



## **Providing Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities (AODA)**

### **Policy and Procedure**

#### **Purpose**

To ensure that at FCF we are treating all members and guests with honour and dignity, and meeting the needs of people with disabilities according to the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)

#### **Scope**

This policy applies to all aspects of FCF including employment, ministry and service.

#### **Policy**

At FCF we are committed to treating all members and guests with honor and dignity. We will assist them so they can participate in the life of FCF as fully as they are desiring and able. We are *committed to meeting the needs of people with disabilities, according to the requirements of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA).*

We will ensure that all our employees, staff and volunteers are trained on an ongoing basis and that the congregation in general is educated on an ongoing basis.



## **Procedure**

In order to ensure accessible service, **we will:**

1. Provide accessible ministry and service, information and communication, building environment, and employment.
2. Train staff and volunteers on Ontario's accessibility laws and best practices that apply to their job duties and our organization, and how to serve people of all abilities. Refresher tests will be completed annually, and results stored in a confidential file to verify completion.
3. Inform the congregation of this policy, have a written copy available, and post it on our website for public viewing.
4. Keep documents on file that comply with the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Regulation as follows: Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act.
5. Ensure our attitudes, values, and behaviors are respectful. Ask how we can help, do not just take over.
6. Work with the person to figure out how to assist and meet their needs.
7. Speak respectfully and make no assumptions.
8. Be patient.
9. Welcome service animals and support persons.
10. Create accessible ways for people to provide feedback when asked. Our AODA administrator will address any concerns in a timely manner.
11. Provide accessible and customized emergency information, when necessary.
12. Make our employment practices accessible. This includes how we hire, retain and provide career development opportunities to all our employees.



## Flamborough Christian Fellowship

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### Notifying of Disruption of Service

- Post a notice at the main entrances, indicating the source of the disruption.
- Phone and/or email notification to regular attenders, or those with scheduled appointments.
- Include the service disruption on the Flamborough Christian Fellowship website.

### Deaf or Hard of Hearing

- People who are deaf or hard of hearing may communicate in various ways such as sign language, speech, and writing. Follow the person's lead in communicating.
- If the person writes, respond in writing. Have paper and pen handy if the person gestures that they want to write.
- If the person responds by talking and lip reading, look directly at them and enunciate clearly in a normal tone of voice. Keep your hands or any objects away from your mouth and face. Rephrase or substitute words rather than repeat yourself again and again.
- Avoid directly asking the person if they lip read as this is culturally offensive to many.
- Pointing is perfectly acceptable in the deaf community. Feel free to point to products or information.
- In emergency situations assist the individual in recognizing and responding to the emergency.
- Persons relying on the use of a hearing aid may find it difficult to hear in a noisy environment, suggest moving to a quieter location.

### Vision Disabilities

- Identify yourself so the person knows who is talking, offer assistance, but wait until the person accepts your offer or makes a request.
- When providing written material, offer to read or summarize it.
- If you need to leave the person to get something, let them know where you are going and when you will return.
- Be clear and precise when giving directions, e.g. two steps behind you, to your right, etc.
- Before opening the door, ask if they want you to open it and indicate whether the door opens to the left or right and if it is pulled or pushed.
- If a person requests assistance with guiding or mobility:
  - Offer your arm, asking which arm is better and ask for further directions on how to proceed.
  - Walk at a pace that works for the person and verbally advise of obstacles and the environment, such as announcing handrails, doors, stairs and describing the surrounding areas.

### General Tips for Working with Assistive Devices

- Be open and willing to work with assistive devices.
- Focus on the person using the device and not the device.
- Ensure the person and assistive device have the appropriate amount of space.
- Avoid blocking, knocking or bumping into assistive devices.



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### **General Tips for Working with a Support Person**

- Introduce yourself to both the disabled person and the support person.
- Talk directly to the disabled person, even if the support person is responding.
- Address the disabled person appropriately, such as asking “how can I help you today?” as opposed to asking the support person “can you find out what they need?”
- Don’t have side conversations with the support person.
- Provide any written materials to both the disabled person and the support person.
- Ensure the disabled person and the support person are not separated.
- Get permission from the disabled person prior to discussing confidential information in the presence of the support person.

### **General Tips for Handling Service Animals**

- Ensure the person and their service animal are not separated.
- Avoid touching, petting or talking to the animal – when the animal is out with the person, it is working and should not be distracted.
- Get permission before providing water or anything else to the animal.

### **Best Practice Tips: Deaf-Blind**

- Understand that communication can take some time, please be patient.
- Ask what would make the person the most comfortable, and respect his/her needs to the maximum extent possible.
- Avoid sudden movements or touching the person that may catch him/her off guard, unless it is an emergency.

### **Best Practice Tips: Physical Disabilities**

- Always ask before touching or moving any assistive device.
- Ensure the environment is clear and free of obstacles.
- If you are providing one-on-one support, consider pulling up a chair and talking to the person at their eye level.

### **Best Practice Tips: Speech or Language Disabilities**

- If you don’t understand, it is okay to ask the person to repeat the information.
- Consider asking closed-ended questions inviting a “yes” or “no” response.
- Be understanding and reassuring.

### **Best Practice Tips: Mental Health Disabilities**

- Listening skills are important when dealing with such situations as you need to understand the real issue to know how you can offer help.
- Ask how you can help and try to work with the person to find a solution.
- Be confident, patient and reassuring.



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### **Best Practice Tips: Intellectual Disabilities**

- Provide examples when sharing and providing information.
- Remember that the person can make his or her own decisions.
- Be patient and verify understanding.
- Provide information in smaller chunks.

### **Best Practice Tips: Learning Disabilities**

- Respond to any requests for verbal information, assistance in completing forms and tasks with courtesy.
- If necessary, allow extra time to complete tasks and projects.

### **Talking to People with Disabilities over the Phone**

- Speak normally using clear plain language, don't shout, and listen carefully.
- Avoid interrupting or interjecting to finish sentences.
- Patiently wait while the person explains themselves.
- It is okay to politely ask the person to repeat information if you do not understand.
- When using a TTY Teletype phone or message relay service, remember to speak as you would normally, addressing the person and not the operator.

### **Providing Service during Home Visitation**

- Confirm when you will arrive in advance.
- Be patient, it may take the person longer to answer the door.
- Introduce yourself clearly, including that you are from FCF.
- If you do need to move the person's items, ask permission, tell the person what you are doing and why, and ensure everything is returned to how it was when you arrived.

Your feedback is extremely important to us. Please address any questions or concerns to [office@flamcf.ca](mailto:office@flamcf.ca), leaving your preferred contact information and someone will respond to you as soon as possible.