

# Accessibility Policy

## Policy Statement:

Allanson International is committed to excellence in serving all clients and visitors in a way that respects the dignity and independence each individual. We are also committed to giving people with disabilities the same opportunity to access information and services in a similar way as other clients or visitors, by providing reasonable accommodations. We are dedicated to continuous improvement and will continue to evolve our practices in this regard.

Allanson's success is built on a foundation of professional integrity and a commitment to excellence. We value our employees along with the skills and talents that each individual brings to our organization. Allanson is committed to a safe work environment and we are also committed to creating a workplace that is accessible by removing barriers and making reasonable accommodations, which will allow employees to reach their full potential. Employees with disabilities will be consulted with respect to their individualized accessibility and accommodation needs, and emergency plans will be modified to include any accommodations required.

## 1. Accessible Customer Service Plan

### Providing services to people with disabilities

Allanson is committed to excellence in serving all clients and visitors, including people with disabilities. We will carry out our functions and responsibilities in the following areas:

#### 1.1 Communication

We will communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability.

Communication is a process of providing, sending, receiving and understanding information. To communicate in an effective way, Allanson will take into consideration how the disability may affect the way the person expresses, receives or processes communications. Where possible, Allanson staff will ask the individual directly the best way to communicate with him/her.

We will train staff who communicate with clients and visitors on how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities.

A variety of ways will be used, wherever possible, to make communications more accessible by:

- Considering the needs of people with disabilities during the planning stage of services and communication development.
- Offering information in alternate communication methods, upon request:
  - Hand-write or type information back and forth;
  - Large print;
  - E-mail as an alternate channel to provide accessible communication.

## **1.2 Billing**

We are committed to providing accessible invoices to all of our customers. For this reason, invoices will be provided in the following formats upon request:

- Large print hard copy
- E-mail

We will answer any questions customers may have about the content of the invoice by telephone, fax, or e-mail.

## **1.3 Assistive devices**

We are committed to serving people with disabilities who use assistive devices.

### **1.3.1 Parking and Visitor Access**

Designated parking space(s) are adjacent to the building entrances. Ramp access is available at the front entrance and employee entrance for persons accessing the head office building and production areas. If requiring assistance in opening entry doors to the building, persons may call for assistance.

## **1.4 Use of service animals and support persons**

We are committed to welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal on the parts of our premises open to clients and visitors, in accordance with the visitor policy. We will also ensure that all staff accompanying clients and visitors are properly trained in how to interact with people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal.

We are committed to welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person. At no time will a person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person be prevented from having access to his or her support person while on our premises.

## **1.5 Notice of temporary disruption**

Allanson will provide notice in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in the facilities or services usually used by people with disabilities. This notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available.

## **1.6 Training for staff**

Allanson will provide training to all employees who deal with third parties (clients, vendors, and visitors), and all those who are involved in the development and approvals of customer service policies, practices and procedures. Individuals in the following positions will be trained:

- Customer service representatives
- Sales associates
- Purchasing
- Reception
- Managers and Vice-Presidents

Training will include the following:

- The purposes of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and the requirements of the customer service standard
- How to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities
- How to interact with people with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or a support person
- What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing our services

Applicable staff will be trained on policies, practices and procedures that affect the way services are provided to people with disabilities. Staff will also be trained on an ongoing basis when changes are made to these policies, practices and procedures.

### **1.7 Feedback process**

The ultimate goal of Allanson is to meet and surpass expectations while serving clients and visitors with disabilities. Comments on our services regarding how well those expectations are being met are welcome and appreciated.

Feedback regarding the way Allanson provides services to people with disabilities can be made by e-mail, verbally, or written correspondence. All feedback will be directed to the Vice-President, Administration and responded to within 14 business days.

### **1.8 Modifications to this or other policies**

We are committed to developing customer service policies that respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. Therefore, no changes will be made to this policy before considering the impact on people with disabilities.

Any policy of Allanson that does not respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities will be modified or removed.

## **2. Information and Communication**

Allanson is dedicated to ensuring information is accessible for people with disabilities.

This will be achieved through the following means:

- ensuring websites and web content is accessible, according to the World Wide Web Consortium's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG).
- Provide accessible formats and communications as quickly as possible at no additional cost, when person with a disability asks for them.

## **3. Emergency Planning**

Allanson will prepare for the specific needs that employees with disabilities may have in emergency situations.

Upon notification of the need for accommodation due to an employee's disability, Allanson will provide individualized emergency response information to employees with disabilities, when necessary.

Emergency plans will be modified to include any accommodations required.

With the employee's consent, Allanson will provide the workplace emergency response information to the person designated to assist the employee.

Allanson will review the individualized workplace emergency response information:

- When the employee moves to a different location within the organization
- When the employee's overall accommodation needs or plans are reviewed, and
- when the general emergency response policies are reviewed

### **When to Provide Individual Workplace Emergency Response Information**

There are several ways that Allanson may be made aware of the need to provide individualized workplace emergency response information:

- A new employee may have requested accommodations during the recruitment process.
- Existing employees tell their employers that they have a disability. (For example, an existing employee who develops vision loss and requests screen reader software for his/her computer)
- An existing employee develops a temporary disability, such as a broken leg.

Allanson may initiate dialogue to offer assistance and accommodation to an employee who is clearly unwell or perceived to have a disability.

### **Developing Individual Workplace Emergency Response Information**

Allanson will consult with employees who have disabilities, so that the individualized workplace emergency response information meets the employees' needs.

It is important to recognize how an individual's disability, as well as the physical nature of the workplace, may create unique challenges in emergency situations.

For example:

- A worker with a hearing disability may not hear an audible alarm for evacuation, and may need to be notified by other means, such as a visual alarm with flashing lights
- An employee with a visual disability may be unable to identify the escape routes, or obstructions to the escape routes and may need guidance toward the exit and meeting area
- A worker with a broken leg may require assistance during an emergency evacuation of the building.

### **When an Employee Needs Assistance**

Employees with disabilities may require assistance when evacuating the workplace in emergencies.

In these cases, and with the employees consent, Allanson will provide the employees' individualized workplace emergency response information to the designated individual(s).

However, we will respect our employees' privacy. For co-workers to provide assistance, they do not need to know the details of the employees' disabilities.

For example, an employee with limited mobility may need assistance walking down stairs. The person designated to help only needs to know the individual requires help walking down stairs. In other words, it is important to not include personal medical information in the individualized workplace emergency response information.

## **Documenting Individualized Workplace Emergency Response Information**

If an employee has an individual accommodation plan, then the individualized workplace emergency response information provided to the employee should be included in the plan.

## **4. Employment**

Allanson's success is built on a foundation of professional integrity and a commitment to excellence. We value our employees along with the skills and talents that each individual brings to our organization. Allanson is committed to creating a workplace that is accessible by removing barriers and making reasonable accommodations, which will allow employees to reach their full potential. This commitment applies to all paid employees including full-time, part-time, paid apprenticeships, and seasonal employment.

### **4.1 Recruitment**

Allanson will notify job applicants (including our employees and the public) that accommodations for disabilities are available, upon request, to support their participation in the recruitment process.

During the recruitment process, Allanson will notify job applicants when they are individually selected to participate in an assessment or selection process that accommodations are available, upon request, in relation to the materials or processes to be used. If a selected applicant requests an accommodation, Allanson will consult with the applicant and arrange to provide reasonable accommodations that takes into account the applicant's accessibility needs due to disability.

Allanson will incorporate a variety of ways to make the recruitment process accessible:

#### **Job Advertisements and Postings**

- Clearly stating that Allanson is an equal opportunity employer
- Using a simple typeface that is easy and large enough to read, and the use of plain language.
- Consideration of alternate formats of advertising such as web-based listings
- Using an employment agency in the community
- Focusing on skills, abilities, expectations and desired outcomes.

#### **Recruitment and Selection**

- The selection process for all applicants will be consistent, including interviews, tests and other screening tools.

- When contacting candidates for an interview, Allanson will advise that accommodations are available upon request in relation to the materials or processes used. (For example, Allanson may ask if the candidate if he/she has any accommodation needs for the interview; ie. they may need materials provided in large high-contrast print)
- Staff greeting job candidates will be trained on how to interact with people with disabilities.
- Questions asked will be related to the job or job task. If the job requires specific physical demands, such as heavy lifting, questions may be asked about the candidate's physical ability to perform the task.

#### Applicant Testing

- If a candidate requests accommodation for the interview or related tests, Allanson will consult with the individual, and arrange for the suitable accommodation. (For example: provide a larger font test; a test may be given verbally; or provide a computer for candidates to do the test.)
- Testing methods and requirements will be established according to the specific job requirements
- The same test and clear instructions will be given to all candidates.

### **4.2 Notice to Successful Applicants**

When making an offer of employment, the successful applicant will be notified of Allanson's policies for accommodating employees with disabilities.

### **4.3 Informing Employees of Supports**

Allanson will inform all new and existing employees of its policies used to support employees with disabilities, including job accommodations that take into account an employee's accessibility needs due to disabilities.

- All new hires will be provided with this information during the orientation process, as soon as practicable after their hire date.
- Updated information will be provided to all employees whenever there is a change to existing policies relating to job accommodations that take into consideration accessibility needs due to disability.

The policy information may be communicated in a variety of ways:

- Staff memos
- Staff meetings

### **4.4 Accessible Formats and Communication Supports for Employees**

On request, Allanson will consult with their employees who have disabilities in order to provide them with the accessible formats and communication supports they require to do their jobs effectively and to be informed of information that is generally available to all employees in the workplace.

Allanson will consult with the employee making the request to determine the suitability of an accessible format or communication support. Accommodations will depend on the needs of the individual.

This requirement also applies to company bulletins on company policies and procedures, fact sheets, health and safety information, and inter-office memorandums. There may be a variety of formats that may be provided, including:

- Printed material
- Email
- Website
- Staff notice boards
- Verbally

### **Documenting Accessible Formats and Communication Supports**

If an employee has an individual accommodation plan, then the accessible formats and/or communications supports that will be provided to the employee should be included in the plan.

Refer to the section below regarding accommodation plans.

## **5. Documented Individual Accommodation Plans**

Allanson is committed to provide a safe work environment for our employees, and we are also committed to creating a workplace that is accessible by removing barriers and making reasonable accommodations which will allow employees to reach their full potential.

Employees with disabilities will be consulted with respect to their individual accessibility and accommodation needs. Any individual accommodation plan to be implemented will be fully documented in writing.

Please refer to the *Modified Work / Work Accommodation* policy and procedure outlining the protocol involved in the return to work and accommodation of injured workers.

### **Developing Individual Accommodation Plans**

Each employee will be assessed in an individual basis, to determine their accessibility and accommodation needs. If clarification of the employee's functional capacity is required, Allanson will request that the worker obtain medical documentation outlining the worker's functional abilities and limitations. Allanson may request that the employee attend a medical assessment by an outside medical provider or expert, at the expense of the company, to clarify their functional capacity and the worker's accommodation needs.

Employees with disabilities will be consulted, when developing an individual accommodation plan.

Employees may request participation of a health and safety representative in the development of the accommodation plan.

Allanson respects our employees' privacy. Personal information will be used for the purpose for which it has been collected and will not be disclosed to any other party, unless consent has been obtained from the individual or as required by law.

Accommodation plans will be reviewed and updated:

- When the worker changes job positions, or moves to a different location
- When the employee's accommodation needs change
- When there is a change to the company's policies, practices, or processes

If the individual accommodation plan is denied, the manner in which the reasons for the denial will be provided to the employee.

A copy of the individual accommodation plan will be provided to the employee in a format that takes into account the employee's disability needs due to disability. The plan will include:

- any information regarding accessible formats and communications supports provided,
- any individualized workplace emergency response information, and
- identify any other accommodation that is to be provided