

## **PROVIDING CUSTOMER SERVICE FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES**

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### **1.0 Purpose**

- .i To establish specific requirements for representatives of Steelway Building Systems, Steelway Material Handling, and ExSteel Building Components (Steelway) to follow when providing customer service to people with disabilities. These procedures will help to ensure that goods and services are provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities; that provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities and others are integrated to enable a person with a disability to obtain, use, or otherwise benefit from the goods and services; and that persons with disabilities are given an opportunity equal to that given to others to obtain, use, and benefit from the goods and services provided by Steelway.

### **2.0 Core Guiding Principles**

- .i Provision of goods and services to customers of Steelway must be done with consideration to the following principles of accessible service:
  - .i Independence – freedom to make your own choices; freedom to do things in your own way.
  - .ii Dignity – treat persons with a disability as customers and clients who are as valued and as deserving of effective and full service as any other customer.
  - .iii Integration – allowing people with disabilities to fully benefit from the same services, in the same place, and in the same or similar way as other customers.
  - .iv Equal opportunity – having the same chances, options, benefits, and results as others.

### **3.0 Service PACTT**

- .i Employees are expected to follow the Overall Service PACTT when providing service to people with disabilities:

#### **3.1 Pay calm, individual attention to the other person**

- .i Avoid making assumptions about a person's capabilities.
- .ii Adjust posture/sit down as needed for face-to-face service

#### **3.2 Ask "How May I help?"**

- .i Usually, a person with a disability knows what works best for him/ her.
- .ii Before ending your interaction, ask "Does this information answer your question?"

**3.3 Communicate clearly and patiently to ensure shared understanding**

- .i Allow the person to finish what he is saying without interrupting.
- .ii Provide one piece of information at a time; repeat or rephrase as necessary.
- .iii If you don't understand what's being said, don't pretend, ask again.
- .iv As needed, ask if another method of communicating would be easier—e.g. always have a pen and paper available.

**3.4 Treat the other person with respect**

- .i Focus on the person as a unique individual.
- .ii Pay attention to her dignity, independence, sense of integration and equality.

**3.5 Try to see the world in terms of accessibility**

- .i Take into account the ways persons with disabilities experience your services.
- .ii Know the location of nearby ramps, elevators, automatic doors, accessible washrooms, etc.

**4.0 Procedure**

- .i Follow established policies, practices, and procedures for the AODA Customer Service Standards.
- .ii Don't make assumptions based on a person's disability.
- .iii Allow people to use their own personal assistive devices, when applicable, in accordance with the Steelway Assistive Devices procedure.
- .iv Allow people with disabilities to be accompanied by their guide dog or service animal in accordance with the Steelway Service Animals procedure.
- .v Permit people with disabilities who use a support person to bring that person with them in accordance with the Steelway Support Persons procedure.
- .vi Accept feedback from customers in accordance with the Steelway Feedback Process procedure.

**5.0 General Guidelines**

- .i Use "disability," not "handicapped" or "impaired."
- .ii Put the person first. Say "person with a learning disability" rather than "learning disabled."

**5.1 Telephone**

- .i Concentrate on what's being said, not how the person's voice sounds.

- .ii Address the person with a disability directly, even if the person is using an interpreter over the phone.
- .iii If communication is very difficult, make arrangements to call a support person.

### **5.2 Physical Space**

- .i Ensure the area is well-lit so faces are visible for lip-reading.
- .ii Clear aisles, remove obstacles.
- .iii Keep furniture layout the same over time, if possible.
- .iv Reduce background noise.

## **6.0 Communication**

- .i Communicate with a person with a disability in a manner that takes into account his or her disability.
- .ii Ask a person directly how to communicate with them.
- .iii Consider making the original communication more accessible. This could be achieved by using plain language.
- .iv Consider changing the usual method of communication. Look at print, online, in person, by phone, and written down as alternatives to the usual method. Consider large print, audio and video recordings, and simplified summaries.
- .v Consider using assistive devices.
- .vi Find something that works for both parties. The person with the disability may have a preferred method, but an alternative method may suffice and work best for both parties.

## **7.0 Specific Tips for Interacting with Persons with Various Disabilities**

### **7.1 Learning Disabilities**

- .i Persons with learning disabilities may have problems with reading and language-based learning, organizing ideas when speaking and writing, working with visual-spatial information, or carrying out calculations and other problem solving tasks quickly. Having a learning disability does not mean a person is incapable of learning. Rather, it means he learns in a different way.
- .ii Ask the person how he would like to receive information. For example, if you have written material, offer to read the information aloud.
- .iii Be willing to explain something again, and allow extra time to complete a task.

## **7.2 Mental Health Disabilities**

- .i Mental health disabilities can cause changes in a person's thinking, emotional state and behaviour and can disrupt the person's ability to work. These changes may also affect the way the person interacts with others. With most mental health problems, the symptoms are not static and can improve or worsen over time. These disabilities are often invisible.
- .ii Ask the best way you can help.
- .iii Be patient and respectful. A person with a mental health disability may have difficulty concentrating.
- .iv Avoid assuming a therapeutic role. If you are concerned about a person's mental health or emotional well-being, refer the individual to the appropriate service.
- .v If the person is in crisis and you are concerned about his or her safety or the safety of a third party, call 911 Emergency Services for medical or other assistance.

## **7.3 Physical Disabilities**

- .i There are many types and degrees of physical disability. Some people may use assistive devices. Others may have conditions such as arthritis, or heart or lung conditions and may have difficulty with moving, standing, or sitting for long periods.
- .ii Ask before providing help. Persons with physical disabilities often have their own way of doing things.
- .iii If the person uses a wheelchair or scooter, sit down beside him/her to enable eye contact and reduce neck strain for longer interactions.
- .iv Offer preferential seating.
- .v If you have permission to move a person in a wheelchair, avoid leaving the person in an awkward position, such as facing a wall.

## **7.4 Hearing Loss**

- .i There are different types of hearing loss. Commonly used terms are hard of hearing, deafened, deaf and Deaf. Persons who are deafened or hard of hearing may use devices such as hearing aids, cochlear implants, or FM systems; they also may rely on lip reading. A person with little or no functional hearing may use sign language.
- .ii Ensure you have his/her attention before speaking. Discreetly wave your hand or gently tap the shoulder if needed.
- .iii Reduce background noise.
- .iv Keep your face visible to enable lip reading. If the person is using an interpreter, speak directly to the person not the interpreter.

.v Speak clearly, pacing your speech and pauses normally. Don't shout or over pronounce your words.

.vi Offer to communicate in writing (pen and paper) as needed.

### **7.5 Vision Loss**

.i Few people with vision loss are totally blind. Some have limited vision, such as the loss of side, peripheral, or central vision.

.ii Offer to communicate in writing (pen and paper) as needed.

.iii Don't assume the person cannot see you.

.iv To get the person's attention, address him/her directly; say your name; do not touch the person.

.v Ask the person in which format she would like to receive information.

.vi When providing printed information, offer to read, summarize or describe it.

.vii Don't be afraid to use words such as "see", "read", or "look".

.viii When offering to guide someone, hold out your elbow. Give clear, precise directions.

### **7.6 Deafblind**

.i People who are deafblind have a combination of vision and hearing loss. Many persons who are deafblind will be accompanied by an intervenor, a person who helps with communicating. Many different ways may be used to communicate, including sign language, tactile sign language, Braille, speech and lip reading.

.ii Ask the person what will help the two of you to communicate.

.iii Many people will explain what to do, perhaps giving you an assistance card or note.

.iv Suddenly touching a person who is deafblind can be alarming and should only be done in emergencies.

### **7.7 Speech or Language Disabilities**

.i Some persons have problems expressing themselves, or understanding written or spoken language.

.ii Don't assume that a person who has difficulty speaking also has an intellectual or developmental disability.

.iii Allow the person to complete what he is saying without interruptions.

.iv If you don't understand, ask the person to repeat the information.

.v Ask questions that can be answered 'yes' or 'no'.

- .vi If the person uses a communication board, symbols or cards, follow her lead.

### **7.8 Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities**

- .i Intellectual or developmental disabilities such as Down Syndrome can limit a person's ability to learn, communicate, and live independently.
- .ii As much as possible, treat persons with an intellectual or developmental disability like anyone else.
- .iii Speak slowly and use plain language.
- .iv Provide one piece of information at a time.
- .v Ask "Is this clear?" to check your communication.

### **8.0 Related Policies & Documents**

- .i Accessible Customer Service Plan
- .ii Assistive Devices
- .iii Availability of Accessible Customer Service Documents
- .iv Feedback Process
- .v Notice of Temporary Disruption Process
- .vi Service Animals
- .vii Support Persons