

## ST. LAWRENCE PARKS COMMISSION

### Customer Service Policy Statement: Providing Goods and Services to People with Disabilities

#### 1. Our mission

The mission of the St. Lawrence Parks Commission (the Commission) is to generate lasting visitor growth, drive economic prosperity, and build community partnerships in Eastern Ontario. It is a revenue-generating tourism business offering customer-focused entertaining and educational experiences that maximize its natural, leisure and heritage assets.

#### 2. Our commitment

In fulfilling our mission, the Commission strives at all times to provide its goods and services in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. We are also committed to giving people with disabilities the same opportunity to access our goods and services and to allowing them to benefit from these services in a comparable way as all other customers.

#### 3. Providing goods and services to people with disabilities

The Commission is committed to excellence in serving all customers and staff, including those with disabilities, and we will carry out our functions and responsibilities in the following areas:

##### 3.1 Communication

We will communicate with people with disabilities in ways that empower them to access and benefit from our products, services and employment opportunities.

We will train staff to communicate and interact in a sensitive fashion with those fellow employees and customers who may face a range of challenges as a result of a disability.

We will strive to maintain a workplace and a customer environment that is mindful and respectful of those with disabilities.

We will endeavour to portray people with disabilities in a respectful fashion in all SLPC communication and marketing materials. We will have an identified web link on our web site for those seeking information about our services for those with disabilities.

##### 3.2 Telephone services

We are committed to providing fully accessible telephone service to our customers. We will train staff to communicate with customers over the telephone in clear and plain language and to speak clearly and slowly. We will train our staff to be sensitive in their communication approach and style, with the goal of providing customers with consistent high quality satisfaction.

We will offer to communicate with customers by e-mail, TTY, or relay services if telephone communication is not suitable to their communication needs or is not available.

##### 3.3 Assistive devices

We are committed to serving people with disabilities who use assistive devices to obtain, use or benefit from our goods and services. We will ensure that our staff are trained and familiar with various assistive devices that may be used by customers and fellow employees with disabilities while accessing our goods or services.

It is our policy to allow people to use their personal assistive devices to access our services.

We will also ensure that staff are responsive to customer needs and aware of assistive devices available on our premises: wheelchairs, lifts, ramps, location of accessible washroom facilities, TTY, Braille self-guided booklets. We will continue our full-access policy for service animals and support persons as detailed in Section 4 below.

### 3.4 Billing

SLPC is committed to providing accessible invoices to all of our customers. For this reason, invoices will be provided in the following formats upon request: hard copy, large print, and e-mail.

We will answer any questions customers may have about the content of the invoice in person, by telephone or e-mail.

### 3.5 Physical Accessibility to Attractions and Sites:

The Commission is committed to providing all visitors with easy access to our buildings and services. To improve accessibility to those with mobility challenges or in wheel chairs, we have undertaken a number of capital upgrades to improve visitor access including: installation of hand railings, fully accessible washroom facilities in all areas, installation of permanent and portable ramps to allow access to heritage buildings and retail outlets, and textured paint on high traffic surfaces to aid in balance and to prevent slipping. The SLPC administration office has been upgraded and is now fully accessible with hands-free entrance, main floor washroom and kitchen facilities. A new kitchen/dining area for youth education programs has been created, and the Montgomery Log House has been updated with fully-accessible washrooms and a Murphy bed on the main floor to accommodate mobility-challenged guests.

In the rare circumstances where full accessibility to a heritage building or floor is not possible without destroying the heritage nature of the building, we will accommodate visitors unable to access the building or floor in other ways, such as providing printed material, personal tour, or other interpretation.

We will explore and integrate interpretive experiences for our guests who may have vision and hearing difficulties.

We will regularly audit our goods and services to assure that we are delivering a high quality experience for all guests.

## 4. Use of service animals and support persons

The Commission is committed to welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal on the parts of our premises that are open to the public and other third parties. We will also ensure that all staff, volunteers and others dealing with the public are properly trained in how to interact with people with disabilities and their service animals.

The Commission 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 will be allowed to enter SLPC 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 our premises. We will ensure that staff are trained to interact directly with the person, not the support person, and to demonstrate respect in all cases.

Fees will not be charged for support persons for admission to the St. Lawrence Parks Commission's premises.

## **5. Notice of temporary disruption**

The Commission will provide customers with notice in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in the facilities or services usually used by people with disabilities. This notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available.

The notice will be placed at all public entrances and service counters on our premises and will be posted on our website.

## **6. Training for staff**

The Commission will provide training to all employees, Board members, volunteers, service providers, and others who deal with the public or other third parties on their behalf, and all those who are involved in the development and approvals of customer service policies, practices and procedures.

This training will be included in the orientation sessions provided prior to the commencement of each operating season (May), with annual renewal.

Training will include the following:

- The purposes of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and the requirements of the customer service standard
- How to sensitively interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities
- How to sensitively interact with people with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or a support person
- Location and availability of assistive devices e.g. TTY, wheelchairs, lifts, etc. and identification of alternative interpretive methods 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 SLPC's goods and services
- Interpretive guides will be sensitivity-trained to identify and respond to visitor speciality needs, e.g. offer sight challenged guests opportunity to feel fabric, etc
- A review of the St. Lawrence Parks Commission's policies, practices and procedures relating to the customer service standard.

All staff will be trained on policies, practices and procedures that affect the way goods and services are provided to people with disabilities. Staff will also be trained on an ongoing basis when changes are made to these policies, practices and procedures.

## **7. Feedback process**

The ultimate goal of the St. Lawrence Parks Commission is to meet and surpass customer expectations while serving customers with disabilities. Comments on our services regarding how well those expectations are being met are welcome and appreciated.

Feedback regarding the way the Commission provides goods and services to people with disabilities can be made by e-mail, verbally, suggestion box, feedback card and visitor surveys. All feedback will be directed to Manager, Customer Service and Corporate Communications and customers will be acknowledged within 14 days.

Any complaints will be addressed according to the Commission's complaint management procedures.

## **8. Modifications to this or other policies**

We are committed to developing customer service policies that respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. Therefore, no changes will be made to this policy before considering the impact on people with disabilities.

Any policy of the St. Lawrence Parks Commission that does not respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities will be modified or removed.

## **9. Questions about this policy**

This policy exists to achieve service excellence to customers with disabilities. If anyone has a question about the policy, or if the purpose of a policy is not understood, an explanation should be provided by, or referred to, General Manager and CEO of the St. Lawrence Parks Commission, 13740 County Rd 2, RR # 1, Morrisburg, ON K0C 1X0, 613-543-3704.

## Appendix C

### Sample Documents for Notifying the Public About Disruptions in Service

Dear Guests,

The accessible washroom at the east end of Upper Canada Village is out of service due to a broken pipe. A repair person will be on the premises tomorrow to fix it. In the interim, please use the accessible washrooms at the main entrance to UCV. We apologize for any inconvenience.

Thank you.

Management

## Appendix D: Customer Feedback Form

Your satisfaction is our business – Your comments please...

Location:

Date of Visit:

Did your experience meet your expectations?

Exceeded  Met  Failed

Would you come back again?

YES  NO

Would you recommend visiting our site to your family or friends?

YES  NO

What could we do to make your visit more enjoyable?

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General Comments

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Contact information (optional)\*:

The collection, use and disclosure of personal information is governed by the Freedom of Information and Privacy Act, R.S.O., 1990, C.F.31. Legal Authority: The St. Lawrence Parks Commission Act, R.S.O., 1990 Chapter S.24, as amended by S.O. 1993, c.16, S. 4.

## Record of Customer Feedback

Date feedback received:

Name of customer (optional):

Contact information (if appropriate)\*:

Details:

Follow-up:

Action to be taken:

Staff member:

Date:

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## Appendix E: Sample Notices on the Feedback Process

### Feedback process on provision of goods or services to people with disabilities

Dear Valued Customers,

We strive to improve accessibility for our customers with disabilities. We would like to hear your comments, questions and suggestions about the provision of our goods or services to people with disabilities. Please contact Customer Service in person, by mail or at 800-437-2233 or by email [getaway@parks.on.ca](mailto:getaway@parks.on.ca) to share your comments.

Thank you.

Management