

ASSISTIVE DEVICES POLICY

Policy Statement:

The City of Hamilton welcomes and provides equitable access to all goods, services, programs and opportunities to persons with disabilities who use personal assistive devices. They must be permitted to use their personal assistive devices unless prohibited by law. Persons with disabilities must be made aware of any assistive devices, services and service methods, supplied by the City of Hamilton that may assist with the provision of goods, services, programs and opportunities. Staff must know how to use the devices and equipment available in their specific areas. Assistive devices must be offered in a manner that respects a person's dignity and independence.

Definitions:

A Personal Assistive Device is any technical aid, communication device or medical aid that is designed, made, adapted or customized to assist a person with a disability, to increase, maintain, or perform a particular task. Assistive devices include but are not limited to, canes, crutches, walkers, wheel chairs, white canes, identity canes, oxygen tanks, hearing aids, word boards, electronic communication devices, augmentative and alternative devices, Bell Relay and telephone amplifiers.

Responsibility:

It is the responsibility of all management, staff, Council, volunteers, agents and/or contractors and consultants, working on behalf of the City of Hamilton, to follow and carry out the procedures outlined below.

All management, staff, Council and volunteers will be made aware of and trained to better understand the purpose and intent of this policy and to implement the procedures effectively.

All staff that work with or contracts agents, contractors and/or consultants to work on behalf of the City of Hamilton will ensure that they are made aware of the purpose and intent of this policy and its procedures.

Procedures:

1. Persons with disabilities have the right to use their own assistive devices at all times, to obtain, use or benefit from the City of Hamilton's goods

and services. It is the responsibility of persons with disabilities to ensure that their assistive devices are operated in a safe and controlled manner.

2. Staff may respectfully ask the person with the disability about their preferred method of communication or how the staff member can best provide the required good or service and make every attempt to communicate using the client's preferred method.
3. If the request is for a format that is not usually made available, such as a document to be provided in Braille, then reasonable advance notice is required by the City of Hamilton, in most cases 3 - 5 working days. However, requests for larger and more complex documents could take up to 10 or more working days. This is to be discussed with the person with a disability who made the request.
4. If there is a regular fee that applies to providing the document requested to the public, the City of Hamilton will charge the same fee for the alternative format. No additional charges will be passed on to the person with the disability for making the document available in an alternative format.
5. Wheelchairs, Bell Relay System, large print, pen and paper are available within the City of Hamilton and text to talk devices and FM systems are available in limited locations, such as Customer Service Counter locations like City Hall, Museums, Tourism sites and some Ontario Works locations.

In certain locations, staff will have to post signage and inform the public of the requirement to book a request for specific assistive devices in advance when not available on site. This information will also be made available to the public on the City's web site and at customer serving locations.

6. All management, staff, Council and volunteers of the City, will be trained and made aware of the various assistive devices that may be used by persons with disabilities while accessing our goods, programs and services.
7. In order to use and/or benefit from the services, programs and opportunities, staff may offer City owned assistive devices to persons with disabilities.
8. In the exceptional circumstance, where the person with a disability should want to use a city-provided wheelchair or walker due to malfunctioning of

a person's wheelchair, walker or scooter, the City of Hamilton staff may, in consultation with the person with a disability, offer the use of a city-provided wheelchair or walker. Staff will provide instructions for use of city-provided wheelchairs and walkers that are loaned out to residents in these circumstances.

9. In such circumstances, the department management or designates will fill out an incident report and send a copy to Access & Equity Office by internal mail.
 - 9.1 Each department must develop a process for recording, tracking and monitoring of these requests.
10. Each department must provide a list of assistive devices available to persons with disabilities and post this in a visible location on the premises.
11. City of Hamilton departments must provide and have available, specific guidelines to persons with disabilities regarding how to use the assistive devices.
12. In exceptional circumstance, where the person who has a disability must be separated from their assistive device, City of Hamilton staff must, in consultation with the person who has a disability, arrange for alternate support to ensure timely and quality provision of the goods, services program and opportunities being sought. If such a situation can be foreseen, consult with the person with a disability so that appropriate arrangements can be made. These arrangements must be made and communicated, in advance, to staff and any other person who may be involved.