilities.

If a barrier to accessing our services cannot be removed, we seek to provide alternate ways to access our services.

Scope and Applicability

The following policy statements, organizational practices and measures are intended to meet the requirements of the Accessibility Standard for Customer Service.

This policy applies to all employees, volunteers and management.

Requirements under the Customer Service Accessibility Standard (AMA)

1. Establish and implement measures, policies and practices respecting barrier-free access to the goods or services it provides to customers with disabilities. In establishing and implementing its measures, policies and practices, an organization must:
 - a. Identify barriers to accessible customer service that exist respecting the goods or services it provides
 - b. Seek to remove the existing barriers it is responsible for, so that all persons reasonably expected to seek to obtain, use or benefit from the goods or services can do so using the same means
2. In its measures, policies and practices, an organization must make reasonable efforts to ensure that, when communicating with a person who self-identifies as being disabled by a barrier, the communication is done in a manner that takes into account the barrier.
3. An organization's policies must recognize that a person who is disabled by a barrier may use assistive devices to remove or reduce the barrier, and the measures and practices that the organization implements must reasonably accommodate the use of those devices.
4. An organization's policies must recognize that a person who is disabled by a barrier may be accompanied by a support person when seeking to obtain, use or benefit from the organization's goods or services. If the organization provides goods and services at a particular premises, its measures and practices must recognize that:
 - a. The person disabled by a barrier and his or her support person ought to be permitted to enter the premises together
 - b. The person disabled by the barrier ought to be able to have access to his or her support person at all times while on the premises
5. If a support person is required to pay an amount to be admitted to or present at its premises, the organization must ensure that advanced notice is given of the amount payable in respect of the support person, if any.
6. An organization's policies must recognize that a person who is disabled by a barrier may be accompanied by a service animal when he or she seeks to obtain, use or benefit from the organization's good or service.
 - c. Ensure that a fee or charge relating to accommodating a person who is disabled by a barrier is imposed only if the organization cannot reasonably accommodate the person otherwise
 - d. If an existing barrier cannot reasonably be removed, seek to ensure that persons who are disabled by the barrier are provided access to the goods or services by alternative means, whether on a temporary or permanent basis
 - e. Seek to prevent new barriers from being created



7. An organization must ensure that its measures, policies and practices include a requirement that any aspect of its built environment intended to facilitate barrier-free access to the goods and services it provides are available for use in the intended manner; and if such access is unavailable for use, notice of the following be given:
 - a. The reason why the aspect is unavailable and an estimate of when the unavailability will cease
 - b. Details of alternative means, if any, available to access the organization's goods or services
8. In its measures, policies and practices an organization must make reasonable efforts to ensure that it provides a process for
 - a. Receiving and responding to feedback about the accessibility of its goods or services in a manner that is appropriate in the circumstances and is suitable for persons who are disabled by barriers
 - b. Documenting its resulting actions, and making that documentation available on request
9. An organization must document the measures, policies and practices it establishes and implements and must provide a copy of the documentation on request and provide notice that the documentation is available on request. The notice must be prominently displayed on the applicable premises and on the organization's website, if any, or be given by other means that are reasonable in the circumstances.
 - a. If the documentation is requested by a person who is disabled by a barrier, the organization must ensure that the documentation or the information contained in it is given to the person
 - b. In a manner that has taken into account the barrier
 - c. Within a reasonable time and at no cost to the person
 - d. An organization must comply with the measures, policies and practices that it establishes and implements.
10. An organization must ensure that training about accessible customer service is or has been provided to the following persons:
 - a. A person who provides goods or services directly to the public or to another organization in Manitoba on behalf of the organization, including employees, agents and volunteers
 - b. A person who participates in or is responsible for the development or implementation of the organization's measures, policies and practices. The training must include
 - a. Instruction about
 - ✓ How to interact and communicate with persons disabled by barriers
 - ✓ How to interact with persons disabled by barriers who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a support person or service animal
 - ✓ How to use any equipment or assistive devices that may be available to assist persons disabled by barriers
 - ✓ What to do if a person disabled by a particular barrier is having difficulty accessing a good or service
 - b. A review of The Human Rights Code, the Act and this regulation

An organization must document its training policy, including a summary of the content of the training and when the training is to be provided.
11. An organization that holds a public event must take reasonable measures to ensure that
 - a. Notice of the event is given in a manner that is accessible to persons disabled by barriers
 - b. The event is held in a meeting space that is accessible
 - c. The physical and communication needs of the persons disabled by barriers are met on request
 - d. Notice is given that persons disabled by barriers may request that relevant supports be provided

A "public event" includes a public meeting, a public hearing and a consultation process required under an enactment.



Customer Service Standard (AMA)

Hatch has made reasonable efforts to ensure that its policies and procedures are consistent with the following principles, as defined by the Accessibility Standard for Customer Service (AMA):

- All goods and services at Hatch will be provided in a manner that respects the dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity for 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 a 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 Hatch will have to treat individuals slightly differently so that they can benefit fully from the services.

Communicating with a Customer with a Disability

Hatch's policies and procedures take a person's disability into account when communicating with the individual. Where possible, Hatch employees will ask the customer directly the best way to communicate with him/her.

Hatch 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 signs and plain language to make a document easier to read for people with certain learning disabilities and offering information in alternate formats, as needed.

Accommodating the Use of Assistive Devices

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

Hatch will ensure that:

- Our employees are aware of the various assistive devices provided by the Hatch that may be used by customers with disabilities while accessing our programs, products and services.
- Designated staff are trained in the use of the assistive devices available at their office location.

Welcoming Support Persons

Hatch 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 the 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 Hatch premises.

Allowing Service Animals

Hatch 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. Hatch employees, volunteers and others dealing with the public are trained in how to interact with people with disabilities, who are accompanied by a service animal.

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.

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 Hatch premises.



Maintaining Accessibility Features

Hatch has also made reasonable efforts to ensure that its policies and procedures are consistent with the following principles, as defined by the Accessibility Standard for Customer Service (AMA):

- Hatch has identified barriers to accessible customer service.
- Hatch has removed existing barriers to the best of our ability.
- Hatch will ensure that there will be no fee or charge to accommodate a person who is disabled unless the company is unable to reasonable accommodate the person otherwise.
- Hatch will ensure that alternate means of access are provided should a barrier be unable to be reasonably removed.
- Hatch will continue to prevent new barriers from being created.

Temporary Disruption of Service

Hatch is aware that temporary disruptions of services (elevators, physical operations) and programs may occur due to reasons that may or may not be within Hatch's control or knowledge. Hatch makes a reasonable effort to provide advance notice of the disruption to 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. Notification may also be made through the building services, if the building is leased.

The notices may be made available through telephone recordings, Intranet for staff and/or temporary signage. In the event of an unexpected disruption, advance notice is not possible. In such cases, Hatch or the building will provide notice, as soon as possible.

Process to Receive and Respond to Feedback

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

Customers with disabilities can offer their feedback in the following ways:

- On-line at Hatch website;
- E-mail and telephone, (redirected, as required, to the appropriate response employee);

- In writing where correspondence is re-directed to the appropriate response employee;
- In person with an appointment to the appropriate response employee.

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

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 require feedback can expect an answer within 72 hours.

Should a complaint be received, the same process and actions outlined in the section above entitled "Process to Receive and Respond to Feedback" would apply. The feedback process is readily available to the public through:

- A notice on the Hatch website;
- A sign in the reception area;
- Other communication networks, as appropriate.

Customer Service Training

Hatch provides training to all employees and all those who are involved in the development and approval of customer service policies and procedures on providing goods and services to customers with disabilities. Hatch ensures that third parties and others, who deal with the public on Hatch's behalf, have the required AMA training.

A variety of methods and time frames are used including formal and informal training sessions, presentations, Ministry of Community and Social Services websites, self-paced e-training, dependent on need and functions. Training is provided within a reasonable and practicable period.

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

- A summary of the Human Rights Code, a summary of the Accessibility for Manitobans Act and the regulation.
- 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 Hatch'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 Hatch's goods and services.

Additional training will be conducted should significant changes be made to the AMA policy.

Record Keeping of Accessibility and Training Policies

We keep a written record of our accessibility and training policies. Our written documents include a summary of our training material and when training is offered.

We let the public know that our written policies are available on request. 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.

Documents are available through the following networks, as appropriate.

- Company website
- Intranet
- Office signage

Related Documents

- The Accessibility for Manitobans Act—Bill 26
- The Manitoba Human Rights Code C.C.S.M. c. H175
- Manitoba's Accessibility Standard for Customer Service

