



MEMORANDUM

TO: All Department Heads, Directors, Managers and Supervisors

FROM: Adelina Urbanski, Commissioner of Community and Health Services
Bill Hughes, Commissioner of Finance and Regional Treasurer

DATE: May 3, 2013

RE: **AODA Update - Management Direction on Incorporating Accessibility
Criteria in Purchases and Acquisitions**

This memo offers an update on incorporating accessibility design, criteria and features into York Region's procurement of goods, services, facilities and self-service kiosks, where practicable. This is required under the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA) on a go-forward basis. It applies across all departments, including Housing York Inc., York Region Rapid Transit Corporation and York Regional Police.

Considering accessibility in the purchasing process is not new to the corporation. The Region has a long-standing commitment to meeting the accessibility needs of people with disabilities, including equitable access to goods, services and facilities. Under the AODA, this practice is now formalized.

Together, Community and Health Services and Finance staff have developed a process that meets the legislated requirements with minimal change to the current delegated authority and procurement practices. Staff from across the corporation were asked to test and provide feedback on the process to ensure the proposed procedures and tools were simple to use and effective. The revised process is now ready for implementation.

Purchases will continue to be prepared according to current departmental and corporate practices, with a new step added. All purchases and acquisitions must now pass through an "accessibility lens" when specifications are being developed.

The *Accessibility Checklist* has been created to help determine if accessibility design, criteria or features can be incorporated into a proposed product, service or facility. If it is not possible to do so, the form is used to record the rationale, as the legislation requires organizations to provide an

explanation upon request. The *Accessibility Checklist* is retained in the department's purchase file in the event of an audit or inquiry. Departments will answer any questions about the accessibility decision.

It is the responsibility of the originating department to conduct this review and to incorporate accessibility criteria in the specifications of the purchase, if practicable. Supplies and Services Purchase Summary and Bid Request forms have been updated to record that departments have worked through the accessibility process. If the accessibility section on the Supplies and Services forms is incomplete the forms will be returned to the department for completion.

The tools needed to accomplish these tasks are now available in the Purchasing Toolkit on MyPortal for easy reference and downloading (Service Catalogue > Procurement), grouped together under a new Accessibility section. Purchasing forms and related training have also been updated to reflect the added procurement requirements.

Purchasing Toolkit resources include:

- *Supplies and Services Authorization Summary*: Step-by-step guide for Purchases under \$10k, Purchases under \$50k, Purchases \$50k to \$100k, and Purchases greater than \$100k
- *Accessibility Checklist*: Guided process to incorporate accessibility design, criteria and features in all purchases and acquisitions, if practicable
- *Making Purchases More Accessible*: PowerPoint for independent or group learning
- Links to accessibility-related resources and tools, including a "Contact Us" link for staff with accessibility or implementation-related questions

Note: Accessible Customer Service Training for agents who provide service on the Region's behalf is an ongoing requirement under the AODA. The *Accessibility Checklist* also includes a tool to determine if the successful supplier must have training as a contract requirement.

Please share this information with staff as appropriate. A communication strategy to inform employees of this new process is underway, with presentations to staff available upon request.

For questions about the purchasing process contact Mike Gerrior, Purchasing Manager, Supplies and Services at Ext. 1654 or mike.gerrior@york.ca.

For questions about accessibility contact Lois Davies, Program Manager ODA/AODA, Community and Health Services at Ext. 2060 or lois.davies@york.ca.

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Copy to: Bill Fisch, Chairman and CEO
Chief Eric Jolliffe, York Regional Police
Housing York Inc. Board of Directors
York Region Rapid Transit Corporation Board of Directors
ODA/AODA Staff Committee