

March 1, 2011

To All Rectors and Wardens:

I am writing to you to draw your attention to *The Ontarians with Disabilities Act* that is coming into effect on January 1, 2012 and will have implications for all of us within the faith community. It includes a provision that every workplace/parish with at least one employee prepares Customer Care Standards Policies and Practices and be available on request to parishioners and non-parishioners alike.

Attached is a brief summary of the customer care provisions required to be included as outlined at the web site www.aoda.ca. There are more details available on the provincial website dealing with the "Ontarians with Disabilities Act".

www.mcass.gov.on.ca/en/mcass/programs/accessibility/index.aspx

Please keep in mind that this includes all disabilities not just barrier-free access. Some areas to consider might be:

- Are there large print BAS copies and bulletins available?
- What training do sidespeople receive for assisting the visually impaired to their seat?
- Is communion available in place?
- How do you handle creating seating for a care giver to be with a worshipper?
- Do your acoustics require some seating to be reserved for those with hearing loss?
- Are there designated spaces for people in wheelchairs?
- Are all parishioners aware that disability assist dogs are allowed entry into our parishes?

Some of the provisions are administrative and include tracking and responding to feedback as well as training of employees and volunteers.

Please review the information provided and if you have any further questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us at the synod office.

Sincerely,

The Venerable Michael Patterson
Executive Archdeacon
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Att.

HIGHLIGHTS OF ONTARIANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT CUSTOMER CARE REGULATION

1. Applies to every business/organization/faith community with at least one employee.
2. The policy must be in place by January 1, 2012.
3. “Every provider of goods or services shall establish policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of its goods or services to persons with disabilities”.
 - Respect the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities
 - Provision of goods/services must be integrated unless alternate measures are necessary so persons with disabilities can obtain/use goods or services
 - Persons with disabilities must be given opportunities equal to others
 - Must deal with the use of assistive devices
 - When communicating with persons with disabilities provider need to take into account the disability
4. For a building owned by the provider:
 - Service animals are permitted unless otherwise excluded by law
 - If the latter, other measures are provided
 - If accompanied by a personal support person, both can enter together and the person with disability is not prevented from having access to him/her
 - Provider can insist that the person with disability have a personal support person if required for the health and safety of that person or others
 - Admission cost for personal support persons must be posted
5. Give notice of any temporary disruption of services.
6. The following must receive training: those who deal/interact with the public; those who develop the policies and procedures Training must include:
 - Purpose of the Act
 - How to interact and communicate with persons with disabilities
 - How to interact with those who use assistive devices
 - How to use equipment you provide to assist persons with disabilities
 - What to do if a person has difficulty accessing your service
 - Training is a.s.a.p. after hiring and ongoing to match any changes
7. a) Establish a process for receiving and responding to feedback about the manner in which goods/services are provided and make the information about the process readily available.
b) The process must be available in person, by telephone, in writing or electronically.
c) It must specify actions to be taken if a complaint is received.