



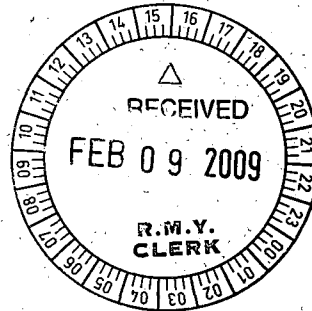
Regional Municipality of York Police Services Board

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To Make a Difference in Our Community

February 5, 2009

Mr. Denis Kelly
Regional Clerk
The Regional Municipality of York
17250 Yonge Street
Newmarket, Ontario
L3Y 6Z1



REGION OF YORK
CLERK'S OFFICE

FILE No. - P14

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Executive Director

Connie Phillipson

Dear Mr. Kelly:

At its meeting on January 28, 2009, the Regional Municipality of York Police Services Board received the attached report entitled *Update on the Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2001 and Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2005* from Chief Armand P. La Barge, and approved the following recommendation:

1. That the Report of the Chief of Police be received and forwarded to the Regional Municipality of York Accessibility Advisory Committee.

Therefore, on behalf of the Board, I request that you forward the attached Report of the Chief of Police to the York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee.

Yours truly,

Connie Phillipson
Executive Director

Attachment



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York Regional Police

Chief of Police
Armand P. La Barge

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THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF YORK POLICE SERVICES BOARD

REPORT OF THE CHIEF OF POLICE

28 JANUARY 2009

Update on the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2001* and *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2005*

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the Board receive this report.

SYNOPSIS

York Regional Police is committed to fostering a culture of inclusivity in all aspects of its service delivery and its work environment. We are a proven supporter of accessibility for all citizens and have made considerable progress to ensure all of our services are inclusive and accessible. York Regional Police has worked in conjunction with Regional Staff to implement the requirements of the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2001* (ODA) and the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2005* (AODA), including the Accessibility Standard for Customer Service, the first of four regulations to be implemented under the AODA.

Since 2004, York Regional Police has developed an annual Accessibility Plan. Our organizational plan is incorporated into the overall annual Accessibility Plan for the Region of York, pursuant to the ODA and the Accessibility Plan Policy Framework that was approved by Regional Council in February 2003. The Plan includes a progress report of our achievements and summarizes what we will be doing to identify and remove barriers to accessibility. A considerable number of initiatives and enhancements have resulted and others are planned for the coming years. Currently, the focus of our accessibility planning efforts is on meeting the requirements of the Customer Service Standard for public sector agencies by the required compliance date of January 1, 2010.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There is no provincial funding to support the implementation of the AODA Regulations. The costs of AODA compliance can only be assessed incrementally as the Province releases each standard and compliance timetable. Some costs associated with implementation of the Customer Service Regulation will be absorbed within the 2009 operating budget for York Regional Police, including the addition of a civilian AODA Coordinator position, consultant expenditures and any training and technology related costs.

BACKGROUND

ODA/AODA Overview

York Regional Police is currently governed by both the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2001* (ODA) and the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2005* (AODA). The AODA will eventually replace the current ODA, however, the ODA will remain in effect for the foreseeable future while the AODA is phased in. During this period, York Regional Police, like the Region and other municipalities, will continue to be subject to both the ODA and AODA simultaneously.

Under the ODA, the Region of York has a legal obligation to prepare an annual Accessibility Plan. The plan highlights barriers that have been identified and/or eliminated and outlines the actions that will be taken to identify, prevent and remove remaining barriers across York Region's departments, including York Regional Police. York Regional Police prepares an annual Accessibility Plan for incorporation in the Region's Plan.

The AODA came into effect in June 2005 and applies to both the public and private sectors. Its goal is to ensure that all Ontarians with disabilities have full access to goods, services, facilities, accommodation, employment, building structures and premises by January 1, 2025. This goal will be achieved through the development, implementation and enforcement of provincially-set accessibility standards in the areas of customer service, the built environment, information and communications, and employment and transportation.

The Region's Accessibility Advisory Committee, established under the ODA in 2001, continues to provide advice to York Regional Police on our ODA plans. Under the AODA, their role will be expanded to include advice to Regional Council on compliance with the new standards.

Unlike the ODA, the AODA establishes a process of reporting, inspection, investigation and compliance and provides for the implementation of administrative penalties in the event of non-compliance. However, the provisions for inspection and investigation have not yet been established by the Province, nor have they released details on the compliance reporting requirements.

AODA Customer Service Regulation

Under the AODA, Provincial Standard Development Committees have been established to develop proposed standards that will become regulations under the AODA. Standard Development Committees have been established to develop standards in the following four areas:

- customer service
- transportation
- information and communication
- built environment and employment.

The Accessibility Standard for Customer Service is the first to be implemented as a regulation. It was released in July 2007 and came into effect on January 1, 2008. Designated public sector organizations, including municipalities, are required to comply with the provisions of the regulation by January 1, 2010. Police services are included within the scope of "municipality" as defined in the regulation.

The purpose of the Customer Service Regulation is to make customer service operations accessible for all persons with disabilities by identifying and removing barriers to customer services in operational practices, policies and procedures, communication and staff training.

ODA/AODA Customer Service Standard Compliance

While responding to the needs of our citizens in a planned and thoughtful way and implementing plans to comply with the ODA and AODA Customer Service Standard, our accessibility goals are to:

- provide services that reflect awareness of the needs of York Region residents, including persons with disabilities who require the assistance of York Regional Police
- develop strategies and programs that facilitate accessibility to policing services
- improve partnerships with the community and other service providers, including persons with disabilities and those who serve people with disabilities.

Our Accomplishments

York Regional Police has made considerable progress in the last several years responding to the needs of persons with disabilities. In the last five years since we have formally undertaken accessibility planning activities pursuant to our departmental Accessibility Plans, some forty initiatives have been completed to eliminate barriers for persons with disabilities. Some of the accomplishments we have achieved in 2008 include the following:

- Purchase of the NexTalk system which is an advancement to our existing TeleTypewriter (TTY) service which will improve the efficiency with which we deal with deaf, deafened and hard of hearing persons
- Relocation of accessible parking spaces at 2, 4 and 5 Districts in Richmond Hill, Vaughan and Markham to enhance wheelchair accessibility
- 'Communication Tips' cards from the Canadian Hearing Society have been distributed to police officers during annual requalification training by representatives from the Hearing Society who attended the training sessions
- Involvement of The Canadian Hearing Society and CNIB in our Recruit Community Insight Program
- Increased the representation of members with disabilities on our Equity Advisory Committee
- Developed a draft Interpretation and Translation Procedure to provide our members with enhanced instruction and detailed responsibilities regarding the use of interpreters and translators. It is anticipated to be issued in early 2009

- Utilized sign language interpreters at various special events, including International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, Citizenship Ceremonies, Black History Month and Asian Heritage Month celebrations
- Annual requalification training sessions have included presentations from the Canadian Hearing Society and CNIB, and included training on mental health issues
- An on-line hearing conservation training session has been developed for our specialized units where hearing loss may be an issue
- In 2008, an additional forty members received the "Just Ask" Inclusivity and Accessibility training course on providing effective customer service to persons with disabilities
- A Language Skills & Diversity Survey has been conducted to identify our member skill sets, including proficiency level in American Sign Language
- Additional modifications have been made to our Aurora police facility and Community Resource Centre to enhance wheelchair access
- Enhanced accessibility for persons with disabilities at the Community Safety Village through purchase of two accessible tricycles, a special accessible motorized car and creation of accessible wheelchair pathways.

2009 Accessibility Plan

In 2009, individual Bureaus and Units of York Regional Police will be working together in identifying, removing and preventing barriers to accessibility. There will be a focus on the implementation of the Customer Service Regulation of the AODA. We will ensure that we continue to address a number of key areas, including training and awareness, policy review, facilities design and modification and technology enhancements to increase access to our services by persons with disabilities. Highlights of some of the planned activities and initiatives include the following:

- An Accessibility Consultant will be contracted to review accessibility designs and best practices to ensure accessibility measures are included in identified facilities, including the Aurora Investigative Services building
- All York Regional Police staff will receive training pursuant to the Customer Service Regulation (AODA). Time has been allotted at uniform requalification training and civilian development training to provide an overview of the AODA and our related policies, practices and procedures
- Annual requalification training will also include a component on the Human Rights Code and our harassment and discrimination procedure
- Acquisition of an accessible playground structure for individuals with disabilities at the Community Safety Village
- An accessibility review of web, telecommunications and other technologies to identify barriers
- Review of our emergency planning procedure in consultation with the Canadian Hearing Society, the Canadian Mental Health Association and the CNIB to identify their requirements pertaining to notification, evacuation and repatriation
- Establishment of a program in conjunction with the Canadian Association for Community Living to provide employment to persons with intellectual disabilities. Two part-time positions have been identified, as per the November 2008 report to the Board. Similarly, a volunteer/mentoring program will be developed for persons with intellectual disabilities
- Review of the current composition of the Equity Advisory Committee to identify additional opportunities for inclusion
- Review of internal policies, practices and procedures to ensure incorporation of the AODA Customer Service Regulation's core principles

- Development of a Mental Health Support Team to meet the needs of children
- Promotion of on-line/web-based service options to persons with disabilities for the reporting of minor incidents and for access to other services such as bike registration and the Community Alert Program
- Review of participation in the Recruit Community Insight Program to broaden representation of agencies and persons who represent the disabled community
- An AODA staff resource person will be included in the 2009 staffing and deployment plan
- Expansion of the portfolio of our Seniors Liaison (crime prevention) officer to include persons with disabilities.

Customer Service Regulation

The following table outlines more specifically the requirements of the AODA Customer Service Regulation and what York Regional Police is doing and will do to comply with its provisions.

Customer Service Regulation provision	Current and Planned Activities
Develop and/or amend policies, practices and procedures to ensure inclusion of the principles of independence, dignity, integration and equality.	A draft procedure covering the various aspects of the AODA and customer service provisions has been developed and is expected to be approved in early 2009. Other related procedures have been developed, including mental health support and harassment and discrimination, or will be developed, such as interpretation and translation. Other procedures, including prisoner transportation, will be reviewed and provisions added as required.
Review training materials and train all staff who interact with the public on policies, practices and procedures for the provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities.	We are in the process of finalizing a training strategy for our staff and have consulted with the Region's Customer Service Unit about their approach. Our training will include an e-learning module and in-class sessions conducted during uniform requalification training and civilian development seminars. New employees will receive their training at their orientation session. Approximately fifty members in total have already received the "Just Ask" Inclusivity and Accessibility training course and thousands of front-line members have received training on mental health issues, and from the Canadian Hearing Society and CNIB.
Ensure that information contained in document format is provided in a format that takes into account disabilities of potential recipients.	The Corporate Communications Bureau is currently reviewing our website and other public document formats and will be incorporating the required provisions. Modifications will be undertaken as required to comply with both the Customer Service Regulation and draft Information and Communication Regulation.

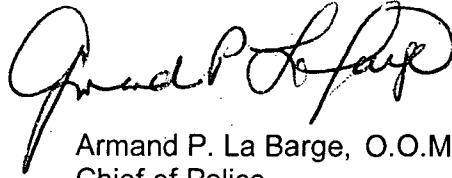
Enable the use of assistive devices and develop policies addressing the use of service animals and support persons for persons with disabilities	The draft AODA procedure will incorporate these provisions to provide guidance to our members to enable the use of assistive devices and in the use of service animals and support persons. It will also itemize the assistive devices and services available to persons with disabilities, such as TTY, Community Alert, hearing amplification devices and our accessible van, and how to access them. We are in the midst of implementing NexTalk as previously described. Our technology review may identify further possible enhancements.
Develop a standardized communication strategy that would address the issue of temporary disruptions of service.	Corporate Communications is conducting a review of possible disruption types and the appropriate ways to disseminate information to persons with disabilities.
Establish a feedback process and process to respond to any feedback and action taken to a complaint.	Currently, we have various mechanisms that allow feedback, including our general e-mail address located on the website, Community Surveys, Customer Service Feedback cards at all our locations and our on-line reporting (CopLogic) system has customer feedback capabilities. The 2009 Operational Budget has identified an AODA Coordinator position that will have responsibility for reviewing our feedback and complaint processes and preparing an associated public document describing the process as it related to the AODA. In addition, in 2009, we will expand the portfolio of our Seniors Liaison officer to include persons with disabilities.

Monitoring and Reporting Process

The Region of York will be developing a comprehensive AODA policy and similarly, the Police Services Board will be required to establish its own policy governing York Regional Police that is consistent with the Region's policy. York Regional Police will implement its own AODA procedure to establish specific operational requirements for our members. We will present our draft annual Accessibility Plan to the Police Services Board in October of every year, prior to being forwarded to the Accessibility Advisory Committee. In order to ensure that we are complying with our procedures and providing the best possible service to persons with disabilities, a quality assurance/audit process will be implemented, including annual reports to the Board, to monitor our progress and recommend any necessary adjustments.

Conclusion

York Regional Police remains strongly committed to not only meeting, but exceeding the requirements of the ODA and AODA through the continued development of annual Accessibility Plans and implementation of the Customer Service Regulation and subsequent regulations as they are developed. In summary, we will continue to foster a culture of inclusivity and accessibility at York Regional Police to support all persons with disabilities and ensure they receive equitable, high quality policing services.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Armand P. La Barge". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Armand" being more prominent than the last name "La Barge".

Armand P. La Barge, O.O.M.
Chief of Police

APL:bm