

## Frequently Asked Questions:

**Q.** I am allergic to dogs and another member has a service dog. What do I do?

**A.** Common allergic reactions are not considered disabilities. Use a well ventilated area or limit exposure to the animal.

**Q.** Who has to be trained by OSSTF/FEESO?

**A.** Anyone dealing with OSSTF/FEESO members on behalf of OSSTF/FEESO. This includes: Bargaining Unit Executives, Workplace Representatives, Branch Representatives, Provincial Committee Members, and District Office Staff.

**Q.** Do we have to add ramps or elevators to our office right now to comply?

**A.** No. The compliance standard will not come into effect until a later date, but no later than January 1st, 2025.

**Q.** How can I accommodate an individual in a wheelchair or scooter?

**A.** Look for an accessible location that takes into consideration the pathways and washrooms. If needed, raise the table so that the assistive device can fit underneath (telephone books can be used!)

**Q.** If our meeting is not held on OSSTF/FEESO premises, whose compliance guide do we use?

**A.** The organization that owns the building must have their own compliance guide and we must abide by their procedures.

# ACCESSING OSSTF/FEESO

## ACCESSIBILITY AND AODA

### CUSTOMER SERVICE

At OSSTF/FEESO  
we believe that  
everyone should  
be treated with  
dignity and respect.



Alternate formats are available upon request.

OSSTF/FEESO represents over 60,000 education workers who are employees of school boards, universities and other educational institutions in Ontario. OSSTF/FEESO has a provincial office in Toronto and hosts provincial and regional events in many venues. The vast majority of our Districts have a local office to provide services to members. Districts and Bargaining Units also host events in other venues.

## The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)

In 2005, *The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)*, was enacted mandating accessibility standards. The accessibility standards coming into force will address:

- Customer Service
- Transportation
- Information and Communication
- Employment and
- The Built Environment

The Customer Service Standard is the first standard under the AODA coming into effect January 2012 for Unions. Compliance requires that OSSTF/FEESO develop:

- Policies, procedures, and practices dealing with customer service
- Provide training to OSSTF/FEESO members who deal with members or members of the public

As part of our commitment to providing quality services, goods and opportunities to our members and others, OSSTF/FEESO will make reasonable efforts to ensure that its policies, statements, procedures and practices pertaining to providing goods and services to individuals with disabilities are consistent with the following guiding principles:

- Goods and services will be provided in a manner that demonstrates respect for the dignity of individuals with disabilities;
- Goods and services will be provided to individuals with disabilities in an integrated manner unless an alternative is necessary to enable them to access goods or services; and,
- Individuals with disabilities will be given an opportunity equal to others to access goods and services.

## OSSTF/FEESO AODA Customer Service Compliance Statements

OSSTF/FEESO has developed compliance statements for the following that meet the requirements of the AODA Customer Service Standards:

- The Use of Assistive Devices
- Communication
- The Use of Service Animals by Individuals with Disabilities
- The Use of Support Persons by Individuals with Disabilities
- Notice of Temporary Disruptions in Services and Facilities
- Training
- Feedback and Complaints
- Agents and Others Providing Goods and Services on Behalf of OSSTF/FEESO
- Notice of the Availability of the Required Documents

\* OSSTF/FEESO Compliance Statements are available online at [www.osstf.on.ca](http://www.osstf.on.ca)



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## Tips for interacting with people with disabilities.

- Patience and a willingness to find a way to communicate are your best tools
- Usually simple changes are all that are required.
- If you're not sure what to do – ask “How may I assist you?”
- Speak directly to a person with a disability not to their interpreter.
- Don't touch or address service animals – they are working and have to pay attention at all times.
- Never touch a person's assistive device without their consent.
- Write in clear print using contrasting colours between text and background.
- Do not assume what a person can and cannot do.
- If speaking with a person in a wheelchair or scooter for an extended period of time, sit so you are at eye level with them.
- Don't put your hands in front of your face while speaking.
- Keep paper and pen handy.

## Some disabilities may be invisible.

Some examples include:

- Rheumatoid Arthritis
- Deaf
- Hard of hearing
- Coronary-Pulmonary Conditions
- Tourette Syndrome
- Medical Conditions (eg. Diabetes, Chronic Pain, etc.)
- Multiple Sclerosis
- Schizophrenia
- Depression
- Phobias
- Bipolar, anxiety and mood disorders
- Autism
- Dyscalculia (problems in mathematics)
- Dysgraphia (writing and fine motor skills)