

### 3.4 AODA EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS POLICY – ONTARIO

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Mills & Mills LLP is dedicated to providing accessible services and work environment for all Firm members, prospective Firm members, and clients. This policy outlines the Firm's compliance with Parts I and III of the *Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation* (IASR) set forth under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA).

This policy ensures Mills & Mills LLP provides services and employment practices that follow the principles of dignity, independence, integration, and equal opportunity.

#### **Definitions**

Accessible format: Includes large print, recorded audio and electronic formats, braille, and other formats usable by persons with disabilities.

Communication supports: Includes captioning, alternative and augmentative communication supports, plain language, sign language, and other supports that facilitate effective communication.

Information: Includes data, facts, and knowledge that exists in any format, including text, audio, digital, or images, and conveys meaning.

Career development and advancement: Additional responsibilities within a Firm member's current position and the movement of a Firm member from one job to another in an organization or any combination of them. Both additional responsibilities and Firm member movement are usually based on merit, seniority, or a combination of both.

Performance management: Activities related to assessing and improving Firm member performance, productivity, and effectiveness with the goal of facilitating Firm member success.

Redeployment: The reassignment of Firm members to other departments or jobs within the organization as an alternative to layoff, when a particular job or department has been eliminated by the organization.

Support person: In relation to a person with a disability, another person who accompanies a person with a disability in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care, or medical needs, or with access to goods, services, or facilities.

#### **General Principles**

##### ***Establishment of Accessibility Policies and Plans***

Mills & Mills LLP will develop, implement, and maintain policies governing how it will achieve accessibility through these requirements.

The firm is committed to meeting the accessibility needs of persons with disabilities in a timely manner. This is reflected in policies which upon request will be made publicly available in an accessible format.

The Firm will establish, implement, maintain, and document a multi-year accessibility plan outlining its strategy to prevent and remove barriers and meet its requirements under the IASR. Accessibility plans will be made available in an accessible format upon request and will be posted on the Firm's website.

The Firm will review and update its accessibility plan once every five years and will establish, review, and update its accessibility plans in consultation with persons with disabilities or an advisory committee. Annual status reports will be prepared to report on the progress of the steps taken in implementing the companies' accessibility plan. This status report will be posted on our website. If requested, the report will be created in an accessible format.

### Training Requirements

Mills & Mills LLP will provide training for its Firm members and volunteers regarding the IASR and the Ontario *Human Rights Code* as they pertain to individuals with disabilities. Training will also be provided to individuals who are responsible for developing the companies' policies, and all other persons who provide goods, services, or facilities on behalf of the Firm.

Training will be provided as soon as is reasonably practicable. Training will be provided regularly to new Firm members and as changes to the companies' accessibility policies occur.

Mills & Mills LLP will maintain records on the training provided, when it was provided, and the number of Firm members who were trained.

### **Recruitment, Assessment and Selection**

Mills & Mills LLP will notify Firm members and the public about the availability of accommodation for job applicants who have disabilities. Applicants will be informed that these accommodations are available, upon request, for the interview process and for other candidate selection methods. Where an accommodation is requested, the Firm will consult with the applicant and provide or arrange for suitable accommodations in a manner that takes into account the applicant's accessibility needs due to disability.

Successful applicants will be made aware of the Firm's policies and supports for accommodating people with disabilities.

### **Accessible Formats and Communication Supports for Firm members**

Mills & Mills LLP will ensure that Firm members are aware of policies for Firm members with disabilities and any changes to these policies as they occur. The Firm will provide the information required to new Firm members as soon as practicable after they begin their employment.

If a Firm member with a disability requests it, the Firm will provide or arrange for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports for the following:

- Information needed in order to perform their job; and
- Information that is generally available to all Firm members in the workplace.

The Firm will consult with the Firm members making the request to determine the best way to provide the accessible format or communication support.

### **Workplace Emergency Response Information**

Where required, Mills & Mills LLP will create individualized workplace emergency response plans for Firm members with disabilities. This information will be created in consultation with the Firm member and take into account the unique challenges created by the individual's disability and the physical nature of the workplace.

This information will be reviewed when:

- The Firm members moves to a different physical location in the organization;
- The Firm member's overall accommodation needs, or plans are reviewed; or
- The Firm reviews general emergency response policies.

### **Documented Individual Accommodation Plans**

Mills & Mills LLP will develop and have in place written processes for documenting individual accommodation plans for Firm members with disabilities. The development process for these plans will include:

- The ways in which the Firm member can participate in the development of the plan;
- The means by which the Firm member is assessed individually;
- The ways that an employer can request an evaluation by an outside medical expert, or other experts (at the Firm's expense) to determine whether accommodation can be achieved, or how it can be achieved;
- The ways that the Firm can request the participation of a representative from the workplace for the creation of the accommodation plan;
- The steps taken to protect the privacy of the Firm member's personal information;
- The frequency with which the individual accommodation plan should be reviewed or updated and how it should be done;
- The way in which the reasons for the denial of an individual accommodation plan will be provided to the Firm member; and
- The means of providing the accommodation plan in an accessible format, based on the Firm member's accessibility needs.

The individual accommodation should also include information regarding accessible formats, communication supports (upon request), individualized workplace emergency response information, and any other accommodation provided.

## **Return to Work**

Mills & Mills LLP will develop and implement return-to-work processes for Firm members who are absent from work due to a disability and require disability-related accommodations in order to return to work.

This process will outline the steps the firm will take to enable a smooth return to work for the Firm member. All steps and individual accommodation plans will be documented and created in consultation with the Firm member.

## **Performance Management and Career Changes**

Mills & Mills LLP will consider the accessibility needs, including documented individual accommodation plans, of Firm members with disabilities during the firm's performance management process. These will also be considered in the event of redeployment, or when offering career development or advancement opportunities.

## **Review**

This policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure that it reflects current practices of Mills & Mills LLP as well as legislative requirements.

### **3.4.1 AODA – INTEGRATED ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS REGULATION (IASR) CUSTOMER (CLIENT) SERVICE**

All goods and services provided by Mills & Mills LLP will follow the principles of dignity, independence, integration, and equal opportunity.

This policy meets the requirements of the customer service standards included in the *Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation* under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*. It applies to the provision of goods and services to the public or other third parties, not to the goods themselves.

## **Definitions**

Assistive device: 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 clients bring with them, such as a wheelchair, walker, or a personal oxygen tank, and that might assist in hearing, seeing, communicating, moving, breathing, remembering, or reading.

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

- Any degree of 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, any degree of 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:** 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:** A service animal for a person with a disability if:

1. The animal can be readily identified as one that is being used by the person for reasons relating to the person's disability, as a result of visual indicators such as the vest or harness worn by the animal; or
2. The person provides documentation from a member of one of the following regulated health professional colleges confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability:
  - College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists of Ontario;
  - College of Chiropractors of Ontario;
  - College of Nurses of Ontario;
  - College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario;
  - College of Optometrists of Ontario;
  - College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario;
  - College of Physiotherapists of Ontario;
  - College of Psychologists of Ontario; or
  - College of Registered Psychotherapists and Registered Mental Health Therapists of Ontario.

**Support person:** In relation to a person with a disability, another person who accompanies them in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care, medical needs, or access to goods and services.

## **Guidelines**

### **The Provision of Goods and Services to Persons with Disabilities**

Mills & Mills LLP 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 clients receive the same value and quality;
- Allowing clients with disabilities to do things in their own ways, at their own pace when accessing goods and services, as long as this does not present a health and safety risk;
- Using alternative methods when possible to ensure that clients with disabilities have access to the same services, in the same place and in a similar manner;

- Taking into account individual accommodation needs when providing goods and services; and
- Communicating in a manner that takes into account the client's disability.

## **The Use of Assistive Devices**

### Client's Own Assistive Devices

Persons with disabilities may use their own assistive devices as required when accessing goods or services provided by the Firm.

In cases where the assistive device presents a health and safety concern or where accessibility might be an issue, other reasonable measures will be used to ensure the access of goods and services, up to the point of undue hardship.

For example, open flames and oxygen tanks cannot be near one another. Therefore, the accommodation of a client with an oxygen tank might involve ensuring the client is in a location that would be considered safe for both the client and business.

### **Guide Dogs and Service Animals**

A client with a disability who is accompanied by a guide dog or service animal 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 or service animals.

Staff may respectfully ask if an animal is a service animal but will not ask the nature of the person's disability or purpose of the animal.

### Applicable Laws

*Dog Owners' Liability Act, 2005*: If there is a conflict between a provision of this legislation or of a regulation under this or any other act relating to banned breeds (such as pit bulls) 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. Staff will respectfully explain that the service animal must be removed from the public area due to a municipal by-law and make alternate arrangements or provide the service outside the public area.

### Recognizing a Guide Dog or Service Animal:

If it is not readily apparent that the animal is being used by the customer for reasons relating to their disability, Mills & Mills LLP may request verification from the client.

### Care and Control of the Animal:

The client who is accompanied by a guide dog or service animal is responsible for maintaining care and control of the animal at all times.

### Allergies and Other Health and Safety Concerns

If a health and safety concern present itself, for example, in the form of a severe allergy to the animal, Mills & Mills LLP will make all reasonable efforts to meet the needs of all individuals. Pursuant to the firm's obligations under the *Human Rights Code* and the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, each client's accommodation needs will be considered on a case-by-case basis, up to the point of undue hardship.

Due diligence needs to be paid to address health and safety requirements. For example, if a person's health and safety could be seriously affected by the presence of a service animal on the premises, management must fully analyze all options for safely accommodating the service animal. Options could include creating distance between the two individuals to eliminate in-person contact, changing the time the two individuals receive service, or using air purifiers and other measures that could allow the person to use their service animal on the premises.

In exceptional circumstances where a service animal becomes out of control, causing a clear disruption or a threat to the health and safety of others, and the animal's behaviour is not corrected by the owner, a person with a disability can be asked to remove their service animal from the premises.

As a courtesy, particularly if the person and service animal have been in attendance on the premises for a long time, staff may ask whether the animal requires water, may designate an area in which the service animal can relieve itself, or ask whether the staff can be of assistance pertaining to the service animal.

### **The Use of Support Persons**

If a client with a disability is accompanied by a support person, Mills & Mills LLP will ensure that both persons may enter the premises together and that the client 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, the firm will make every reasonable attempt to resolve the issue.

In situations where confidential information might be discussed, consent will be obtained from the client before any potentially confidential information is mentioned.

### **Notice of Disruptions in Service**

Service disruptions may occur for reasons that may or may not be within the control or knowledge of Mills & Mills LLP. In the event of any temporary disruptions to facilities or services that clients with disabilities rely on to access or use goods or services, reasonable efforts will be made to provide advance notice. In some circumstances, such as in the situation of unplanned temporary disruptions, advance notice may not be possible.

If a notification needs to be posted, the following information will be included unless it is not readily available or known:

- Services that are disrupted or unavailable;
- Reason for the disruption;
- Anticipated duration; and
- A description of alternative services or options.

### Notification Options

When disruptions occur, Mills & Mills LLP 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, or on the firm website;
- Contacting clients with appointments;
- Verbally notifying clients when they make a reservation or appointment; or
- By any other method that may be reasonable under the circumstances.

### **Customer Feedback**

Mills & Mills LLP shall provide clients with the opportunity to provide feedback on the service provided to clients with disabilities. Information about the feedback process will be readily available to all clients and notice of the process will be made available at reception.

Feedback forms, along with alternate methods of providing feedback verbally (in person or by telephone) or written (handwritten, delivered, website, or e-mail), will be available upon request.

### Submitting Feedback

Clients can submit feedback to [mills@millsandmills.ca](mailto:mills@millsandmills.ca)

Firm member name and position title

Phone number

Mailing address

E-mail address

Clients who wish to provide feedback by completing an onsite client feedback form or verbally can do so by asking to speak with the Human Resources Manager or the Managing Partner.

Clients 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:

- Every Firm member of or a volunteer with Mills & Mills LLP;
- Every person who participates in developing the policies of Mills & Mills LLP; and
- Every other person who provides services on behalf of Mills & Mills LLP.

### Training Provisions

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 clients service standards;
- Instructions on how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities;
- Instructions on how to interact with people with disabilities who:
  - Use assistive devices;
  - Require the assistance of a guide dog or other service animal; or
  - 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 our services; and
- Policies, procedures, and practices of the firm pertaining to providing accessible clients service to clients with disabilities.

### Training Schedule

Mills & Mills LLP will provide training as soon as practicable. Training will be provided to new Firm members, volunteers, agents, and contractors. Revised training will be provided in the event of changes to legislation, procedures, policies, or practices.

### Record of Training

Mills & Mills LLP will keep a record of training that includes the dates training was provided and the number of Firm members who attended the training.

### **Notice of Availability and Format of Documents to Clients**

Mills & Mills LLP shall notify clients that the documents related to the client's service standards are available upon request and in a format that takes into account the client's disability. Notification will be given by posting the information in a conspicuous place owned and operated by Mills & Mills LLP, the website of Mills & Mills LLP, and any other reasonable method.

## Administration

If you have any questions or concerns about this policy or its related procedures, please contact [mills@millsandmills.ca](mailto:mills@millsandmills.ca) or Human Resources Manager.

Firm member name and position title

Phone number

Mailing address

E-mail address

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

### **3.4.2 AODA – INTEGRATED ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS REGULATION (IASR) INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS POLICY**

This policy is intended to meet the requirements of the Integrated Accessibility Standards, Ontario Regulation 191/11 for the Information and Communications Standard set forth under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005. This policy applies to the provision of information and communications services and materials for people with disabilities.

All information and communications materials and services provided by Mills & Mills LLP shall follow the principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity.

## Definitions

Accessible Formats– Include but are not limited to large print, recorded audio and electronic formats, braille and other formats usable by persons with disabilities.

Communication Supports – Include but are not limited to captioning, alternative and augmentative communication supports, plain language, sign language and other supports that facilitate effective communications.

Conversion Ready– An electronic or digital format that facilitates conversion into an acceptable format.

## General Principles

In accordance with the *Integrated Accessibility Standards, Ontario Regulation 191/11*, this policy addresses the following:

- A. General Requirements
- B. Feedback Process
- C. Accessible Formats and Communication Supports

- D. Emergency Procedures, Plans or Public Safety Information
- E. Accessible Websites and Web Content
- F. Education and Training Resources
- G. Training to Educators
- H. Producers of Educational or Training Material
- I. Libraries of Educational and Training Institutions
- J. Public Libraries
- K. Exceptions
- L. Review

## **A. General Requirements**

General requirements that apply across all of the five (5) standards (information and communication, employment, transportation, design of public spaces, and customer service) are outlined as follows.

### Establishment of Accessibility Policies and Plans

Mills & Mills LLP will develop, implement, and maintain policies governing how it will achieve accessibility through these requirements.

Mills & Mills LLP will include a statement of its commitment to meeting the accessibility needs of persons with disabilities in a timely manner in its policies. These documents will be made publicly available in an accessible format, upon request.

Mills & Mills LLP will establish, implement, maintain, and document a multi-year accessibility plan outlining its strategy to prevent and remove barriers and meet its requirements under the IASR.

Accessibility plans will be made available in an accessible format, upon request, and will be posted on our website.

Mills & Mills LLP will review and update its accessibility plan once every five (5) years and will establish, review, and update our accessibility plans in consultation with persons with disabilities or an advisory committee. Annual status reports will be prepared that will report on the progress of the steps taken to implement Mills & Mills accessibility plan. This status report will be posted on our website. If requested, the report shall be created in an accessible format.

### Procuring or Acquiring Goods and Services, or Facilities

Mills & Mills LLP will incorporate accessibility criteria and features when procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities. The only exception is in cases where it is impracticable to do so.

## Training Requirements

Mills & Mills LLP will provide training for its Firm members and volunteers regarding the IASR and the Ontario Human Rights Code as they pertain to individuals with disabilities. Training will also be provided to individuals who are responsible for developing Mills & Mills LLP's policies, and all other persons who provide goods, services, or facilities on behalf of Mills & Mills LLP.

Training will be provided as soon as is reasonably practicable. Training will be provided on an ongoing basis to new Firm members and as changes to Mills & Mills LLP's accessibility policies occur.

## Records

Mills & Mills LLP will maintain records on the training provided, when it was provided and the number of Firm members that were trained.

### **B. Feedback Process**

Mills & Mills LLP will ensure that all feedback processes (both internal and external) are made accessible to clients/clients or Firm members, upon request.

In accordance with the customer service standards, Mills & Mills LLP will make known the availability of accessible feedback formats.

### **C. Accessible Formats and Communication Supports**

Unless deemed unconvertible, Mills & Mills LLP will provide or arrange for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports for persons with disabilities, upon request. Accessible formats and communication supports will be provided in a timely manner and at no additional cost to the individual.

Mills & Mills LLP will take into account the person's accessibility needs when customizing individual requests and shall consult with the individual making the request to ensure suitability.

Mills & Mills LLP will make the availability of accessible formats and communication supports publicly known.

### **D. Accessible Websites and Web Content**

Mills & Mills LLP will ensure that our website, and where applicable web content, conforms to the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) as outlined in the IASR, and will refer to the legislation for specific compliance deadlines and requirements.

## **E. Exceptions**

The Information and Communications Standard does not apply to:

- Products and product labels;
- Unconvertible information or communications; or
- Information that the organization does not control either directly or indirectly through a contractual relationship.

### Unconvertible Information or Communications

If it is determined, in consultation with the requesting party, that information or communications are unconvertible, Mills & Mills LLP will ensure that the individual who made the request is provided with an explanation and a summary of the information.

Mills & Mills LLP will classify information or communications as unconvertible where:

- It is not technically practicable to convert; or
- The technology required to make the conversion is not readily available.

## **F. Review**

This policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure that it is reflective of Mills & Mills LLP's current practices and legislative requirements.