



## Accessible Customer Service Policy

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## The EDGE Benefits Accessibility Customer Service Policy

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# Introduction

## The EDGE Benefits Accessibility Customer Service Policy

The EDGE benefits Inc. (herein after referred to as The EDGE) is committed to excellence in serving all customers, including people with disabilities.

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 is Provincial legislation that sets out Standards of compliance to ensure that services provided to Ontarians with disabilities is accessible and provided in a manner that uses reasonable efforts consistent with the core principles of:

**Dignity** – services are provided in a respectful manner

**Independence** – services support their independence

**Respect** – respect their right to safety and personal privacy

**Integration/Inclusion** – services allow all to benefit from the same service in the same way as other clients

**Accommodation** – provide an opportunity to benefit from our service the same as other clients.

The EDGE supports the goal of the Ontario government to make Ontario barrier-free by 2025. As we move closer to that date, it is expected the EDGE services and facilities will become progressively more accessible and responsive to the needs of persons with disabilities.

The Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07, s2 came into force on January 1, 2008, and is the first accessibility standard created under the authority of the AODA. The EDGE is required to become compliant with the regulation by January 1, 2012.

Whenever new or revised standards are developed under AODA, this policy will be reviewed and updated as necessary to ensure consistency.

This policy has been prepared to outline what EDGE must do to comply with the regulation, and what our customers may expect from us.

The definition of disability under the AODA is the same as the definition of disability in the Ontario Human Rights Code. Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) Section 2 states that “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 impediment, 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.*

The EDGE is committed to ensure that all persons receive excellent customer service, including people with disabilities. We will strive at all times to provide services in a way that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.

Accessible Customer Service will be provided by all employees who communicate with the public, all management and program staff who develop our policies and procedures.

## Assistive Devices

Assistive devices are usually devices that people bring with them, such as, walkers, personal oxygen tanks, magnification devices, wheelchairs, canes, or other mobility devices that assist the person with daily living.

The EDGE is committed to servicing persons with disabilities who use assistive devices to obtain, use, or benefit from our services.

The EDGE will ensure that staff are trained and familiar with various assistive devices that may be used by customers with disabilities while accessing our facility and services, and that staff know how to use the assistive devices which are available on our premises, including electronic door openers.

Exceptions may occur if the EDGE has determined that an assistive device may pose a risk to the health or safety of a person with a disability, or others on the premises.

It is the responsibility of the person to ensure that their assistive device is operated in a safe and controlled manner at all times.

## Communication

Communication is a process of providing, sending, receiving and understanding information, and this section of the regulation is a requirement to communicate with an individual in a way that takes their disability into consideration, and allows effective communication.

The EDGE shall communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability.

The EDGE will train staff who communicate with customers, on how to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disabilities.

## Service Animals

Service Animals are used by people such as dogs used by people who are blind, hearing alert animals for people who are Deaf, deafened, or hard of hearing; and animals trained to alert an individual to an oncoming seizure.

A service animal is defined in the Act as:

*Any animal where it is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to his or her disability, and if the person provides a letter from a physician or nurse or other government issued certification confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability.*

The EDGE welcomes people with disabilities and their service animals. Service animals are allowed on the parts of our premises that are open to the public. The EDGE will ensure that staff are trained in how to interact with persons with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal.

Exceptions may occur, where a manager may determine that a support person is required, or that a service animal cannot enter an area of the premises if it may pose a health or safety risk to others on the premises.

## Support Persons

Support Persons can accompany a person with a disability to provide assistance. They can be a professional, a family member, a friend, or other person who assists a person with a disability with communication, mobility, personal care, medical needs, or with access to goods or services. They will be allowed to accompany them on our premises; however there may be documentation necessary for customer privacy purposes. We will notify customers of this through a notice posted on our premises and on our website.

## Notice of temporary disruptions

In the event of a planned or unexpected disruption to services or facilities normally used by people with disabilities to access goods or service, such as malfunctioning auto door device, the EDGE will notify customers with a clearly posted notice which will include the reason for the disruption, and its anticipated length of time; with a description of alternative facilities or services if available. The notice will be placed at the public entrance to our building, and on our website if/as applicable to the disruption at [edgebenefits.com](http://edgebenefits.com).

## Training for Staff

The EDGE will provide training to employees who deal with the public on our behalf, who are involved in the development and approvals of customer service policies, practices, and procedures. New staff, and staff who commence new duties that involve interaction with the public, will receive training as part of their orientation.

Specifically, individuals in the following positions will be trained:  
Customer Service Representatives, Claims Customer Care Case Consultants, Administrative Staff, Executive Management Group, Sales Representatives.

This training will be provided to staff as soon as possible after hiring, and to all existing staff on an on-going basis as changes are made. Training should help to dispel myths, misconceptions, stereotypes, and fears about people with disabilities.

Training will include:

- An Overview of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and the requirements of the customer service standard.
- The EDGE Accessibility Service Plan 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 support person.
- How to use the automatic door opener and/or other on-site equipment or devices to help people with disabilities.
- What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing The EDGE facility, goods, or services.
- Staff will also be trained when changes are made to The EDGE accessibility plan.
- All employees will be required to complete the Accessible Customer Service online training module “Serve-Ability”.
- The EDGE will keep training records including names, dates, and content of training provided to each employee.

## Feedback Process

Customers who wish to provide feedback on the way The EDGE provides goods and service to people with disabilities can:

Email: [customerservice@edgebenefits.com](mailto:customerservice@edgebenefits.com) or

Website: “contact us” on our website at [edgebenefits.com](http://edgebenefits.com)

Phone: 1-800-908-9917

Mail: The EDGE Benefits, 1255 Nicholson Rd., Newmarket, Ont. L3Y 9C3

## Modifications to other policies

The EDGE will remove any policy that does not respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities, and will ensure that our customer service policies, practices, and procedures, respect and promote the dignity and independence of all persons with disabilities. No change will be made to this policy before considering the impact on persons with disabilities.

(Sample)

Customer Service Feedback Form

Notice of Planned Interruption in Service Document

Due to unforeseen circumstances (indicate reason) there is a service disruption....etc..same as above.

There will be a schedule service disruption at 1255 Nicholson Rd., Newmarket for (indicate reason) impacting the delivery of goods and services for customers on (date).

The goods and services unavailable during this service disruption are:

1. (service/event name) (floor)
2. (service/event name) (floor)

The services listed above will be accessed again at (date/time/)

We apologize for any inconvenience this disruption has caused. Should you require any additional information on the delivery of this service, please call our office at 1-800-908-9917.