

**Vipond Inc.**

**Accessible Customer Service Policy**

**Approval Date:**     **October 1, 2013**

**Review: Annually**

**Purpose:**

The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (“the AODA”) is a Provincial Act with the purpose of developing, implementing and mandating accessibility standards in order to achieve accessibility for persons with disabilities, with respect to goods, services, facilities, accommodation, employment, buildings, structures and premises. Under the AODA, Ontario Regulation 429/07, entitled “*Accessibility Standards for Customer Service*”, came into force on January 1, 2008. The Regulation establishes accessibility standards specific to customer service for public sector organizations and other persons or organizations that provide goods and services to members of the public or other third parties, but not to the goods themselves.

**Intent:**

The objective of this policy is to identify what the equal treatment provisions of the Ontario Human Rights Code, through the AODA and the Regulation, require as a minimum legal standard in program design and delivery to persons with disabilities and addresses the following:

- The provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities;
- The use of assistive devices by persons with disabilities;
- The use of service animals by persons with disabilities;
- The use of support persons by persons with disabilities;
- Notice of temporary disruptions in services and facilities;
- Training;
- Customer feedback regarding the provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities; and
- Notice of availability and format of documents.

**Scope:**

- This policy applies to the provision of goods and services at premises owned and operated by Vipond Inc.
- This policy applies to employees, volunteers, agents and/or contractors who deal with the public or other third parties who act on behalf of Vipond Inc.

- The section of this policy that addresses the use of guide dogs, service animals and service dogs only applies to the provision of goods and services that take place at premises owned and operated by Vipond Inc.

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### **Policy Statement:**

In accordance with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities, Ontario Regulation 429/07, Accessibility Standards for Customer Service*, Vipond Inc. is committed to providing a working and learning environment that is accessible and inclusive to all persons who work, study or visit the Association. It is the policy of Vipond Inc. that its working environments will be free from discrimination and harassment as defined by the Ontario Human Rights Code.

### **Definitions:**

Assistive Devices: It is a technical aid, communication device or other instrument that is used to maintain or improve the functional abilities of people with disabilities. Personal assistive devices are typically devices that customers bring with them such as a wheelchair, walker or a personal oxygen tank that might assist in hearing, seeing, communicating, moving, breathing, remembering and/or reading.

Disability: the term disability as defined by the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, and the *Ontario Human Rights Code*, refers to:

- any degree or physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing includes diabetes, mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, and any degree or paralysis, amputation, lack of physical co-ordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device;
- a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability;
- a learning disability, or dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language;
- a mental disorder; or
- an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997.

Guide Dog: is a highly-trained working dog that has been trained at one of the facilities listed in Ontario Regulation 58 under the *Blind Persons' Rights Act*, to provide mobility, safety and increased independence for people who are blind.

Service Animal: as reflected in *Ontario Regulation 429/07*, an animal is a service animal for a person with a disability if:

- it is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to his or her disability; or
- if the person provides a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability.

Service Dog: as reflected in *Health Protection and Promotion Act*, a support person means, in relation to a person with a disability, another person who accompanies him or her in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care, medical needs or access to goods and services.

## **General Principles**

The Provision of Goods and Services to Persons with Disabilities: Vipond Inc. will strive to ensure that its policies, practices and procedures are consistent with the following core principles as outlined in the AODA.

Dignity: goods and services are provided in a manner that is respectful to persons with a disability and does not diminish the person's importance.

Independence: accommodating a person's disability means respecting their right to do for themselves and to choose the way they wish to receive goods and services.

Integration: persons with disabilities can access all goods and services. This may require alternative formats and flexible approaches. It means inclusiveness and full participation. This is a fundamental human right.

Equal Opportunity: service is provided to persons with disabilities in a way that their opportunity to access goods and services is equal to that given to others.

*Vipond Inc.* will make every reasonable effort to ensure that its policies, practices and procedures are consistent with the principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity by:

- ensuring that all customers receive the same value and quality;
- allowing customers with disabilities to do things in their ways, at their own pace when accessing goods and services as long as this does not present a safety risk;
- using alternative methods when possible to ensure that customers with disabilities have access to the same services, in the same place and in a similar manner;
- taking into account individual needs when providing goods and services; and
- communicating in a manner that takes into account the customer's disability

Assistive Devices: Persons with disabilities may use their own assistive devices as required when accessing goods or services provided by Vipond Inc.

In cases where the assistive device presents a safety concern or where accessibility might be an issue, other reasonable measures will be used to ensure the access of goods and services. For example, open flames and oxygen tanks cannot be near one another. Therefore the accommodation of a customer with an oxygen tank may involve ensuring the customer is in a location that would be considered safe for both the customer and business. Or, where elevators are not present and where an individual requires assistive devices for the purposes of mobility, service will be provided in a location that meets the needs of the customer.

Guide Dogs, Service Animals and Service Dogs: A customer with a disability that is accompanied by a guide dog, service animal or service dog will be allowed access to premises that are open to the public unless otherwise excluded by law. 'No Pet' policies do not apply to guide dogs, service animals and/or service dogs.

Food Service Areas: a customer with a disability that is accompanied by a dog or service dog will be allowed access to food service areas that are open to the public unless otherwise excluded by law. Other types of service animals are not permitted into food service areas due to the Health Protection and Promotion Act, Ontario Regulation 562 Section 60.

Exclusion Guidelines: If a guide dog, service animal or service dog is excluded by law (see applicable laws below) Vipond Inc. will offer alternative methods to enable the person with a disability to access goods and services, when possible (for example, securing the animal in a safe location and offering the guidance of an employee).

Applicable Laws:

- Food Safety and Quality Act 2001, Ontario Regulation 31/05
- The Health Protection and Promotion Act, Ontario Regulation 562, Section 60
- Dog Owner's Liability Act, Ontario: if there is a conflict between a provision of this Act or of a regulation under this or any other Act relating to banned breeds (such as pitbulls) and a provision of a by-law passed by a municipality relating to these breeds, the provision that is more restrictive in relation to controls or bans on these breeds prevails.

Recognizing a Guide Dog, Service Dog and/or Service Animal: if it is not readily apparent that the animal is being used by the customer for reasons relating to his or her disability, Vipond Inc. may request verification from the customer. Verification may include:

- A letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons related to their disability;
- A valid identification card signed by the Attorney General of Canada; or,
- A certificate of training from a recognized guide dog or service animal training school.

Care and Control of the Animal: the customer that is accompanied by a guide dog, service dog and/or service animal is responsible for maintaining care and control of the animal at all times.

Allergies: if a health and safety concern presents itself for example in the form of a severe allergy to the animal, Vipond Inc. will make all reasonable efforts to meet the needs of all individuals.

Support Persons: if a customer with a disability is accompanied by a support person, Vipond Inc. will ensure that both persons are allowed to enter the premises together and that the customer is not prevented from having access to the support person. There may be times where seating and availability prevent the customer and support person from sitting beside each other. In these situations Vipond Inc. will make every reasonable attempt to resolve the issue. In situations where confidential information might be discussed, consent will be obtained from the customer, prior to any conversation where confidential information might be discussed.

Admission Fees: if payment is required by a support person for admission to the premises or functions of Vipond Inc. will ensure that notice is given in advance by posting notice of admission fees for support persons where the Toronto Sheet Metal Contractors Association fees are posted.

Notice of Disruptions in Service: service disruptions may occur due to reasons that may or may not be within the control or knowledge of Vipond Inc. In the event of any temporary disruptions to facilities or services that customer's with disabilities rely on to access or use Vipond Inc. goods or services, reasonable efforts will be made to provide advance. In some circumstances such as in the situation of unplanned temporary disruptions, advance notice may not be possible,

Notifications Will Include: in the event that a notification needs to be posted, the following information will be included unless it is not readily available or known:

- Goods or services that are disrupted or unavailable
- Reasons for the disruption
- Anticipated duration
- A description of alternative services or options

Notification Options: when disruptions occur Vipond Inc. will provide notice by:

- Posting notices in conspicuous places including at the point of disruption, at the main entrance and the nearest accessible entrance to the service disruption and/or on Vipond Inc. website;
- Contacting customers with appointments or meetings;

- Verbally notifying customers when they are making a reservation, appointment or while they are at a Vipond Inc. facility; or
- By any other method that may be reasonable under the circumstances.

Feedback Process: Vipond Inc. shall provide customers with the opportunity to provide feedback on the service provided to customers with disabilities. Information about the feedback process will be readily available to all customers and notice of the process will be made available on Vipond Inc. website, [www.vipond.ca](http://www.vipond.ca). Feedback forms along with alternate methods of providing feedback such as verbally (in person or by telephone) or written (hand written, delivered, website or email), will be available upon request.

Submitting Feedback: Customers can submit feedback by:

- Completing the online feedback form at [www.vipond.ca](http://www.vipond.ca)
- Completing a paper feedback form at Vipond.ca Offices; or
- Verbally providing feedback to any Vipond.ca employee

Customers who wish to provide feedback by completing an onsite customer feedback form or verbally can do so to any Vipond.ca employee.

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

Training: training will be provided to all employees, volunteers, agents and/or contractors who deal with the public or other third parties that act on behalf of Vipond Inc.

Training Provisions: as reflected in *Ontario Regulation 429/07*, regardless of the format, training will cover the following:

- A review of the purpose of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*.
- A review of the requirements of the *Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07*
- Instructions on how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities
- Instructions on how to interact with people with disabilities who:
  - a) use assistive devices
  - b) require the assistance of a guide dog, service dog or other service animal; or
  - c) require the use of a support person (including the handling of admission fees)

- Instructions on how to use equipment or devices that are available at our premises or that we provide that may help people with disabilities.
- Instructions on what to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing your services.
- Vipond Inc. policies, procedures and practices pertaining to providing accessible customer service to customers with disabilities

Training Schedule: Vipond Inc. will provide training as soon as practicable. Training will be provided to new employees, volunteers, agents and/or contractor who deal with the public or act on our behalf. Revised training will be provided in the event of changes to legislation, procedures and/or practices.

Record of Training: Vipond Inc. will keep a record of training that includes the dates training was provided and the number of employees or volunteers who completed the training.

#### Notice of Availability and Format of Documents

Vipond Inc. shall notify customers that the documents related to the Accessibility Standard for Customer Service are available upon request and in a format that takes into account the customer's disability. Notification will be given by posting the information in a conspicuous place owned and operated by Vipond Inc. website and/or any other reasonable method.

#### Administration

If you have any questions or concerns about this policy or its related procedures please contact:

Paul Donnelly, Controller  
905-564-7060  
6380 Vipond Drive, Mississauga, ON, L5T 1A1  
paul.donnelly@vipond.ca

This policy and its related procedures will be reviewed as required in the event of legislative changes.

## Acknowledgement & Agreement

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (Employee/Volunteer Name),  
acknowledge that I have read and understand the Accessibility Standards for Customer  
Service Policy of the Vipond Inc. Further, I agree to adhere to this Policy and will ensure  
that the employees/volunteers working under my direction adhere to these guiding  
principles.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Referenced Documents:

- Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005
- Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07
- Blind Person's Rights Act, 1990
- Dog Owners' Liability Act, Ontario
- Food Safety and Quality Act 2001, Ontario Regulation 31/05
- Health Protection and Promotion Act, Ontario Regulation 562
- Ontario Human Rights Code, 1990