



## Accessibility Policy and Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

### Purpose

This policy has been drafted in accordance with the Ontario Regulation 191/11, The Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR), made under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)*. It addresses how the Veterinary Emergency Clinic (VEC) achieves or will achieve accessibility through meeting its requirement in the IASR.

Under the AODA and its Regulations, the following accessibility standards are applicable to the VEC:

- Customer Service Policy
- Information and Communications
- Employment

### Our Commitment

The Veterinary Emergency Clinic (VEC) is committed to treating all people in a way that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence. We believe in integration and equal opportunity. We are committed to meeting the needs of people with disabilities in a timely manner, and will do so by preventing and removing barriers to accessibility and meeting accessibility requirements under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act.

### Definitions

Below is a list of definitions as set out in the IASR

**Accessible Formats** may include, but are not limited to, large print, recorded audio and electronic formats, braille and for formats usable by persons with disabilities

**Accommodations** means the special arrangement made or assistance provided so that persons with disabilities can participate in the experiences available to persons without disabilities. Accommodation will vary depending on the person's unique needs.

**Communication Supports** may include, but are not limited to, captioning, alternative and augmentative communication supports, plain language, sign language and other supports that facilitate effective communications.

**Communications** means the interaction between two or more persons or entities, or any combination of them, where information is provided, sent or received.

**IASR** means Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation

**Kiosk** means an interactive electronic terminal, including a point-of-sale device, intended for public use that allows users to access one or more services or products or both.

**Medical Aid** means an assistive device including but not limited to: respirators and portable oxygen supplies.

**Mobility Aid** means a device used to facilitate the transport, in a seated posture, of a person with a disability.

**Mobility Assistive Device** means a cane, walker, wheelchair, scooter or similar aid.

**New Internet Website** means either a website with a new domain name or a website with an existing domain name undergoing a significant refresh.

**Unconvertible** means if it is not technically feasible to convert the information or communications. It also means if the technology to convert the information or communications is not readily available.

**Web Content Accessibility Guidelines** means the World Wide Web consortium recommendation, dated December 2008, entitled "Web Content Accessibility Guidelines" (WCAG) 2.0.

### **Accessibility Standards for Customer Service**

The VEC has been in compliance with the Accessible Customer Service Regulation under the AODA since December 2012. The VEC is committed to providing goods and services in a way that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities. The following steps have been implemented:

- Ensuring all persons who, on behalf of the VEC, deal with the public or other third parties are trained to communicate and provide the best possible customer service to all customers, including persons with disabilities;
- Ensuring staff are trained and familiar with various assistive devices that may be used by clients with disabilities who are accessing the VEC's services;
- Ensuring completion of accessibility training is tracked and recorded;
- Ensuring customers accompanied by a guide dog or other service animal in areas of the VEC open to the public and other third parties, are accommodated;
- Ensuring that if a person with a disability is accompanied by a support person, the support person is accommodated;
- Providing customers with notice in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption of service or inaccessibility of facilities used by persons with disabilities, by placing such notices at all public entrances on the VEC premises. If the disruption is long-term, the VEC posts an announcement on its website informing clients of the location, duration of the disruption and alternate solutions;
- Continuing to welcome and appreciate feedback from persons with disabilities through multiple communication channels;
- Reporting compliance with the customer service standard on the Accessibility Compliance Reporting tool at ServiceOntario's One-Source for Business website.

### **Multi- Year Accessibility Plan**

VEC's Accessibility Plan outlines a phased-in strategy to prevent and remove barriers and meet its requirements under the IASR. VEC will post the plan on the VEC website and will provide it in an accessible format upon request. The plan will be reviewed and updated at least once every 5 years.

### **Training**

The VEC is committed to implementing a process to ensure that all employees, veterinarians, volunteers and persons who participate in developing VEC's policies, are provided with appropriate training on the requirements of the IASR and on the Human Rights Code as it pertains to persons with disabilities. By January 1, 2015, VEC will:

- Determine and ensure that appropriate training on the requirements of the IASR and on the Ontario Human Rights Code as it pertains to persons with disabilities, is provided to all employees, veterinarians, volunteers and others who provide services on VEC's behalf;
- Keep and maintain a record of the training provided, including dates that the training was provided and the number of individuals to who it was provided;
- Ensure that training is provided on any changes to the prescribed policies on an ongoing basis.

### **Information and Communication Standards**

The VEC is committed to making company information and communications accessible to persons with disabilities. The VEC will incorporate new accessibility requirements under the information and

communication standard to ensure that its information and communications are accessible and provided in accessible formats that meet the needs of persons with disabilities.

In the event that the VEC determines that it is not technically feasible to convert the information or communications, or the technology to convert the information or communications is not readily available, the VEC will provide the person that requires the information with an explanation as to why the information or communications are unconvertible and a summary of the unconvertible information or communications.

### **Accessible Formats and Communications Supports**

By January 1, 2016, VEC will, upon request, provide or arrange for accessible formats and communication supports for persons with disabilities as follows:

- In a timely manner that takes into account the person's accessibility needs due to a disability;
- At a cost that is no more than the regular cost charged to other persons;
- Consult with the person making the request and determine suitability of an accessible format or communication support;
- Notify the public about the availability of accessible formats and communication supports.

### **Feedback**

In accordance with the IASR, by January 1, 2015, the VEC will ensure that feedback processes are accessible to persons with disabilities by providing or arranging for the provision of accessible formats and communications supports upon request. The VEC will notify the public about the availability of accessible formats and communication supports

### **Accessible Emergency Information**

Emergency procedures, plans and public safety information that are prepared by VEC 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.

### **Website Accessibility**

The VEC shall make their internet website and web content conform with the World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guideline (WCAG) 2.0. All VEC internet website and web content backdated to 2012 currently conforms with WCAG 2.0 Level AA.

## **Employment Standard**

The VEC is committed to fair and accessible employment practices that retain employees with disabilities. This includes providing accessibility across all stages of the employment cycle. In accordance with the IASR, by January 1, 2016, the VEC will do the following:

### **1. Recruitment**

VEC will notify employees and the public of the availability of accommodations for applicants and employees with disabilities. This will include:

- A review and, as necessary, modification of existing recruitment policies, procedures and processes;
- Specifying that accommodation is available for applicants with disabilities, on the VEC's website and on job postings

The VEC will notify job applicants, when they are individually selected to participate in an interview or selection process, that accommodations are available upon request in relation to the materials or processes to be used in the interview and selection process. This will include:

- A review and, as necessary, modification of existing recruitment policies, procedures and processes;
- Inclusion of availability of accommodation notice as part of the script in the scheduling of an interview and /or assessment
- If a selected applicant requests an accommodation, consult with the applicant and arrange for provision of suitable accommodations in a manner that takes in to account the applicant's accessibility needs due to a disability

## **2. Employee Notification**

VEC shall inform its employees of its policies used to support its employees with disabilities, including but not limited to, policies on the provision of job accommodations that take into account an employee's accessibility needs due to a disability. Such information will be provided as follows:

- To new employees as soon as practicable after they begin their employment
- To existing employees whenever there is a change to existing policies on the provision of job accommodations that take into account an employee's accessibility needs due to a disability.

## **3. Accessible Formats and Communication Supports**

Upon request by an employee with a disability, VEC will consult with the employee to provide or arrange for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports for:

- Information that is needed in order to perform the employees job; and
- Information that is generally available to employees in the workplace

## **4. Individual Accommodation Plan (IAP)**

VEC will develop and have in place a written process for developing a documented individual accommodation plan for employees with a disability. The process will include the following elements:

- The employees participation in the development of the IAP;
- Assessment on an individual basis;
- The company's process for requesting an evaluation by outside medical or other expert, to assist with determining accommodation and how to achieve accommodation;
- Where required the process for handling workplace representatives;
- The steps taken to protect the privacy of the employee's personal information;
- The frequency with which the individual accommodation plan will be reviewed and the manner in which it will be done;
- If an IAP is denied, the reasons for denial
- A format that takes into account the employee's accessibility needs due to disability

## **5. Return to Work**

The VEC will have in place a return to work process for employees who have been absent from work due to a disability and require disability-related accommodation in order to return to work. Such processes shall be documented and must outline the steps that the VEC will take to facilitate the return to work and include an individual accommodation plan.

## **6. Performance Management, Career Development and Advancement**

VEC will take into account the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities, as well as individual accommodation plans:

- When using performance management processes
- When providing career development and advancement information to employees with disabilities

### **7. Workplace Emergency Response Information**

VEC will provide individualized workplace emergency response information to employees who have a disability as per the following four (4) points:

- If the disability is such that the individualized information is necessary and the VEC is aware of the need for accommodation due to the employee's disability;
- If the employee who receives an individual workplace emergency response information requires assistance and with the employee's consent, VEC shall provide the workplace emergency information to the person designated by VEC to provide assistance to the employee
- As soon as practicable after becoming aware of the need for accommodation due to the employee's disability
- Review the individualized workplace emergency response information when the employee moves to a different VEC location, when overall accommodations needs or plans are reviewed and when the employer reviews its general emergency response policies.