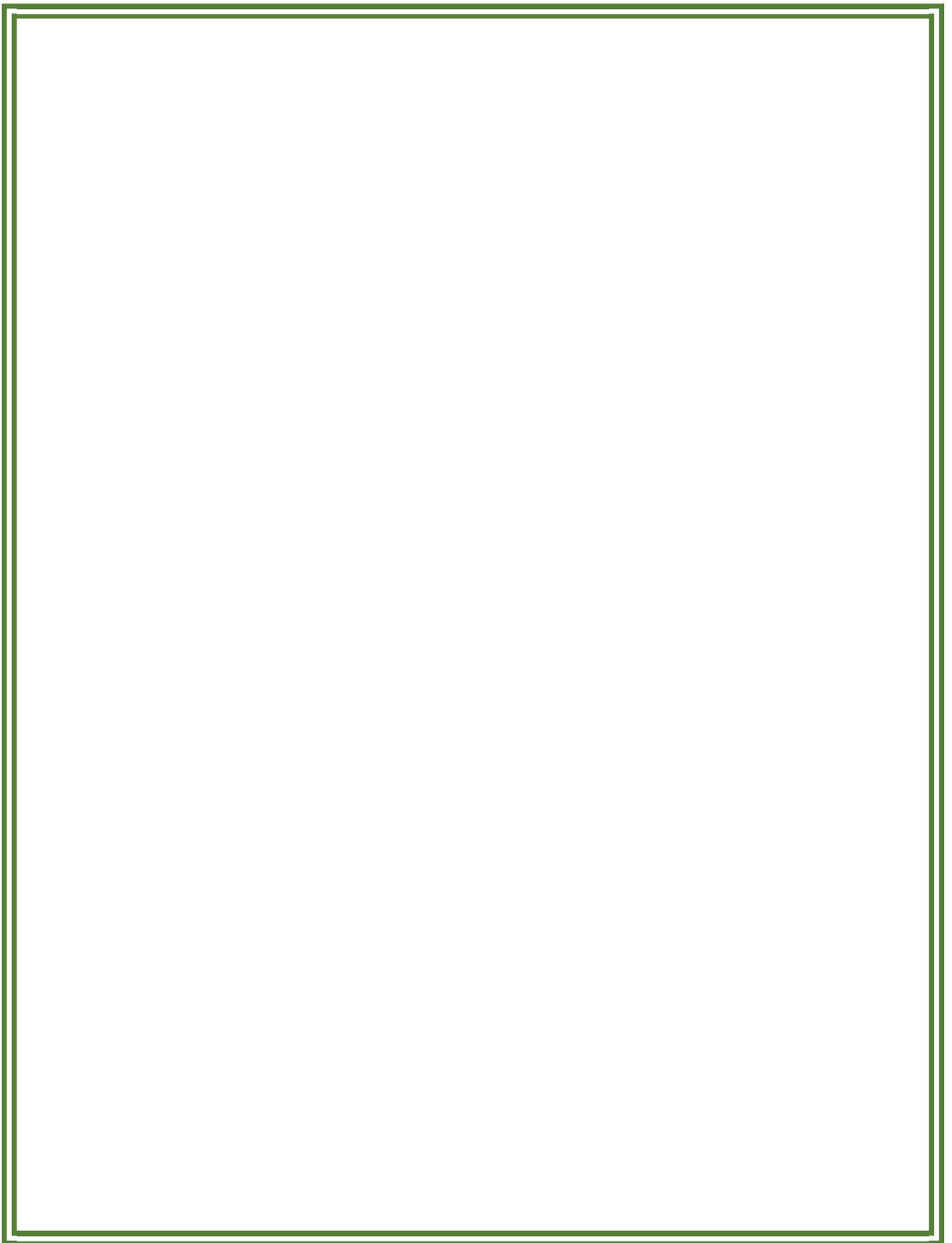




Employee Guide to Ensuring
Accessible Customer Service



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INTRODUCTION

The City of Brandon's Mission Statement:

“To improve safety, health, economic security and quality of life in our community”

The City of Brandon’s mission statement is one rooted in dedicated, unwavering service to our community. It pledges leadership by example, service with integrity, prudent use of resources, and places high value on our employees. These are all pledges that are just as important now as when they were first established by the Council and City Administration of the day in the late 1990’s.

In 2013, the City of Brandon organization added to the bench strength of its external mission statement by adopting its own internal vision statement of “Serving & Building Community”. The vision statement is brought to life by our talented and dedicated staff every day, who display core values of professionalism, respect, integrity, diversity and excellence.



In our community, accessibility to City services affects all of us. Whether you live with a disability or know someone who has experienced barriers due to illness, injury or age, you will have become aware of the impact and significance of accessibility.

Manitoba now has legislation designed to improve accessibility for everyone in the province. Even more important than the legislation is our belief that

improving Accessibility is the right thing to do. The City of Brandon is committed to enhancing the access to our services to reasonably accommodate the needs of all people, regardless of their abilities. Making these changes will improve the level of service we provide for all of our customers, not just those challenged with accessibility barriers.

This [Accessible Customer Service Employee Guide](#) builds on this vision. The City of Brandon supports excellence in core municipal service delivery by encouraging an attitude of finding solutions and focusing on universal design.

Message from Accessibility Champion, Mayor Rick Chrest

PART 1 - ACCESSIBILITY AWARENESS

Accessible Customer Service

In 2013, the Accessibility for Manitobans Act (“the Act”) was passed by the provincial government. Under this Act, and the Customer Service Standard Regulation, all employees who interact with the public, must receive training specific to accessible customer service. Under the Regulation, accessible customer service is provided when everyone who might want a good or service has the same opportunities as everyone else.

Accessible customer service is providing service with the understanding that each individual may need a slightly different type of accommodation in order to have the same opportunity as others to that service. For example, a person with a visual impairment may need to have information read aloud; an individual with a learning disability may need to have instructions written down; and someone who uses a wheelchair may need help finding an accessible route. Accessible customer service is simply good customer service: courteous, helpful and prompt.

Part 1 of this Accessible Customer Service Guideline for City of Brandon employees includes the following:

1. An overview of The Accessibility for Manitobans Act and the requirements of the Customer Service Standard Regulation
2. An overview of The Manitoba Human Rights Code
3. Reasonable Accommodation as set out by The Human Rights Code
4. The City of Brandon’s measures, policies and practices to provide accessible customer service, including Policy #3012 – The Accessibility Policy

The Accessibility for Manitobans Act

The Accessibility for Manitobans Act (AMA) became law December 5, 2013. Under this legislation, the Manitoba government will develop five (5) mandatory accessibility standards:

1. Customer Service
2. Information and Communications
3. Built Environments
4. Employment
5. Transportation



Accessible parking and entrance of the newly renovated Brandon Municipal Airport.

Accessible Customer Service was the first standard to be developed. It addresses business practices and training needed to provide barrier-free customer service to people with disabilities by addressing attitudes, knowledge, and basic good practices. It requires organizations to:

- Identify barriers to their goods and services
- Remove existing barriers or provide alternate access
- Ensure fees are charged for an accommodation only when no other reasonable accommodation can be made

The Accessibility Standard for Customer Service Regulation

The requirements of the Accessibility Standard for Customer Service for the City of Brandon include:

- Reviewing physical barriers that prevent customers receiving service
- Considering the communication needs of customers
- Allowing service animals
- Allowing assistive devices such as wheelchairs, walkers and oxygen tanks
- Informing customers about our accessibility policies and procedures
- Informing our customers when accessible services aren't available
- Inviting customer feedback
- Understanding The Human Rights Code and providing reasonable accommodations
- Training staff on accessible customer service

The **City of Brandon's Accessibility Plan** lists the following 10 specific objectives which, when completed, will improve the accessibility of our customer service:

1. Employee Training
2. Reviewing Accessibility Issues
3. Accessible Information
4. Documentation
5. Accessibility Feedback
6. Accessibility Devices
7. Public Events
8. Signage
9. Parking
10. Accessible Washrooms

The Human Rights Code (Manitoba): Reasonable Accommodation

The Human Rights Code is Manitoba's provincial human rights law, designed to protect groups and individuals from unreasonable discrimination. Reasonable accommodation is the Code's answer for preventing discrimination.

A reasonable accommodation can create equal opportunities. By taking into account a customer's unique need, often a simple and inexpensive change to how we do something is all that is needed to remove a barrier.

A good place to start when asked for an accommodation is to talk with the customer. Ask what the need is and how it can best be met. **Good communication, flexibility and co-operation is very important.** Each situation and the customer's specific needs must be considered.

City of Brandon employees are encouraged to take steps to make reasonable accommodations. This may mean adjusting a rule, a policy or even a physical space to allow for changes to the way things are usually done. With flexibility and good communication, a simple and affordable accommodation solution is usually possible.



The customer service desk in Development Services offers two levels of work surfaces.

The City of Brandon's Accessibility Policy

A copy of this policy is available on the City of Brandon website at www.brandon.ca and on the intranet under "Policies and Procedures". In this policy, the City of Brandon pledges its commitment to:

- ensure equal access and participation for all people, regardless of their abilities
- treat all people in a way that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence
- meet the needs of people who face accessibility barriers by identifying, removing and preventing these barriers
- meet the requirements of *The Accessibility for Manitobans Act*

The responsibilities outlined in the Policy include the following:

- **The City of Brandon** will prepare an Accessibility Plan in consultation with persons disabled by barriers or representatives from organizations of persons disabled by barriers. The plan must be made available to the public.
- **Employees** are responsible for ensuring that they perform their duties according to the requirements of the Accessibility Policy, Accessibility for Manitobans Act, and Customer Service Standards. This includes ensuring every reasonable effort is made to achieve accessibility for the customer and reporting any potential barrier they notice.

In 2016, the **Accessibility Plan for the Customer Service Standard** was completed. The other four standards will be addressed, one standard every second year. A copy of the plan is available on the City of Brandon's website at www.brandon.ca. It is also available in alternate formats upon request.

Provincial Inspectors

The Act also includes provincial inspectors whose job will be to check information and records, and conduct investigations.

The inspectors have the right to enter any building that falls under the Act, or any building that may contain records and other materials related to compliance with the Act. City of Brandon employees in charge of the building or required records must produce them, or make them available, provide any assistance or information requested, and provide written answers when requested.

Upon receiving a written order from a provincial inspector under the Accessibility for Manitobans Act, in addition to complying with the request, employees must provide the order information to the Accessibility Coordinator through the Accessible City Services (acs@brandon.ca or 204-729-2186).

Accessible Customer Service Basics

How does accessible customer service differ from the customer service the City of Brandon strives to provide everyday? These best practices support our basic customer service principles of courtesy and promptness. They also promote understanding that everyone has different needs. In serving and building community, we make every effort to provide service in a way that allows the person with a disability to maintain self-respect, to do things on their own without unnecessary help or interference from others as well as benefiting from the same services, in the same or similar way as other customers.



The City of Brandon Columbarium offers wide, level paths for ease of access.

Be prepared to provide seamless customer service:

- Be familiar with the adaptive technologies available to you
- Adopt a problem-solving, solution-focused attitude
- Identify and work to remove potential barriers before they can impact service
- Know the service-alternatives readily available (e.g. available meeting spaces)
- Proactively notice what could present an issue (e.g. consider the customer's situation before providing instructions)

All employees are encouraged to problem solve when they come across barriers and find a way of making it work. Focus on the customer's needs and what service you can offer to meet those needs.

General Disability Etiquette Tips

- Be polite, introduce yourself, and ask how you can help
- Do not make assumptions about someone's abilities or limitations; every person's disability is different. Ask questions if you are not sure what someone needs
- Focus on removing the barrier, not identifying the disability. Do not ask, "What is your disability?"
- Describe and address people with disabilities appropriately. Use respectful language that emphasizes the person rather than the disability (Example: "person who has epilepsy" rather than "epileptic")
- Speak to your customer, not the person accompanying him or her. Having a disability does not prevent people from making their own decisions about what to buy, or what services they want
- Be patient – people with disabilities may need more time to express themselves or to move about
- Pay attention to all non-verbal behaviour. If a person seems disoriented or distressed, ask what you can do to help



Arborist crew trimming trees over sidewalk (above)

City employee working on curb ramp (left)

Mobility barriers affect people with amputations, paralysis, cerebral palsy, stroke, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, arthritis, spinal cord injury, and other disabilities or health conditions. A wheelchair is only one device people with mobility disabilities use. Depending on the disability, some people may use crutches, canes, scooters or walkers. Some may use no support at all.

TIPS:

- Do not touch wheelchairs, crutches or other technical aids without permission
- When asked to help by pushing someone in a wheelchair, do not leave the person in an awkward place such as facing a wall, or in the path of opening doors or crowded corridors
- Do not move mobility devices out of a customer's reach
- Organize the space so that there is room for wheelchairs, scooters and walkers
- For longer conversations, consider inviting everyone to sit

People with dexterity disabilities may have decreased range of motion in their arms, fingers, wrists, back or neck, and decreased muscle control, spasms, paralysis, tingling or numbness. A simple doorknob could be a barrier. Dexterity disabilities may result from multiple sclerosis, cerebral palsy, carpal tunnel syndrome, tendonitis, arthritis, sciatica, amputations or degenerative disc disease.

TIPS:

- Do not assume that a person with dexterity disabilities needs assistance
- Ask your customer if they need help before helping him/her
- Have seating available
- Install door levers rather than doorknobs

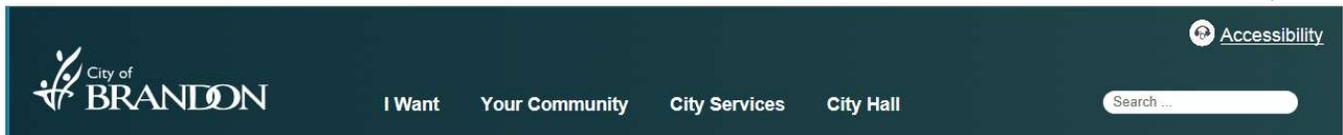


North entrance of City Hall.

Communication barriers affecting persons who are blind or have a visual impairment result when customers are expected to read signs, forms and general information, understand physical gestures, locate landmarks, or see hazards. There are many things you can do or say to remove barriers for people who are blind or have a visual impairment and may or may not use a mobility cane (often white) or be accompanied by a service animal.

TIPS:

- If you realize someone has a visual impairment, assume they can see you
- Identify yourself as you approach and speak directly to the customer
- Ask if you can offer any assistance, such as reading printed material aloud
- Be precise and descriptive when providing directions or instructions
- Offer your elbow or shoulder to guide them if needed. Relax and walk at a normal pace
- Let the customer know when approaching a narrow opening or stairs
- Always give customers the opportunity to tell you what they need
- See also “Service Animals are Welcome”



City of Brandon website – Browsealoud function

Communication barriers affecting people who are hard of hearing, deafened or deaf result when there are no alternatives to spoken communication. Hard of hearing or deafened people may have difficulty in hearing, but can still talk. Deaf people communicate through American Sign Language (ASL). You can help remove barriers by following these tips.

TIPS:

- Once customers have identified themselves as having a hearing loss, make sure you are facing them and speak clearly at a normal pace. Do not shout. If necessary, move to a well-lit area away from a window, or to a quieter area
- If they appear unsure, ask if another form of communication would be helpful, such as using a pad of paper and pen
- If customers identify themselves as Deaf, in order to discuss an issue or product, they require an interpreter to translate speech into their first language, ASL. If an ASL interpreter is not available, ask if they want to set up an appointment for a different time with interpretation

- If communicating with customers and clients using a public address system, offer them an alternative, such as a public display screen that shows printed information
- If needed, attract a person’s attention before speaking (e.g. use a gentle touch or a wave)
- Use closed captioning on video presentations

Communication barriers affecting persons who are deaf-blind: A person who is deaf and blind may have some degree of both hearing and vision. Others do not. Your customer may have been born deaf-blind or has become deaf-blind over time. A professional support person may accompany some individuals who are deaf-blind.

TIPS:

- A customer who is deaf-blind is likely to explain to you how to communicate with them (e.g. a white board and a black marker can be used to communicate for those customers with some vision)
- Put signs at eye level and, if requested, turn on a screen for them to read
- Some customers may ask you to “show them” or “guide them” to something specific
- Some customers who are deaf-blind cannot read and communicate at the same time. Be patient.
- Some may ask for “Print on Palm.” This simply means using your finger to write large block letters for a word or a number on the palm of their hand.
- In an emergency, draw a large X with your finger, covering the person’s entire back. This should alert the person to the emergency and that they should follow you.
- When you approach a person who is deaf-blind, let them know – by a simple touch on the shoulder or arm – that you are there. Reassure them of your continued presence in the same manner.
- Speak directly to your customer, not to the support worker.
- If you cannot understand a person communicating with you by phone, let them know you are having difficulty understanding and ask if there may be another way to communicate.



Universal Disability Symbols

Barriers to understanding may result when a person is affected by intellectual, developmental and learning disabilities, such as autism, fetal alcohol syndrome, and Down syndrome. Knowing about the disability is not necessary in order to offer respectful service and clear communication.

TIPS:

- Always address the person directly
- Don't make assumptions about what a person can understand or do
- Use plain language, and provide one piece of information at a time
- If you are in a busy area with many distractions, consider moving to a quieter location
- Provide information in a way that takes into account the customer's disability. Whenever possible, use pictures and keep words to a minimum
- Be patient, some people with learning disabilities may take a little longer to process information, to understand and to respond

Barriers created by mental health issues include a lack of patience and stereotyping. Mental health issues, such as anxiety and depression, can affect a person's ability to think clearly, concentrate or remember things. People with brain injuries may face similar barriers.

TIPS:

- Treat everyone with the same respect and consideration
- If a customer appears to be in crisis, ask them to tell you the best way to help
- Be confident, calm and reassuring



Handi-transit service is available to Handi client:

- *Requires a mobility device to perform daily tasks*
- *Is unable to read information signs*
- *Is unable to step up or down a 40 cm step*
- *Is unable to walk 200 m (660 feet) from home/destination unassisted*

Service Animals Are Welcome

People with disabilities may use service animals for many different forms of assistance depending on their disability. A service animal can be identified by the harness it is wearing. According to *The Human Rights Code* (Manitoba), a service animal is defined as “an animal that has been trained to provide assistance to a person with a disability.” The disability may be visible (such as blindness) or invisible (such as post-traumatic stress disorder or PTSD).

TIPS:

- Service animals are welcome in places available to the public
- Do not pet, feed, or distract service animals. They are working animals, not pets
- If you are not sure if the animal is a service animal, ask if it is trained to assist the person with a disability related need. Do not ask the person with a service animal what their disability is
- Do not apply “pet policies” to service animals
- Do not charge extra for the presence of a service animal



This service dog is working; do not pet, feed, or distract service animals.

Helping Customers Who Use Assistive Devices

Assistive devices enable people with disabilities to do everyday tasks and activities to overcome many barriers. Assistive devices include but are not limited to wheelchairs, walkers, hearing aids, white canes and sometimes computers.

TIPS:

- Ask permission before touching or handling any assistive device
- Assistive devices should not be moved out of the customer's reach
- Let customers know what assistive devices you offer (i.e. some organizations offer wheelchairs)
- Always notify customers if an accessibility feature, such as an elevator or accessible washroom, is temporarily out of service. Offer an alternative accommodation when possible



Sportsplex assistive device.

Helping Customers Accompanied by a Support Person

Some people with disabilities may be accompanied by a support person who assists with mobility, personal care or medical needs.

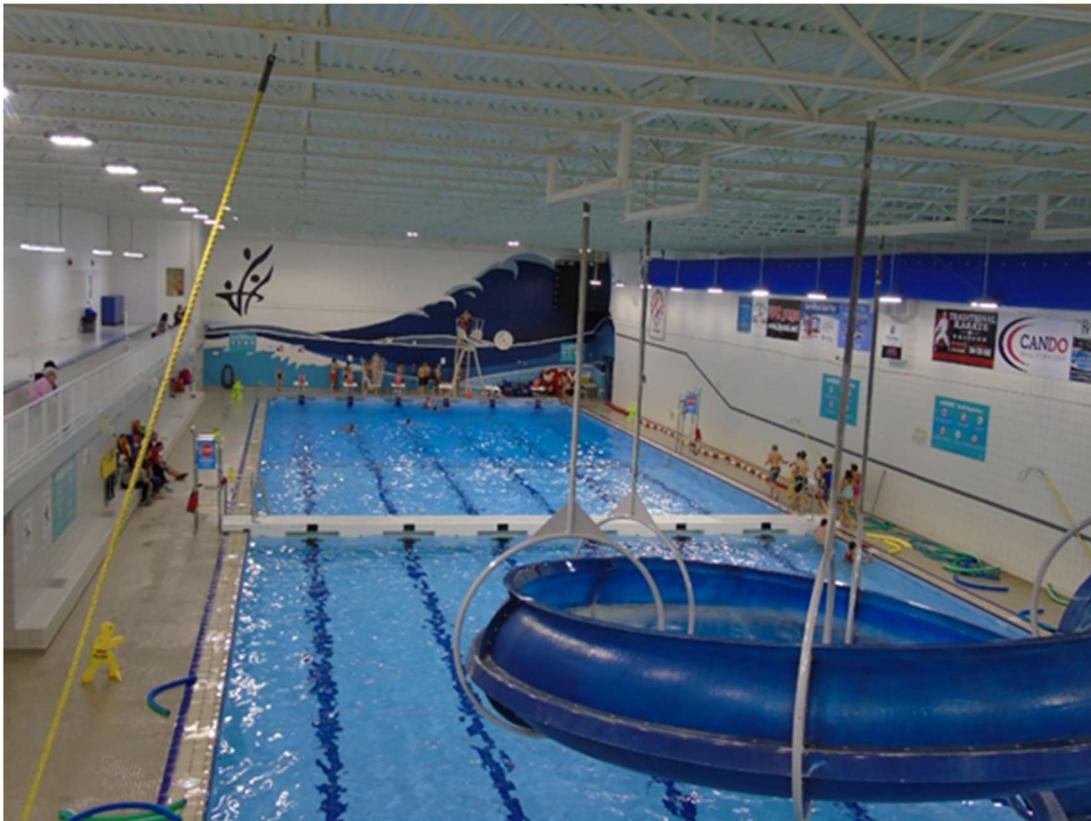
TIPS:

- Welcome support people to your workplace or place of business
- Speak directly to your customer, not to the support person. Do not assume the individual with a support person will not understand
- Avoid charging entrance or other fees for a support person when possible
- If you must charge admission for the support person, provide advance notice

Part 1 of this guide has addressed the basic requirements under the Act in providing an overview of the following topics:

- The Accessibility for Manitobans Act and the requirements of the Customer Service Standard Regulation
- The Manitoba Human Rights Code
- Reasonable Accommodation as set out by The Human Rights Code
- The City of Brandon's measures, policies and practices to provide accessible customer service, including Policy #3012 – The Accessibility Policy

Part 2 provides details on the City's processes, procedures, and resources designed to ensure Accessible City Services.



Sportsplex Pool.

PART 2 - ACCESSIBLE CITY SERVICES

Identifying Barriers

A barrier is anything that prevents a person from fully joining in all parts of society. Barriers can include:

- **Physical and architectural barriers** are physical obstacles that make it difficult for some to easily access a place (e.g. a door knob that cannot be turned by a person with limited mobility or strength, or a hallway or door that is too narrow to allow a person who uses a wheelchair to pass through safely)
- **Informational and communication barriers** are created when information is offered in a form that suits some, but not all, of the population (e.g. print that is too small for some people to read and public address systems that alert only people who can hear the message)
- **Systemic barriers** are policies, practices or procedures that result in some people receiving unequal access or being excluded (e.g. eligibility criteria that effectively exclude people based on a disability, such as requiring a job applicant to have a driver's license even though there are ways to reorganize a job to use another form of transportation)
- **Attitudinal barriers** result when people think and act based on false assumptions (e.g. receptionist talks to an individual's support person because she or he assumes the individual with a disability will not understand)
- **Technological barriers** occur when technology, or the way it is used, cannot be accessed by people with disabilities (e.g. websites not accessible to people who are blind and use screen reader software)

Identifying & Removing Barriers

The City of Brandon is committed to continuous improvement. This includes identifying and removing barriers. If there is a barrier you are aware of, please take a few moments to fill out a Barrier Identification Checklist (See "Accessibility Procedures" in the Appendix of this guide).

- This form may be completed electronically or by pen and paper.
- Please forward completed forms to Accessible City Services at acs@brandon.ca or through interoffice mail
- Barriers may also be reported by phone to 204-729-2186



Brandon Police Service

Preventing Barriers - Universal Design

When we are making changes, we can avoid creating new barriers by using the “universal design” approach. Universal design refers to making things safer, easier, and more convenient for everyone. It involves a broad range of design concepts – including design of products, spaces and environments – to provide access in a way that respects all abilities.

A universal design focus for City of Brandon services and structures will result in products and environments that are naturally accessible to older people, people without disabilities, and people with disabilities alike.



Brandon Fire & Emergency Services

Examples of current universal design applications in the City of Brandon are curb cuts or sidewalk ramps, Browsealoud on the website, and the low-floor Transit vehicles. Some other examples of universal design to consider include:

- Smooth ground-level entrances without stairs and surface textures that require low rolling force
- Surfaces that are stable, firm, and slip resistant
- Wide interior doors, hallways, and alcoves with a five-foot turning space at doors and dead-ends
- Lever handles for opening doors rather than twisting knobs
- Single-hand operation with closed fist for operable components including fire alarm pull stations
- Components that do not require tight grasping, pinching or twisting of the wrist
- Components that require less than 5 pounds of force to operate
- Light switches with large flat panels rather than small toggle switches
- Buttons and other controls that can be distinguished by touch
- Bright and appropriate lighting, particularly task lighting
- Auditory output redundant with information on visual displays
- Visual output redundant with information in auditory output
- Contrast controls on visual output
- Use of meaningful icons with text labels
- Clear lines of sight to reduce dependence on sound
- Closed captioning on television networks
- Signs with light-on-dark visual contrast
- Web pages that provide alternative text to describe images
- Instruction that presents material both orally and visually



Brandon Municipal Airport

Public Events

This is a brief summary of things to consider when hosting a public event. Please see the **Public Events Procedure** on Employee Self-Service (ess.brandon.ca) under Company Documents, in the Appendix of this guide. All accessibility procedures are also available on the Intranet under Corporate Documents and Procedures, Accessibility.

As a public sector organization, the City of Brandon must make their events accessible by:

- Announcing events in a manner that is accessible
- Holding events in accessible meeting places
- Inviting requests for relevant disability accommodations. For example, accommodation requests could include:
 - Front row seating
 - Print copy of the presentation
 - Captioning or American Sign Language (ASL)

All public events should be advertised in a way that makes the information available to everyone in our community. Use a variety of methods such as posters, emails, radio announcements, and websites. All notices should include the “Active Offer” for accommodation requests.



Music in the Park

Active Offer Wording

An “Active Offer” tells the public we are ready to provide accessibility and invite their requests. Use the following City of Brandon standard wording:

This publication is available in alternate formats upon request. **Or**
Disability accommodations are available by advance request. **Or**
Dietary accommodations are available by advance request. **Plus**

For more information, please contact:

Accessible City Services

410 – 9th Street

Brandon MB

R7A 6A2

Phone: 204-729-2186

email: acs@brandon.ca

Accessible Meeting Places

Awareness is the first step in making change. Spot the barrier – it could fall under any category. Be proactive – make note of what you see and hear and think about how it might affect our customers’ ability to use our services.

The Public Events Procedure in the Appendix includes a comprehensive list of what to look for when evaluating a facility for a public event.



T.E. Snure Room, A.R. McDiarmid Building

Alternate Formats

Alternate formats are ways of providing information beyond traditional printed material. Examples include but are not limited to large print, electronic text, CD-ROMs, DVDs and braille. All City of Brandon public documents should be published with an “Active Offer” inviting requests for alternate formats.

Alternative formats requested could include:

- larger print
- an electronic version (enables Browsealoud)
- having the document read aloud
- dyslexia font
- braille

HINT: Always save your master document in a text template, such as Word (*not a PDF*), to be used as the basis for all other formats.

See the Procedures for guidelines on creating accessible documents.

Disruptions in Service

Sometimes accessibility features or services require repair or are just temporarily out of service (e.g. an elevator or an accessible washroom). When this happens, we need to let our customers know. This should be done whether the disruption is planned or unexpected.

It is especially important to provide reasonable notice if a disruption in service is planned or expected. People with disabilities often go to a lot of trouble to access services, such as booking transit or arranging a ride. By providing notice, you can save that person an unnecessary trip.

Provide notice in a variety of ways, as quickly as possible and offer alternative methods of service. It is important to include the reason for the disruption, expected duration of disruption, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available. The “Procedure Ensuring the Availability of Accessibility Devices” in the Appendix provides detailed instructions.

Disruptions in Service Notifications

Notice of disruptions in accessibility services must be provided as soon as is reasonably possible. Report the “out of service” to

Accessible City Services
Phone: 204-729-2186
Email: acs@brandon.ca

Accessible City Services (Records Centre) will log the incident, and forward reports to employees responsible for maintenance and public notifications, as well as designated facility staff.

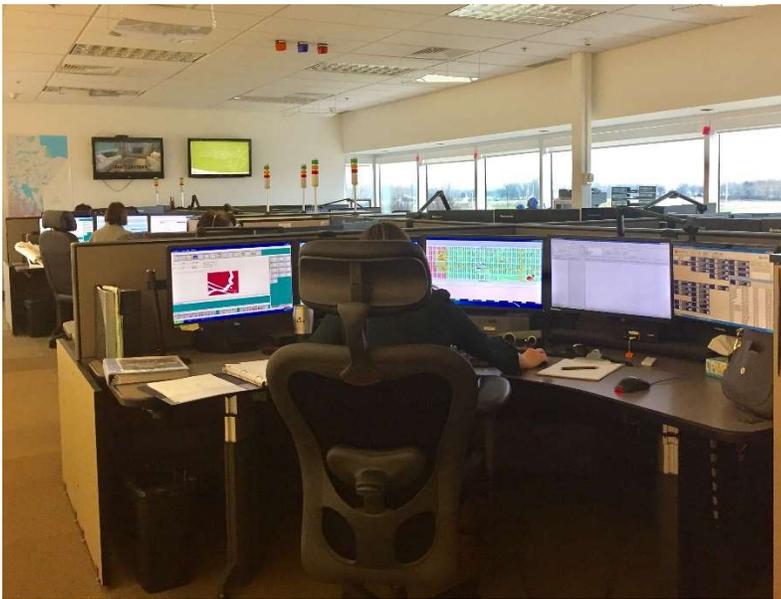
If you are aware of a customer who will be impacted by the service loss, contact them personally.

Each facility is responsible for creating their individualized response plan for disruptions in service.

Adaptive Services

For Adaptive Services information see:

- City Intranet (Commonly Used Forms, Policies & Procedures/Accessibility) or
- Employee Self-Service (ess.bradnon.ca/Company Documents/Accessibility).



Emergency Communications Centre

Customer Feedback

There are several ways, including in person, by telephone, and through email or our website, that the public may access to provide customer feedback. The procedure “Encouraging Public Feedback” in the Appendix provides detailed information.

APPENDIX

Associated Documents:

The Accessibility for Manitobans Act

[Link to Accessibility Manitoba Website](#)

The City of Brandon's Accessible Customer Service Policy

Intranet/Corporate Documents & Procedures

[Link to Accessibility Plan on the City's Website](#)

The City of Brandon's Accessibility Plan

[Link to Accessibility Plan on the City's Website](#)

The Human Rights Code (Manitoba)

[Link to the Manitoba Human Rights Code](#)

The Service Animals Protection Act

[Link to Manitoba Service Animal Protection Act](#)



Definitions

Accessibility: Related to this legislation, accessibility means giving people of all abilities opportunities to participate fully in everyday life. Accessibility refers to the ability to access and benefit from a system, service, product or environment.

Accessibility Champions: In the City of Brandon, the Mayor and the City Manager hold these positions. They are responsible for supporting and driving the Accessibility Plan.

Accessibility Coordinator: An accessibility point person who liaises with senior management and provides consultation services to staff in their organization. This is the City Employee responsible for ensuring the Accessibility Plan and related Standards are developed and maintained.

Accessibility Plan: A detailed document, adopted by the City, which meets the requirements of the Act.

Accessibility Working Group: The group of employees working together to assist the Accessibility Coordinator in meeting requirements of the Act with respect to the Accessibility Plan and related Standards.

Accessible Customer Service: This is providing service with the understanding that each individual may need a slightly different type of accommodation in order to have the same opportunity as others to that service.

Accessible Formats: Information provided in a way that is accessible to people with disabilities. Examples: large print, recorded audio or Braille instead of standard printed material.

Accommodations: Arrangements made to allow persons with disabilities to participate or benefit equally. There is no set formula for accommodating people with disabilities; the person involved must be consulted. Examples: healthy snacks at events accommodate individuals with dietary needs; flexible hours accommodate employees whose schedules are affected by homecare duties or medication.

Act: The Accessibility for Manitobans Act, C.C.S.M. c.A1.7, including related Regulations as adopted by the Province of Manitoba, and amended from time to time.

Active Offer: Offering the public the opportunity to request an accessibility. Examples: inviting requests for disability accommodations in event advertisements including the active offer on print materials: “this information is available in alternate formats on request”, advertising disability accommodations such as a wheelchair access icon).

Alt Tags: Also referred to as alt attributes, alt tags provide a verbal description of a visual or graph for individuals with visual impairments who use screen readers.

Alternate Formats: Alternate ways of providing information beyond traditional printed material.

Examples: large print, electronic text, CD ROMs, DVDs and braille)

American Sign Language (ASL): Interpreters use hand gestures and physical expression to translate spoken words into “sign language” for persons who are Deaf. American Sign Language is common to English-speaking North Americans. In Quebec, another form of sign language is used (LSQ).

Barriers: In the context of the Act, obstacles that limit access and prevent people with disabilities from fully participating in society. Most barriers are not intentional. Barriers usually arise because the needs of people with disabilities are not considered from the beginning.

Braille Transcription: An alternative format that uses a combination of tangible dots to represent characters and letters. Persons who are blind use their fingertips to read braille.

Built Environment: Includes everything humans have changed in the natural environment, such as buildings, sidewalks, roadways and parks.

Captioning: Text at the bottom of the screen (television/video) allowing persons who are deaf or hard-of-hearing to follow the spoken dialogue. It is also widely used in bars and sports facilities. Closed captioning is similar but the text must be decoded to appear on the screen.

Communication Access Real-Time Translation (CART): A professional CART writer transcribes the spoken word into written English or French text. The text is then displayed on a laptop or projected onto a large screen. This allows meeting or conference participants who are hard-of-hearing to follow a discussion or presentation.

Communication Intermediary: A Communication Intermediary is a Speech-Language Pathologist with additional training to assist people with speech and language disabilities to communicate in police, legal and justice situations.

Communication Methods: Picture, letter and speech output devices that people with speech and language disabilities may use to communicate their messages.

Communications Access: Various tools and methods used by people who work in businesses and organizations so that individuals who have speech and language disabilities can understand what is being said, have their messages understood, and use their preferred ways of communicating in face-to-face interactions, over the telephone, at meetings and events.

Computerized Note-Taker (Print Interpreter): A note-taker provides a summary of spoken words, maintaining the spirit and intent of the speaker to allow participants who are hard-of-hearing to follow a presentation (not verbatim). Note-takers type into a notebook or laptop computer connected to an overhead screen or video monitor.

Descriptive Video Service (DVS): Narration is added to visual media to describe actions, characters, locations, costumes and sets, without interfering with dialog or sound effects. DVS allows people who are blind or visually impaired to enjoy television programs, feature films, online videos.

Disability: A disability is a condition that limits a person's daily activities. Persons with disabilities may have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder their participation on an equal basis with others. A disability, aging, an injury and other life events may temporarily or permanently affect mobility, dexterity (use of hands), vision, hearing, communication, understanding or mental health.

Duty to Accommodate: The requirement established by The Human Rights Code (Manitoba) to remove barriers up to the point of undue hardship.

Employee: An individual employed by the City of Brandon.

Infrared Systems (IR Systems): Assistive listening technology used in large settings such as conference rooms, theatres or classrooms. IR Systems transmit sound using infrared light waves to send signals to the listener's receiver. Sound can be adjusted to a desired volume.

Interveners: People specially trained to communicate auditory and visual information to persons who are deaf-blind. Various methods are used depending on individual needs. These include visual sign language, tactile sign language, tactile finger spelling, braille and large print notes.

Large Print: Printed information provided in a large font size (14 points or larger) for people who have low vision. For easier reading, select "sans serif" fonts.

Oral Interpreters: An oral interpreter is a person that silently mouth interprets speech. This is done when a person who is hard-of-hearing or deaf is able to lip read but does not use sign language.

Personal Care Attendants: Attendants who assist persons with disabilities with the care of their physical needs. Tasks may include but are not limited to assistance with dressing, management of bodily functions and eating.

Persons Disabled by Barriers: Individuals with a physical or mental impairment prevented from full participation by a factor in the environment.

Persons with disabilities: Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual, communication or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation on an equal basis with others.

Reasonable Accommodations: A wide range of modifications or adjustments to meet the needs of persons in a respectful manner. Usually simple and inexpensive, reasonable accommodations consider the needs of persons or groups who have characteristics protected under The Human Rights Code (Manitoba), such as a disability.

Relay Services:

Internet Protocol Relay (IP Relay): Online chat applications used by persons who are deaf or have hearing and speech disabilities. IP Relay users connect to specially trained operators who place phone calls over the internet on their behalf and facilitate conversations. Calls are entirely confidential and operators follow a strict code of ethics; no record is retained.

Video Relay Service (VRS): Similar to IP Relay, VRS is the newest technology to facilitate communication for persons who are deaf and use sign language. VRS uses internet-based video conferencing to communicate via relay operators using sign language.

Service animal: An animal, typically a dog, trained to provide assistance to a person with a disability.

Sign Language Interpreter: A person who translates from one language (English) to another language (American Sign Language) using gestures and physical expressions (sign language). Interpreter services are critical to ensure accurate communication between individuals who are deaf and hearing persons who do not use sign language.

Standard: Accessibility standard as prescribed under the Act and applicable to the City of Brandon.

Support person: A person accompanying a person with a disability to help with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs, or to access goods or services.

Universal Design: Refers to making things safer, easier, and more convenient for everyone. It involves a broad range of design concepts – including design of products, spaces and environments – to provide access in a way that respects all (dis)abilities.

Working together, we will create a barrier-free City of Brandon for people of all abilities.



Accessibility Procedures

1. Ensuring Public Events are Accessible
2. Encouraging Public Feedback
3. Ensuring the Availability of Accessibility Devices
4. Ensuring Documents are Accessible
5. Checklist for Identifying Barriers
6. Contact Information for Local Disability Organizations

This Employee Guide was compiled by the City of Brandon Accessibility Working Group. It is available in alternate formats.

Please direct questions, concerns, and requests for an alternate format of this document, to Accessible City Services at acs@brandon.ca or phone (204) 729-2186.

An electronic version of this guide is available at:

- www.brandon.ca/accessibility,
- City of Brandon Intranet/Corporate Policies & Procedures/Accessibility, or
- Employee Self Service (ess.brandon.ca/Company Documents).