

ACCESSIBILITY POLICY

Policy Statement

1. The Ontario Volleyball Association (“OVA”) is committed to providing quality service to our diverse user community, including persons with disabilities. As part of our commitment to providing access to our services for all customers, we seek to remove obstacles faced by individuals with disabilities.
2. This policy is intended to meet the requirements of the Integrated Accessibility Standards, Ontario Regulation 191/11 (“the Regulation”) set forth under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005.

Interpretation

3. Definitions

Accessible Formats – include but are not limited to large print, recorded audio and electronic formats, braille and other formats usable by persons with disabilities.

Assistive device – a technical aid, communication device, or other instrument that is used to maintain or improve the functional abilities of people with disabilities. Personal assistive devices are typically devices that customers bring with them, such as a wheelchair, walker, or a personal oxygen tank that might assist in hearing, seeing, communicating, moving, breathing, remembering, or reading.

Communication Supports – include but are not limited to captioning, alternative and augmentative communication supports, plain language, sign language and other supports that facilitate effective communications.

Disability – as defined by the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, and the Ontario Human Rights Code, refers to:

- i. 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;
- ii. a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability;
- iii. a learning disability, or dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language;
- iv. a mental disorder; or
- v. an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997*.

Service animal – an animal is a service animal for a person with a disability if:

- i. the animal can be readily identified as one that is being used by the person for reasons relating to the person’s disability, as a result of visual indicators such as the vest or harness worn by the animal; or
- ii. the person provides documentation from a member of a regulated health professional college confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability.

Support person – in relation to a person with a disability, another person who accompanies him or her in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care, medical needs, or access to goods and services.

Purpose

4. The OVA will make every reasonable effort to ensure that its policies, practices, and procedures are consistent with the principles of dignity, independence, integration, and equal opportunity by:
 - ensuring that all customers receive the same value and quality;
 - allowing customers with disabilities to do things in their own ways, at their own pace when accessing goods and services, as long as this does not present a safety risk;
 - using alternative methods when possible to ensure that customers with disabilities have access to the same services, in the same place and in a similar manner;
 - taking into account individual needs when providing goods and services;
 - communicating in a manner that takes into account the customer’s disability; and
 - providing accessible formats and communication supports to employees and potential employees with disabilities.

Application

5. This Policy describes how the OVA works with its employees, as well as how the OVA provides its programs, goods and services in a manner that respects the dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity of persons with disabilities.

Guidelines

6. The OVA will support our customers and our employees in the following manner:

A. Accessible Formats and Communication Supports

Unless deemed unconvertible, the OVA will provide or arrange for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports for persons with disabilities, upon request. Accessible formats and communication supports will be provided in a timely manner and at no additional cost to the individual.

The OVA will take into account the person's accessibility needs when customizing individual requests and shall consult with the individual making the request to ensure suitability.

The OVA will make the availability of accessible formats and communication supports publicly known.

Exceptions: These provisions do not apply to:

- products and product labels;
- unconvertible information or communications; or
- information that the organization does not control either directly or indirectly through a contractual relationship.

Unconvertible Information or Communications: If it is determined, in consultation with the requesting party, that information or communications are unconvertible, The OVA will ensure that the individual who made the request is provided with an explanation and a summary of the information.

The OVA will classify information or communications as unconvertible where:

- it is not technically practicable to convert; or
- the technology required to make the conversion is not readily available.

B. Employment Practices

Recruitment, Assessment and Selection: The OVA will notify employees and the public about the availability of accommodation for job applicants who have disabilities. Applicants will be informed that these accommodations are available, upon request, for the interview process and for other candidate selection methods. Where an accommodation is requested, the OVA will consult with the applicant and provide or arrange for suitable accommodation.

Successful applicants will be made aware of the OVA's policies and supports for accommodating people with disabilities.

Accessible Formats and Communication Supports for Employees: The OVA will ensure that employees are aware of our policies for employees with disabilities and any changes to these policies as they occur.

If an employee with a disability requests it, the OVA will provide or arrange for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports for the following:

- Information needed in order to perform his/her job; and
- Information that is generally available to all employees in the workplace.

The OVA will consult with the employee making the request to determine the best way to provide the accessible format or communication support.

Workplace Emergency Response Information: Where required, the OVA will create individual workplace emergency response information for employees with disabilities. This information will take into account the unique challenges created by the individual's disability and the physical nature of the workplace and will be created in consultation with the employee.

This information will be reviewed when:

- the employee moves to a different physical location in the organization;
- the employee's overall accommodation needs or plans are reviewed; and / or
- the OVA reviews general emergency response policies.

Performance Management and Career Development and Advancement: The OVA will consider the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities when implementing performance management processes, or when offering career development or advancement opportunities. Individual accommodation plans will be consulted, as required.

Redeployment: The accessibility needs of employees with disabilities will be taken into account in the event of redeployment. Individual accommodation plans will be consulted, as required.

C. Design of Public Spaces

The OVA will comply with the Accessibility Standards for the Design of Public Spaces, as set forth in Part IV.1 of the Regulation, when building or making major modifications to public spaces.

D. Use of Assistive Devices

Persons with disabilities may use their own assistive devices as required when accessing goods or services provided by the OVA.

In cases where the assistive device presents a safety concern or where accessibility might be an issue, other reasonable measures will be used to ensure the access of goods and services. For example, open flames and oxygen tanks cannot be near one another. Therefore, the accommodation of a customer with an oxygen tank may involve ensuring the customer is in a location that would be considered safe for both the customer and business. Or, where elevators are not present and where an individual requires assistive devices for the purposes of mobility, service will be provided in a location that meets the needs of the customer.

E. Guide Dogs and Service Animals

A customer with a disability who is accompanied by guide dog or service animal will be allowed access to premises that are open to the public unless otherwise excluded by law. “No pet” policies do not apply to guide dogs or service animals.

Exclusion Guidelines: If a guide dog or service animal is excluded by law, the OVA will offer alternative methods to enable the person with a disability to access goods and services, when possible (for example, securing the animal in a safe location and offering the guidance of an employee).

Recognizing a Guide Dog or Service Animal: If it is not readily apparent that the animal is being used by the customer for reasons relating to their disability, the OVA may request verification from the customer.

Care and Control of the Animal: The customer who is accompanied by a guide dog or service animal is responsible for maintaining care and control of the animal at all times.

Allergies: If a health and safety concern presents itself (for example, in the form of a severe allergy to the animal), the OVA will make all reasonable efforts to meet the needs of all individuals.

F. The Use of Support Persons

If a customer with a disability is accompanied by a support person, the OVA will ensure that both persons may enter the premises together and that the customer is not prevented from having access to the support person.

There may be times where seating and availability prevent the customer and support person from sitting beside each other. In these situations, the OVA will make every reasonable attempt to resolve the issue.

In situations where confidential information might be discussed, consent will be obtained from the customer before any confidential information will be discussed in front of the support person.

Admission Fees: Where the OVA requires a support person to accompany a person with a disability, and where the person with a disability has agreed to the accompaniment, the OVA will not charge the support persons any fees.

G. Notice of Disruptions in Service

Service disruptions may occur due to reasons that may or may not be within the control or knowledge of the OVA.

In the event of any temporary disruptions to facilities or services that customers with disabilities rely on to access or use goods or services of the OVA, reasonable efforts will be made to provide advance notice. In some circumstances, such as in the situation of unplanned temporary disruptions, advance notice may not be possible.

If a notification needs to be posted, the following information will be included unless it is not readily available or known:

- goods or services that are disrupted or unavailable;
- reason for the disruption;
- anticipated duration; and
- a description of alternative services or options.

H. Training for Staff and Service Providers

Training will be provided to:

- Every person who is an employee of or a volunteer with the provider.
- Every person who participates in developing the provider's policies.
- Every other person who provides goods, services, or facilities on behalf of the provider.

Training Provisions: Regardless of the format, training will cover the following:

- A review of the purpose of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*;
- A review of the requirements of the customer service standards set forth in Part IV.2 of the Regulation;
- Instructions on how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities;
- Instructions on how to interact with people with disabilities who:
 - Use assistive devices;
 - Require the assistance of a guide dog or other service animal; or
 - Require the use of a support person (including the handling of admission fees);
- Instructions on how to use equipment or devices that are available at our premises or that we provide that may help people with disabilities;
- Instructions on what to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing your services; and
- Policies, procedures, and practices of the OVA pertaining to providing accessible customer service to customers with disabilities.

Training Schedule: The OVA will provide training as soon as practicable. Training will be provided to new employees during orientation. Training will be provided to volunteers, agents, and contractors prior to dealing with the public on behalf of the OVA. Revised training will be provided in the event of changes to legislation, procedures, policies, or practices.

I. Feedback Process

The ultimate goal of the OVA is to meet and surpass expectations while serving individuals with disabilities. Comments on our services regarding how well those expectations are being met are welcomed and appreciated. Feedback regarding the way the OVA provides services to people with disabilities can be directed to:

Email: info@ontariovolleyball.org

Mail: Executive Director and / or Director of Finance and Administration
111-60 Scarsdale Rd, Toronto, ON, M3B 2R7

Modifications to This or Other Policies

7. The OVA is committed to developing and updating its policies in a manner that respects and promotes the dignity and independence of people with disabilities.
8. This policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure that it is reflective of current legislative requirements, as well as the OVA's practices.

Questions About this Policy

9. All questions regarding this policy should be directed to the OVA's Director of Finance & Administration:

Email: info@ontariovolleyball.org

Mail: 111-60 Scarsdale Rd, Toronto, ON, M3B 2R7

This Policy is effective January 30, 2024.