



Houston Marine Systems

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act
(AODA) Package for 1-49 Employees

December 2023



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Statement of Commitment - AODA (Accessibility)

Houston Marine Systems is committed to treating all people with dignity and independence. We believe in integration and equal opportunities.

Houston Marine Systems is committed to supporting the goals of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 ('AODA'). Houston Marine Systems will establish policies, practices and procedures which are consistent with the accessibility standards established under the AODA, to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities.

Houston Marine Systems will ensure that both the regulations and principles of the AODA are adhered to for the following standards:

- Customer Service,
- Information and Communications,
- Employment,
- Built Environment,
- Transportation (as applicable)

To facilitate this commitment, Houston Marine Systems 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 Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation. Accessibility plans will be made available in an accessible format, upon request, and will be posted on our website.

Should you require an alternative format of a this or another document, a copy of AODA documentation, more information or you wish to provide feedback, please contact:

<Provide contact information including a contact name, department, phone number, email address and a website address if applicable.

This document is available in an alternate format upon request.

Accessibility Policy

POLICY STATEMENT

Houston Marine Systems is committed to upholding and exceeding Ontario's legislation intended to remove barriers to accessibility for persons with disabilities. This includes providing equal access to employment, information, goods, and services, and treating persons with disabilities with dignity and respect in a way that takes their disability into account.

DEFINITIONS

Definitions taken from the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, S.O. 2005, C. 11* or *Ontario Human Rights Code*.

"Accessible formats" may include, but are not limited to, large print, recorded audio and electronic formats, braille, and other formats usable by persons with disabilities.

"Barrier" means anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of their disability, including a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, an information or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy, or a practice; ("obstacle").

"Disability" is defined broadly by the *Ontario Human Rights Code* as:

1. "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 coordination, 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,
2. a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability,
3. a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,
4. a mental disorder, or
5. an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997*."

POLICY

Houston Marine Systems will make every reasonable effort to meet the requirements of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), 2005*, including all applicable elements of the *Integrated Accessibility Standards*.

1. Information and Communication
2. Employment



3. Customer Service
4. Design of Public Spaces
5. Transportation

Houston Marine Systems will provide training to all employees, volunteers, and independent contractors to ensure they are familiar with our policies, practices, and procedures for communicating with and providing services to persons with disabilities.

Information and Communication

Houston Marine Systems will make its information accessible to people with disabilities by creating materials and supports in accessible formats, and it will notify the public of the types of accessible formats provided.

Further, Houston Marine Systems will deliver alternate formats of information to clients, upon request. If a particular material cannot be converted into an accessible format that meets the needs of the person requesting it, Houston Marine Systems will provide details of why it cannot be converted and provide a summary of the information or communication in another way that is suitable to the person requesting it.

This extends to any emergency procedures or safety information prepared by Houston Marine Systems.

Employment

Houston Marine Systems welcomes and encourages employment applications from people with disabilities and will do its part to make hiring and employee support practices more accessible by providing accommodation during all stages of recruitment, hiring, and employment.

If a job applicant requests accommodation, Houston Marine Systems will consult with the applicant and provide suitable accommodation that takes the person's accessibility needs into account.

When making offers of employment, Houston Marine Systems will notify the successful applicant of its policies for accommodating employees with disabilities.

New employees will be reminded about the organization's job accommodation policies as soon as possible upon being hired and notified when any future changes are made to policies. Policy and practice information will include available employment accommodations that will be provided for job related matters such as performance management, career development, emergency response plans, and return to work information.

Houston Marine Systems will consult with an employee who requests it, to provide or arrange for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports that take the employee's needs into account when providing information that is needed to perform the employee's job, and information that is generally available to employees in the workplace.



Customer Service

Houston Marine Systems will provide customer service in a manner that removes barriers for people with disabilities according to the following key principles of the AODA:

- Goods and services will be provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.
- Service to people with disabilities will be integrated with others, unless an alternate way of providing the goods, service or facility is required by the person with the disability.
- Persons with disabilities will be given equal opportunity to use and benefit from the goods, services, or facilities an organization or business has to offer.
- We will communicate with people with disabilities in a way that takes the individual's disability into account.

Assistive Devices, and Service Animals, Service Dogs or Guide Dogs

Persons with disabilities who use an assistive device will be permitted to use their own device to access the goods and services of Houston Marine Systems.

If a person with a disability is accompanied by a guide dog or other service animal, Houston Marine Systems shall ensure that the person is permitted to enter the premises with the animal and to keep the animal with them, unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law from the premises.

Support Workers

If a person with a disability is accompanied by a support person, Houston Marine Systems will ensure that both persons are permitted to enter the premises together and that the person with a disability is not prevented from having access to the support person while on the premises.

Houston Marine Systems will ensure that notice is given in advance if admission fees will be charged to support workers for accessing the goods or services in their role as support person, including how much the fee will be.

Service Interruptions

If there is a temporary disruption in any of our services either in whole or in part, Houston Marine Systems will provide notice of the disruption to the public via as many channels as possible, in accessible formats, where available. We will physically post notices where the disruption is taking place as well as through any other channels that are appropriate such as email, phone, text, social media, or on our website.

Notice of the disruption will include the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration and a description of alternative facilities or services, if any, that are available.



Process for Receiving Feedback

Houston Marine Systems will accept feedback about the way in which it provides goods and services to persons with disabilities in person, by phone or email, or in another way that is suitable to a person with a disability.

When a complaint is received about the way we provide goods, services, or facilities to persons with disabilities, Houston Marine Systems will let the person who submitted the feedback know about the actions the organization will take to resolve the issue.

At Houston Marine Systems, the person designated to accept feedback is (Insert person) at (Insert email address).

Transportation

Houston Marine Systems does not provide conventional or specialized commercial transportation services to passengers and is not required to adhere to the Transportation Standard.

Design of Public Spaces

If Houston Marine Systems redesigns or redevelops an outdoor public space such as a parking area, outdoor eating area or play space, exterior path of travel, recreational trail or beach access route, or an indoor or outdoor service counter, waiting area or queuing line, it will do so in accordance the Design of Public Spaces Standard of the AODA. Houston Marine Systems will also ensure any newly redesigned or redeveloped areas are maintained in accordance with the rules set out by the AODA.

Accessible Customer Service Policy

POLICY STATEMENT

This policy is designed to meet the standards and act in accordance with Regulation 191/11, Integrated Accessibility Standards under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005. These standards were developed to identify, remove and prevent barriers and increase accessibility for persons with disabilities in the areas of information and communications and employment. The mandate of the Standard is that all obligated organizations must take measures to provide accessible service to all customers, including customers with all types of disabilities.

PURPOSE

Houston Marine Systems is committed to providing goods and services in a way that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities. Houston Marine Systems is also committed to ensuring our employees are educated and adhere to this policy. Houston Marine Systems will make all reasonable efforts to ensure that all people are treated and provided customer service in a manner that is consistent with the principles of the AODA: Dignity, Independence, Equal Opportunity and Integration.

POLICY

Customer Service and Communication

Houston Marine Systems will ensure that effective customer service and communication is provided to all persons with a disability by adhering to the following:

- Make all reasonable efforts to ensure that the provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities will be integrated into regular practice.
- Offer and provide alternative measures and/or formats if necessary when requested by an individual with a disability.
- Ensure that, to the extent possible, accessible goods and services are delivered in a timely manner.
- All communication shall be provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.

Assistive Devices

Persons with disabilities may require the use of their own assistive devices to access services or goods. An assistive device is any device that is used, designed, made or adapted to assist people in performing a particular task. Houston Marine Systems will take all reasonable measures to ensure goods and services are accessible to persons using assistive devices, including training employees in how best to support a customer using an assistive device.

In the case the use of an assistive device poses a further challenge to the accessibility of goods and services or raises a potential safety concern, all reasonable efforts will be made to accommodate the individual, which may include using an alternative assistive device or providing the same service in a different manner.



Service Animals

Houston Marine Systems is committed to welcoming persons with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal. We will ensure that all staff who deal with the public are properly trained in how to interact with people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal.

The following terms apply to a person with a disability who is accompanied by a service animal:

- In the event a particular service animal is not allowed by law on or in a particular area of the premises, all reasonable efforts will be made to accommodate the individual, which may include an alternative form of assistance or providing the same service in a different manner.
- In the event of a valid health and safety issue, all reasonable efforts will be made to accommodate the individual, which may include an alternative form of assistance or providing the same service in a different manner.
- In the case of service dogs, the law allows them to accompany their owner to go where food is served, sold or offered for sale. The law also states service dogs are not allowed in places where food is manufactured, prepared, processed or handled.
- The owner is responsible for maintaining control of the animal at all times.

Support Persons

Houston Marine Systems is committed to welcoming persons with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person.

The following terms apply to a person with a disability who is accompanied by support person:

- Houston Marine Systems may require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person while on the premises in situations where it is necessary due to health and safety concerns.
- Consent from the person with a disability is required when communicating confidential issues related to the person with a disability, in the presence of a support person.
- If a fee is charged for the admission of a support person, the fee will be communicated and posted.

Notice of Temporary Disruptions

Houston Marine Systems will publicly notify customers of temporary disruptions of services or facilities. If the disruption is planned the organization will publicly notify customers of the upcoming service disruption in advance of the start of the service disruption.

A notice of temporary disruption will include:

- When the disruption will happen if it is a case where it is planned;
- Steps to take to access alternative methods;
- A description of alternative facilities or services if they are available;
- The reason for the disruption; and
- How long the disruption will last.

The notice may be delivered to the public by the following methods:



- Posting at the main entrances and the source of the disruption;
- Via phone and email notification to regular customers or customers with scheduled appointments;
- The company's website.

Feedback Process

A feedback process regarding the provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities has been established. The manner in which feedback may be provided will be in such a way that best suits the person with a disability.

Houston Marine Systems will review all feedback received and respond in a timely manner. If the feedback is of an urgent concern, a response to the person submitting the complaint will be issued as soon as reasonably possible.

Feedback will be provided to [Insert Person] at [Insert Contact Information].

Training

Houston Marine Systems will ensure that all employees and applicable third parties who interact with customers are provided with accessibility training. Training will also be required for those individuals who are involved in the development or implementation of customer service policies, practices and procedures.

The training will address:

- The purpose of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005;
- The requirements of the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service;
- Information about Company policies and procedures (including this policy);
- Best practice on how to communicate with persons with various types of disabilities;
- Best practice on how to interact with people with disabilities who use assistive devices, require the assistance of a service animal or a support person.

Houston Marine Systems will retain a record of all individuals who have completed the required training.

Notice of Availability of Documents and Alternative Formats

Houston Marine Systems will post notice of the availability of this policy, other documents prescribed by the Standard and the availability of alternative formats upon request. This information will be provided in our Statement of Commitment, which is posted at a conspicuous location for customers, as well on the company's website.



Customer Feedback Form

Thank you for visiting Houston Marine Systems. We value all our customers and strive to meet everyone's needs. Please tell us the date and location of your visit:

Date: _____ Location: _____

1. Were you satisfied with the customer service we provided you?

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat
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Comments

2. Was our customer service provided to you in an accessible manner?

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat
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Comments

3. Did you experience any problems accessing our goods and services?

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat
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Comments

Contact Information (optional)

Name: _____ Phone Number: _____

Email: _____