

**CATEGORY:** Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities

**POLICY:** 1-391

**Section 5:** CAOT Policy and Procedures Manual

**SUBJECT:** Customer Service

**DATE:** November 17, 2014

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### **Policy Statement**

Persons with disabilities are permitted to use their own personal supports to access goods and services offered by the Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists (CAOT). Personal supports include personal assistive devices; service animals and support persons.

Persons with disabilities and the public will be notified promptly by CAOT of any service disruptions which may affect access to goods and services.

### **Reason for the policy:**

The objective of this policy is to enable persons with disabilities to access the range of goods and services offered by CAOT.

### **(1) Assistive devices**

Persons with disabilities are permitted to use personal assistive devices to access goods and services offered by CAOT.

An assistive device is any device that is used, designed, made or adapted to assist a person in performing a particular task. Assistive devices enable persons with disabilities to do everyday tasks such as moving, communicating, reading or lifting.

Examples of assistive devices include, but are not limited to the following:

- Wheelchairs
- Canes
- Walkers
- Assistive listening devices (FM systems)
- Laptops with screen-reading software or communicating capabilities
- Smart phones (i.e. wireless handheld devices)
- Hearing aids
- Global positioning system (GPS) devices
- Digital audio players
- Teletypewriters (TTY)
- Portable oxygen tanks
- Personal digital assistants
- Communication devices, such as voice-output systems or pictures/symbols

Assistive devices are permitted in *all* areas of CAOT to which members, non- members, volunteers, staff, contractors have access with the exception of specific provisions stated in the CAOT policy # 11215 Special testing accommodation provided for the National Occupational Therapy Certification Examination.

## **(2) Service Animals**

Persons with disabilities are permitted to use service animals to access goods and services offered by CAOT.

Service animals include but are not limited to:

- A guide dog serves as a travel aid for a person with vision loss.
- A hearing or signal animal alerts a person with hearing loss when a sound occurs, such as knock on the door or alarm.
- Mobility assistance animals may carry, fetch, open doors, ring doorbells, activate elevator buttons, pull a wheelchair, steady a person while walking or help someone get up after a fall.
- A seizure response animal warns a person of an impending seizure or provides aid during a seizure such as going for help or standing guard over the person.
- Therapeutic assistance animals aid people with cognitive or psychological disabilities.
  
- Service animals are permitted in *all* areas of CAOT. There are only a few exceptions where a service animal would be excluded by law, as in these examples.
- The *Health Protection and Promotion Act* (1990).
- Should municipal by-laws restrict certain breeds of animals or dogs from the municipality and these by-laws apply even if the animal is acting as a service animal.

In unique situations where the presence of the animal presents a significant risk for another person (e.g. severe allergies), the association is required to meet the needs of both persons in these situations and must devise an accommodation plan that enables both persons to access services and goods accordingly.

## **(3) Support Persons**

Persons with disabilities are permitted to use support persons to access goods and services offered by CAOT. When a support person accompanies a person with a disability to a CAOT event for which there is an admission fee, the support person will not be charged admission. A support person is someone either hired or chosen to help a person with a disability. A support person can be a personal support worker, a volunteer, a family member or spouse or a friend of the person with the disability. A support person in some cases does not necessarily need to have special training or qualifications.

Support persons may provide one or more types of assistance.

- Transportation
- Guiding a person with a vision loss
- Adaptive communication (e.g., Intervener for someone who is deaf/blind)
- Interpretation (e.g., ASL/English interpreter, LSQ/French interpreter)
- Note-taking, scribe or reading services (usually coordinated by disability or library services offices)
- Personal care assistance
- Support persons in the event of a seizure (e.g., protect from falls)
- Interpret and speak on behalf of someone with a speech disability

Support persons will be subject to the specific provisions stated in the CAOT policy # 11215 Special testing accommodation provided for the National Occupational Therapy Certification Examination.

#### **(4) Notice of Service Disruptions**

##### **Planned Service Disruptions:**

CAOT will post any planned service disruptions that may affect persons with disabilities. These service disruptions include, but are not limited to: elevators; building access; and obstructions to pathways.

Notification of planned service disruptions received from the Carleton Department of University Safety for the emergency notification system with all pertinent details will be posted on the CAOT website with a minimum of one (1) day advanced notice.

The same principles and procedures will apply to service disruptions planned by CAOT.

##### **Unplanned Service Disruptions:**

In the event of an unplanned service disruption, CAOT will post a notification on the CAOT website as soon as possible.

#### **ACCESSIBLE FORMATS AND COMMUNICATIONS SUPPORTS**

CAOT shall, upon request, provide or arrange for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports for persons with disabilities in a timely manner and at a cost that is no more than the regular cost charged to other persons.

#### **TRANSPORTATION POLICY**

CAOT is not primarily in the business of transportation, however, when transportation is provided, such as for CAOT events and conference accessible vehicles or equivalent services will be made available upon request.

##### **Persons affected by the policy**

All CAOT employees, volunteers, members, non-members, contractors.

##### **Who should read this policy**

All CAOT employees and volunteers