

Cheshire supports the goals and is committed to fulfilling our requirements under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*. (AODA) and will establish policies, practices and procedures which are consistent with the accessibility standards established under the AODA, including accessible customer service, information and communication, employment, the built environment and transportation.

This accessibility plan outlines the steps we are taking to meet those requirements and to improve opportunities for people with disabilities.

The plan is reviewed and updated at least once every 5 years.

Statement of Commitment

Cheshire is committed to providing an accessible environment in which all individuals have equal access to Cheshire's services and programs in a way that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities. This includes creating and fostering an inclusive environment that is considerate and accommodating for all individuals, including people with disabilities. We will continue to prevent barriers by designing inclusive and supportive positive attitudes and preventing attitudes which devalue and limit the potential of persons with disabilities.

Cheshire will strive to ensure that its policies, practices and procedures are consistent with the following core principles as outlined in the AODA.

Dignity – goods and services are provided in a manner that is respectful to persons with a disability and does not diminish the person's importance.

Independence – Accommodating a person's disability means respecting their right to do for themselves and to choose the way they wish to receive goods and services.

Integration – Wherever possible, services will be provided in a manner that enables people with disabilities to fully benefit from the same services, in the same place and in the same or similar way as other customers. This may require alternative formats and flexible approaches. It means inclusiveness and full participation. This is a fundamental human right.

Equal Opportunity – Service is provided to persons with disabilities in a way that their opportunity to access goods and services is equal to that given to others.

Accessible Emergency Information

Cheshire is committed to providing the consumers and clients with publicly available emergency information in an accessible way upon request. We will also provide employees with disabilities with individualized emergency response information when necessary.

Training

Cheshire will provide training about the provision of its goods and services to persons with disabilities. All Cheshire employees and others as necessary who deal with the public or other third parties will receive e-training (Moodle) at hire and annually thereafter.

Cheshire will also provide training with respect to changes in its policies, practices and procedures to those individuals who require such training as soon as practicable. Lastly, Cheshire will keep records of all staff who have received training.

Training includes:

- How to provide goods and services in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities;
- How to interact and communicate with persons in a manner that takes into account their disabilities;
- The process for people to provide feedback to Cheshire, its provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities and how Cheshire responds to the feedback and takes action on any complaint;
- How to interact with persons with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a guide dog, service animal or a support person to access goods or services;
- A review of the purposes of the AODA and the requirements of the customer service standard;
- How to use equipment or devices available that may help with the provision of goods and services;
- What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing Cheshire's goods and services.

Assistive Devices

If a person with a disability requires assistive devices to access goods or services from Cheshire, they are allowed to use such devices. Cheshire does provide some assistive devices (i.e. Ceiling track lifts)

Guide Dogs and Service Animals

Service dogs can assist adults and children who are visually impaired, have autism, spina bifida, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, mobility related disabilities, hearing problems and seizure disorders, amongst other disabilities.

If a person with a disability is accompanied by a guide dog or other service animal, Cheshire will permit the person to enter the premises with the animal and keep it with him or her, unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law from the premises. If the service animal or guide dog is excluded by law from the premises, Cheshire will look to other available measures to enable the person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from Cheshire's goods and services

Support Persons

If a person with a disability is accompanied by a support person, they are permitted to enter the premises together and are not prevented from having access to each other while on the premises. Cheshire may require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person while on its premises, but only if a support person is necessary to protect the health or safety of the person with a disability or the health or safety of others on the premises.

Where fees for goods and services are advertised or promoted by Cheshire, it will provide advance notice of the amount payable, if any, in respect of the support person.

Information and Communications

a) Emergency Procedure, Plans or Public Safety Information

Information that is prepared by Cheshire and made available to the public will be made available in an accessible format or with appropriate communication supports, as soon as practicable, upon request.

c) Accessible Websites and Web Content

Cheshire will continue to ensure that all new websites or significant refreshes to an existing website and all content on that website that has been posted conforms to the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0, Level A and WCAG 2.0 Level AA, except for exclusions set out in the IASR.

d) Feedback, Accessible Formats

Cheshire will continue to identify any barriers in our existing feedback processes and remove those barriers to ensure they are accessible to people with disabilities upon request.

e) Accessible Formats and Communication Supports

Cheshire will continue to ensure that all of our publicly available information is made accessible upon request. Where a request for an accessible format or for communication supports is received, we will consult with the individual making the request to determine their accessibility needs and what would be a suitable format or support and provide the requested information in a timely manner.

Feedback Process

The public can provide feedback on the accessibility of the provision of goods and services by Cheshire by:

Phone: 519-439-4246 ext. 310

Email: cheshire.info@cheshirelondon.ca

Mail: 2-1111 Elias Street
London, ON N5W 5L1

Website: http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/AODA_Cheshire_Feedback

We can arrange for accessible feedback and alternate formats upon request.

Employment Standards.

Cheshire is committed to fair and accessible employment practices.

We notify employees, job applicants and the public that accommodations can be made during recruitment and hiring. We consult with the applicants and provide or arrange for suitable accommodation.

- An offer to provide additional information regarding the position and the recruitment process will be included in job advertisements.
- We notify staff that supports are available for those with disabilities as soon as practicable after they begin their employment. We
- provide updated information to employees whenever there is a change to existing policies on the provision of job accommodation

We will take the following steps to ensure the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities are taken into account if Cheshire is using performance management, career development and redeployment processes.

- Cheshire will ensure that workers with disabilities who are redeployed or reassigned will be afforded appropriate accommodations in accordance with prescribed functional restrictions.
- Cheshire will provide all employees, including those with functional disabilities, the chance to participate in career development opportunities as they arise.

We will consult with employees when arranging for the provision of suitable accommodation in a manner that takes into account the accessibility needs due to disability. We will consult with the person making the request in determining the suitability of an accessible format or communication supports specifically for:

- a) information that is needed in order to perform the employee's job; and
- b) information that is generally available to employees in the workplace

Where needed, we will also provide customized emergency information to help an employee with a disability during an emergency. With the employee's consent, we will provide workplace emergency information to a designated person who is providing assistance to that employee during an emergency. We will provide the information as soon as practicable after we become aware of the need for accommodation due to the employee's disability.

We will review the individualized workplace emergency response information:

- a) when the employee moves to a different location in the organization;
- b) when the employee's overall accommodations needs or plans are reviewed; and
- c) when the employer reviews its general emergency response policies.

We have a written process to develop individual accommodation plans for employees.

Cheshire has put in place an early and safe return to work process which can be found in H&S Policy #1-127 for employees that have been absent due to a disability.

Our performance management, career development and redeployment processes take into account the accessibility needs of all employees.

Design of Public Spaces

Cheshire will take the following steps to prevent and remove other accessibility barriers identified.

- With respect to any new construction or renovation, Cheshire will meet the Accessibility Standards for the Design of Public Spaces when building or making major modifications to public spaces which it owns and/or controls.
- In the event of a service disruption, Cheshire will notify the public of the service disruption as soon as feasible and description of alternative option, if available.

Accessibility Barrier Audits by Program

[Administration Office](#) (includes Lhubs/Middlesex)

[North](#)

[South](#)

[East](#)

[West](#)

[Central](#)

[Elgin](#)

[Huron](#)

[Oxford](#)

[Perth](#)

Related Policies and Procedures

[Agency #1-140 Accessible Customer Service](#)

[Agency #1-141 Accessibility Policy Statement of Commitment](#)

[Emergency Preparedness Guide for People with Disabilities/Special Needs](#)

[H&S #1-127 Early and Safe Return to Work Disability Claims Management Program](#)

Changes to Existing Policies

Any policies of this organization that do not respect and promote the principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity will be modified or removed.

This document is publicly available. Accessible formats are available upon request.