

Accessibility of Manitoba Act-Customer Service Standard

The Accessibility of Manitoba Act (“AMA”) Customer Service Standard requires the Northern Health Region to make public (to be posted on NHR’s website) how the organization complies with customer service. This document describes the AMA requirement followed by how the NHR is complying. An accessible public events guide is also attached. This is also a requirement of the AMA Customer Service Standard to make sure all NHR public events comply with the AMA requirements.

The Northern Health Region ensures communication with a person disabled by a barrier is done in a way that removes the barrier.

- AD-02-45-Employee Communication Policy
The Northern Health Region places a high priority in involving all employees in events, issues and decisions that affect the organization and to establish and maintain effective channels of communication. Northern Health Region has developed various employee communication methods and continues to work on improving employee communication.
- AD-02-35-Advertising:Public Communication
Public communication is organized by the Northern Health Region Communications Coordinator. Development considerations such as easy to read fonts, plain language and various formats of advertising are used to reach audiences.

Accessibility of Public Events

The Northern Health Region considers accessibility for all at public events. Planning, requested accommodations, advertising and venue will be considered at all events using the developed guide.

- Accessible Events Guide (attached)
- Accessible Events Checklist (attached)
- Speaker Tips on Accessibility (attached)

The Northern Health Region welcomes the use of assistive devices to remove or reduce barriers. The Northern Health Region does not charge fees for use of on-site assistive devices, such as hearing technology, descriptive video or wheelchairs.

- The Northern Health Region does not charge fees for assistive devices that are on site. Customers are welcome to provide assistive devices for their personal use. It is

the responsibility of the customer that the assistive device is maintained and operated in a safe controlled manner.

- In the rare situation that an assistive device cannot be used due to medical or safety considerations, Northern Health Region will make reasonable attempts to provide an alternative accommodation that is agreed upon by the customer and staff.
- Every accommodation request will be reviewed individually. Customer accommodation preferences will be considered. The accommodation may involve providing service at another location, time, or in another way that considers the customers accessibility needs.

The Northern Health Region welcomes support persons to enter and remain with the customer. The Northern Health Region avoids charges for a support person when possible. If there is an admission fee for a support person, advance notice will be provided to the customer.

- Northern Health Region's Mission, Vision, and Values are to provide quality and accessible health services to all. The Northern Health Region welcomes any person with a disability along with their support person access to services and access to where services are provided.
- In the event of a facility admission, a person with a disability is able to have access to their support person at all times and is not restricted to visiting hours. Any personal costs of the support person are the responsibility of the support person.
- Controlled access areas requiring the separation of a person with disabilities include but are not limited to surgical areas, procedure rooms, post anaesthetic care areas and recovery rooms. All efforts will be made in advance to discuss situations where separation is required and what accommodations will be put in place to support the customer.
- Verbal consent is required by the care provider where a support person is accompanying a person with a disability in situations where confidential information is discussed.

The Northern Health Region welcomes people with service animals to enter a restaurant, store, hotel, taxi or other place where the public, customers or guests are generally allowed.

- [AD-01-160 Service Animals Policy](#)
The Northern Health Region welcomes persons with disabilities partnered with a service animal. The service animal policy will help with concerns regarding the presence of a service animal in a healthcare setting.

The Northern Health Region creates barrier-free access to goods and services, so they benefit everyone as intended. For example, remove boxes or other obstructions from hallways.

- Workplace Safety and Health Safety Tours
- The Northern Health Region complies with the Manitoba Workplace Safety and Health Act. Workplace Safety & Health Committees conduct quarterly safety inspections. The safety tour team consists of one employer rep and one employee rep who conduct a tour of an area assigned to them. They use a prescribed tour questionnaire that has things to look at and a set of questions to ask a worker from the area that is being inspected. The completed reports are returned to the recording secretary of the WS&H Committee. Any outstanding item from the safety tour is tracked by the safety tour team.

The Northern Health Region informs the public when there are temporary barriers to buildings, spaces or services and must include reasons why accessibility is not available and estimate on the time it will be unavailable. Details of alternate means for access to goods or services are required. This must be displayed at site and on website.

- Disruptions to service can happen by planned and unplanned service outages interfering with the customer ability to access services or service areas.
- The Northern Health Region will communicate temporary barriers to building, spaces or services using service point signs, entrance posters, staff communication, newspaper advertisements, radio advertisements, and website notices.
- A communication plan of all service outages is agreed on by the Executive Director, site maintenance supervisor, and communications department. The communication plan includes but is not limited to length of service outage, alternate access options, and purpose of outage.

The Northern Health Region introduces a process to receive and respond to feedback, including what action will be taken to respond to complaints, make the information about the feedback process available to the public on-site, on the webpage and offer alternate format. A description of the process to receive and respond to feedback is to be made public. Documentation on resulting actions must be made available on request.

AD-06-10 Complaints Management Policy

- There are multiple ways to bring a concern forward to the Northern Health Region such as in-person, by phone, by email, or written letter. Information on how to bring a concern, complaint or feedback to the Northern Health Region is provided publicly on the Region's website and available in all facilities through posters, patient experience brochures and business cards that are made available throughout Northern Health Region sites. This information is also shared with the Northern Health Region Board of Directors and through connections and relationships with local government offices.
- Clients and family are encouraged to first speak with their healthcare provider, the staff, manager or administrator at the point of service if they have a concern or feedback regarding the Northern Health Region. If they still have more to share, clients and families are encouraged to contact the Patient Experience Coordinator.

- Anyone who brings forward a concern will generally be responded to within two (2) business days. While every effort to respond via telephone is made, in some instances a response will be sent in the same method it was received; verbally, written or email. A written summary of the complaint resolution is available on request and will be responded to in accordance with The Personal Health Information Act. For any client specific concerns, consent of the client must be obtained prior to releasing any personal or personal health information to anyone other than the client.

The Northern Health Region ensures employees receive training on how to serve people disabled by barriers. This includes everyone who participates in, or is responsible for, the implementation of policies and practices.

- HR-05-10-Education,Responsibilities of
- HR-01-150-Orientation
- HR-05-150 Form: New Hire Orientation Checklist
- HR-05-45 Online Learning Course Development
- Customer service training has been developed with an all staff requirement to complete training using the Northern Health Region online learning system.
- Accessibility for Manitobans Act Standard of Customer service training has been developed utilizing videos and online learning for all staff.
 - Training outline
 - Accessibility: Introductory Video
 - Understanding Accessibility
 - Customer Service
 - Understanding Human Rights
 - Removing Barriers
 - What are Assistive devices
 - How Can I Help?
 - AMA Tips for employees document



Planning Accessible Public Events

Nearly one in six Manitobans is disabled by barriers where they work, live and play. Barriers to accessibility come at an enormous cost – to persons with disabilities, to their family and friends, to their communities, and also to business and our organization. By learning how to eliminate barriers, everyone benefits.

Northern Health Region events should be planned with accessibility in mind. This guide will help to ensure your event is more inclusive, Accessibility for Manitobans Act (AMA) compliant and planning includes the consideration of people with various types of disabilities might attend the event.

A public event includes a public meeting, public hearing and consultation process required under an enactment that is held at a Northern Health Region facility or other public facility.

AMA requirements for holding public events are:

- Ensure notice of event is provided in an accessible manner
- Event is held in an accessible space
- Physical and communication needs of all participants are met on request
- Provide notice that persons disabled by barriers may request relevant supports that are required to participate

A checklist is attached. This checklist is to be sent to the Communications Coordinator.

Costs of Accommodation

Accessibility should be considered part of normal event budgeting such as food, gifts, and room rental or speaker fees as examples.

Event Notice

If there is a registration form for the event, provide a space for people to identify necessary accommodations or other special needs such as sign language interpretation or food allergies.

Indicate a date by which a request for accommodation must be made to ensure the service is available in time. Recommended timeframe for receiving accommodation request is 2-3 weeks.

Plain language is easier for all readers to understand.

All promotional material for events and invitations must include an act of offer for accommodations (or a similar) statement:

“The Northern Health Region is committed to removing barriers for accessible events. Please contact us by {date 2-3 weeks in advance of event} if you have any accommodation requirements {contact person, email and phone number}”

Requested Accommodations

Follow up with people who are requesting accommodations in advance to discuss and agree on appropriate accommodation.

If providing food, give attendees the opportunity to request dietary preferences and order enough to include interpreters or support persons.

Train volunteers on how to respectfully assist people with disabilities and respond to accessibility issues that may arise.

Participants may request language accommodations to participate. An individual's support person can be a good resource to help with this need.

Venue

Visit the potential venue whenever possible. Think about your audience attending the event and consider the barriers they may face in the venue.

Parking: Is there accessible parking? In areas which have public transportation, is the venue close to drop off points?

Entrance pathways: A minimum of one meter wide pathway is required for easier access. Are barriers present along the outdoor and indoor pathways to the event that can cause problems for people using canes or wheelchairs? Are there garbage stands partially blocking doorways?

If there are stairs to the venue, is there an alternative access route for those who have difficulty with stairs? Post clear signs showing alternate access.

Doorways: Automatic doorways are ideal. If the venue does not have automatic doors then try arrange for volunteers to help.

Washrooms: Are the washroom facilities accessible? Is there room beyond the door for a wheelchair to move around? Is there grab bars in the stall? Is the sink, soap and paper towel reachable for someone in a wheelchair?

Lighting levels: Good lighting helps people who are deaf or hard of hearing lip read, or communicate using sign language. Adjustable lighting makes it easier for presenters who have visual presentations.

If there is natural light during daytime events, ensure there are blinds you can control. Natural light can cause glare making it difficult for people with low vision to see.

Acoustics: Environments with significant echoes create barriers for those who are hard of hearing.

Room Set up

Easy to read signs: Use common words with simple short sentences so everyone can understand.

Clear Floor Space: Make isles and space around tables wide enough for mobility aids such as walkers and wheelchairs. An isle width of one meter or more is recommended. Cover electrical cords that cross isles and pathways so everyone can safely cross them.

Accessible Seating: Make sure there are spaces without chairs for people in wheelchairs. Ask where they would like to sit, not all people using a wheelchair prefer to sit front and center. Provide a variety of chairs with and without arms if available at your venue.

Food and Refreshments

If the event is being served buffet style, organize food, drinks and utensils easy to reach.

Have bendable straws and cups with handles available for people that have limited use of their hands.

Offer assistance or seated service to guests that have difficulties with a buffet line. Do not assume that guests will require help. Ask "can I help?"

Service Animals

Service animals are not pets but make life easier for people. These animals are trained to do specific tasks. They are welcome in public areas where food is served. You will know a service animal by the vest or collar indicator "service animal." Do not pet a service animal as they are working and have a job to do. Like other guests and support

people of your guests a service animal will be thirsty. Having a bowl on hand will be welcoming.

Volunteers

Volunteers should be easily identified by name tags, vest or other identifiers.

Volunteers can help troubleshoot and resolve accessibility issues as they arise at your event.

Remind Volunteers not to make assumptions of what someone can or cannot do.

Please ask “How can I help you?”

Evaluation of event

Include a section about accessibility on your event evaluation form. This will be valuable information at the next event.

Accessible Events Checklist

Name of Event:

Date and Time:

Event Location:

Number of attendees:

Coordinator Contact:

Invitations and Promotion

- Due dates and contact information for accessibility request included in act of offer
- Minimum 12 point fonts for printed material with large print available
- Plain Language
- List Variety of communication methods used

Requested Accommodations

Venue

- Accessible to parking/passenger drop off area/public transportation
- Outdoor and indoor pathways free of barriers
- Doors easy to open
- Accessible washrooms
- Adjustable lighting
- Good acoustics (minimal echo)

Food and Refreshments

- Food, drinks and utensils easy to reach for people using wheelchairs
- Bendable straws and cups with handles available
- Food Buffet assistance available

Room Set up

- Clear, easy to read signs
- Clear floor space
- Cables and wiring secured
- Chairs provided and volunteer stand-ins near registration
- Reserved/Accessible seating available

Speeches and Presentations

- Speakers provided tips on accessibility

Service animals

- Relieve area for service animals considered
- Water bowl provided if required

Volunteers

- Volunteer assigned to resolve accessibility barriers
- Volunteers/staff reminded to ask guests, "How may I help you?"

Speaker Tips on Accessibility

Does your speaker or presenter have any accommodation requirements?

Offer handouts, slides, and other material in accessible formats.

- Electronic formats such as HTML (that is, web page format) and WORD are often the most flexible to meet different people's needs.
- Participants might need material in alternative formats such as large print or braille; however, if they get the material in advance electronically, they might not need it in hard copy at all.
- Screen Reader technology does not work with PDF formats.
- Make media fully accessible- include audio and video used in sessions and recordings of sessions provided afterwards.
- Provide alternative text for images.
- Use at least 12 point sans serif fonts such as Ariel for print materials.
- Use at least 18 point sans serif fonts for audiovisual displays (slides)
- Use high contrast colors.

Provide material ahead of time if requested

- Work with interpreters by giving material in advance. Explain acronyms, terms, names etc. that will be used. Be available to answer questions.

Consider activities

- Accessibility issues can be present with any participant activities such as responding to questions, arranging sticky notes, small group work. Use multiple communication methods for different learning styles.
- Some people can better understand verbal information, pictures, diagrams and others text.
- Always describe pictures and images in your presentation.
- Be aware that if presentations run longer than planned, participants who are dependent on transportation will be leaving your event on time.
- During question and answer periods, remind audience to speak slowly and clearly.