



## **Accessibility Policy - Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) (Customer Service, Employment and Built Environment)**

---

### **INTENT**

Hope Bible Church Oakville (Hope) is committed to providing a barrier-free environment for all stakeholders, including employees, job applicants, suppliers, and any visitors who enter the premises, work for the church, access information provided by the church, or use the church's goods and services.

Hope will work to break down the barriers that prevent or limit persons with disabilities from employment, receipt of goods and services, the built environment, and information and communication through the implementation of accessibility standards.

(Hope) is committed to meeting its current and ongoing obligations under the Ontario Human Rights Code respecting non-discrimination.

Hope understands that obligations under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) and its accessibility standards do not substitute or limit its obligations under the Ontario Human Rights Code or obligations to people with disabilities under any other law.

Hope is committed to complying with both the Ontario Human Rights Code and the AODA.

Hope is committed to excellence in serving everyone including people with disabilities.

Our accessible policies are consistent with the principles of independence, dignity, integration, and equality of opportunity for people with disabilities.

### **GUIDELINES**

#### **Customer Service**

##### Assistive devices:

People with disabilities may use their personal assistive devices when accessing our services or facilities. In cases where the assistive device presents a significant and unavoidable health or safety concern or may not be permitted for other reasons, other measures will be used to ensure the person with a disability can access our services or facilities. We will ensure that our staff are familiar with various assistive devices that may be used by people with disabilities while accessing our services or facilities.

##### Communication

Hope understands the importance of accessible digital and non-digital forms of communication and will do its best to provide accessible types of communication and information to all individuals with disabilities.

##### Access to Goods and Services

Hope will seek to provide barrier-free access to the church's goods and services. Where barriers cannot be removed, alternate means for accessing goods or services will be provided to the best of the church's ability.

Hope Bible Church Oakville	page 1 of 6
Approved by: Executive Pastor	Date: Apr 2023

## **Accessibility Policy - Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) (Customer Service, Employment and Built Environment)**

---

### Service Animals

We welcome people with disabilities and their service animals. Service animals are allowed on the parts of our premises that are open to the public.

When we cannot easily identify that an animal is a service animal, our staff may ask a person to provide documentation (template, letter or form) from a regulated health professional that confirms the person needs the service animal for reasons relating to their disability.

A service animal can be easily identified through visual indicators, such as when it wears a harness or a vest, or when it helps the person perform certain tasks.

A regulated health professional is defined as a member of one of the following colleges:

- College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists of Ontario
- College of Chiropractors of Ontario
- College of Nurses of Ontario
- College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario
- College of Optometrists of Ontario
- College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario
- College of Physiotherapists of Ontario
- College of Psychologists of Ontario
- College of Registered Psychotherapists and Registered Mental Health Therapists of Ontario

If service animals are prohibited by another law, we will do the following to ensure people with disabilities can access our services or facilities:

- explain why the animal is excluded
- discuss with the visitor another way of providing services or facilities

### Support Persons

If an individual with a disability is accompanied by a support person, Hope will ensure that both persons may enter the premises together and that the individual is not prevented from having access to the support person.

The church will waive admission fees to support persons, or when not possible, ensure the support person is notified of admission costs in advance. The church will attempt to accommodate the individual and support person to sit with one another.

In situations where confidential information might be discussed, consent will be obtained from the individual before any potentially confidential information is mentioned in front of the support person.

Hope Bible Church Oakville	page 2 of 6
Approved by: Executive Pastor	Date: Apr 2023

## **Accessibility Policy - Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) (Customer Service, Employment and Built Environment)**

---

### Service Disruptions

In the event of any temporary disruptions to facilities or services that attendees with disabilities rely on to access or use goods or services, reasonable efforts will be made to provide advance notice.

When disruptions occur, the church will:

- Post notices in the nearest accessible entrance to the service disruption,
- Contact individuals with reservations or appointments; or
- By any other method that may be reasonable under the circumstances.

The church will make every reasonable effort to indicate when services will resume and suggest alternatives that can be utilized during the disruption. In some circumstances, such as in the situation of unplanned temporary disruptions or emergencies, advance notice may not be possible.

### Emergency Notifications

Hope will provide emergency and public safety information, plans and procedures, maps and warning signs at evacuation points, and any other emergency alert information, in accessible formats or with appropriate communication supports, upon request.

The church will:

- Work with any individuals requesting information to see how to best meet their needs;
- Ensure emergency information can be seen, read, and heard by anyone, including people with disabilities; and
- If a person with a disability requires assistance from a support person in case of an emergency, make sure an employee is available to act as such.

### Training:

Hope will provide accessible customer service training to:

- all employees and volunteers
- anyone involved in developing our policies
- anyone who provides services or facilities to people on our behalf.

### Customer Feedback

Hope welcomes feedback on how we provide accessible service. Feedback will help us identify barriers and respond to concerns.

Hope will make sure our feedback process is accessible to people with disabilities by providing or arranging for accessible formats and communication supports, on request. Feedback can be provided through a variety of mechanisms, such as in person, by phone, or e-mail ([info@hopeoakville.ca](mailto:info@hopeoakville.ca)).

Those who provide formal feedback will receive acknowledgement of their feedback, along with any resulting actions based on concerns or complaints that were submitted.

Hope Bible Church Oakville	page 3 of 6
Approved by: Executive Pastor	Date: Apr 2023

## **Accessibility Policy - Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) (Customer Service, Employment and Built Environment)**

---

### **Employment**

Hope will make every effort to identify, remove, and prevent barriers by developing inclusive employment procedures that support persons with disabilities with accommodations during the recruitment and selection stages, and throughout the employment life cycle.

#### Recruitment and Hiring

Hope understands that improving workplace accessibility and ensuring an accessible recruitment and selection process for applicants with disabilities can expand the pool of talented candidates. Upon request, the church will provide candidates with reasonable accommodations during the interview and selection process. Where an accommodation is requested, the church will consult with the applicant to arrange suitable accommodations, such as providing the application in an alternate or accessible format.

The church interview process will focus on experience and skills and will not discriminate against candidates who have a disability or require accommodation. Hope is committed to hiring decisions that are unbiased and based on qualifications and past experience. Successful candidates will be made aware of policies and support for accommodations upon completion of the recruitment process.

#### Training and Development

Hope recognizes that skills development and career planning can enrich the employment experience and increase engagement for individuals with disabilities. The church will align training and development programs to meet the needs of employees with disabilities and provide training as soon as reasonably practicable upon the person being assigned to applicable duties. Training programs will be designed with the flexibility to allow customization for the individual requirements of the employee, such as providing training materials in accessible or conversion-ready formats that take into account the need of the employee. The church will consider employee barriers when implementing performance management processes, or when offering career development, employment support, or advancement opportunities.

#### Communication

Hope will provide or arrange for accessible formats and communication supports for employees, upon request. The church will consult with the employee to determine the specific barrier and the best way to provide support. Such accessible formats and communication supports are conversion-ready and will be provided in a timely manner.

When communicating with or providing information to an employee who requires accommodation or assistance due to a disability, the church will ensure that all communication with the individual is completed in a manner that takes into account the individual's disability. Where an assistive device is used, the church will reasonably accommodate the use of the device.

#### Emergency Response

If necessary or if requested, Hope will create individualized workplace emergency response plans for employees with disabilities. The emergency response plan will consider the unique challenges created by the individual's disability and the physical nature of the workplace and will be created in consultation with

Hope Bible Church Oakville	page 4 of 6
Approved by: Executive Pastor	Date: Apr 2023

## **Accessibility Policy - Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) (Customer Service, Employment and Built Environment)**

---

the employee. If an employee with a disability requires assistance from a support person during an emergency, the church will designate a fellow employee to act as such.

Customized emergency response plans will be reviewed when:

- The employee moves to a different physical location in the organization;
- The employee's overall accommodation needs or plans are reviewed; or
- The church reviews general emergency response policies.

### Accommodation

The duty to accommodate is required of all employers, in all jurisdictions in Canada, and encompasses providing respect and dignity, individualized accommodation, integration and participation, and barrier-free designs. Hope will provide individual accommodations to support the needs of employees with disabilities. Personalized accommodation plans will be designed to allow employees to contribute and participate in job-related functions and activities to the best of their abilities. The process of accommodating individuals will take a consultative approach and is a shared obligation of the church, the employee, and any applicable professionals required to assist the employee throughout the process.

### Return to Work

Hope is committed to a supportive return-to-work program and will develop and implement return-to-work processes for employees who are absent from work due to a disability and require accommodations in order to return to work. The church will work with the employee to develop an individualized return-to-work plan and support the employee in the transition period by addressing any barriers. The return-to-work process will outline the steps the church will take to facilitate the employee's return to work and use documented individual accommodation plans.

### Redeployment

If an employee cannot be accommodated in their current position, even with accommodations to either the job processes or hours, Hope will consider redeployment by placing the employee in an alternative position within the church. The church will work with leadership, supervisors, human resources and the employee to determine whether there is another available position. If the accommodation requires a substantial change in the position, involving duties or hours, the position may be redesigned.

### Inability to Accommodate

Hope will provide workplace accommodation up to the point of undue hardship. Undue hardship may occur where it is established that no forms of appropriate accommodation exist, or where the creation of accommodation would create a health and safety hazard or cause unreasonable costs for the organization.

Where a necessary accommodation is found to cause undue hardship on the organization, the church will work to find a fair and equitable compromise that meets the needs of the employee and the organization to the greatest extent possible

Hope Bible Church Oakville	page 5 of 6
Approved by: Executive Pastor	Date: Apr 2023

## **Accessibility Policy - Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) (Customer Service, Employment and Built Environment)**

---

### **Building Accessibility**

Hope will work to ensure that the built environment, including the building interior and exterior, is designed to facilitate barrier-free access to goods or services for customers and employees. If areas of the built environment are not accessible for certain individuals with disabilities, the church will work with the individual to provide an alternate means of access.

Reference: Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) Policy, Canadian Centre for Christian Charities (CCCC), Mar 2023

---

Greg McFarlane  
Executive Pastor

Hope Bible Church Oakville	page 6 of 6
Approved by: Executive Pastor	Date: Apr 2023