

## **Accessibility Policy**

**Updated: May 5, 2021**

### **Purpose**

This policy outlines the commitment of POGO to meet the accessibility needs of people with disabilities.

### **Policy**

POGO is committed to treating all people in a manner that respects their dignity and independence. We believe in integration, equal opportunity, access and participation for people with disabilities, are committed to meeting the needs of people with disabilities in a timely manner and will do so by ensuring compliance with Ontario's accessibility laws and regulations and by identifying, preventing and removing barriers to accessibility.

This policy complies with the requirements and objectives of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) and the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) as established under the AODA, and applies to all agents of POGO.

### **Definitions**

#### **Disability:**

The AODA uses the Ontario Human Rights Code (the Code) definition of disability. It includes disabilities of different severity, visible as well as non-visible of which the effects may come and go. It includes sensory disabilities (e.g., hearing and vision), learning disabilities and physical disabilities. The Code defines disability as:

- a. 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 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;
- b. A condition of mental impairment or developmental disability;
- c. A learning disability, or dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language;
- d. A mental disorder; or,
- e. An injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997.

**Barrier:**

As defined by the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001, is anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of their disability. This may include:

- a physical barrier
- an architectural barrier
- an informational or communications barrier
- an attitudinal barrier
- a policy, practice and procedure barrier

**Guidelines**

**Customer Service Standard**

This Standard helps remove barriers for people with disabilities in accessing POGO's services or office. POGO is committed to ensuring that our office and services are welcoming and accessible to people with disabilities and will make every effort to ensure that this policy and related practices and procedures are consistent with the principles of independence, dignity, integration and equality of opportunity for people with disabilities.

POGO demonstrates its commitment to accessible customer service as follows:

**Assistive Devices**

People with disabilities are welcome to use personal assistive devices for the purpose of accessing our services or office. POGO will, to the best of our ability, remove any barrier identified as preventing the use of an assistive device and/or work with the individual towards accommodation or implementation of alternative measures to enable access.

**Communication**

POGO communicates with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability. We will work with people with disabilities to determine what method of communication works for them.

**Service Animals**

POGO welcomes people with disabilities and their service animals at all times to all areas that are open to the public or third parties, unless excluded by law. If excluded by law, POGO will explore other means to meet the individual's needs.

**Support Persons**

POGO welcomes support people accompanying a person with a disability in our office. In certain cases, POGO might require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person for the health or safety reasons of the person with a disability or others. Before making a decision, POGO will a) consult with the person with a disability to understand their needs; b) consider the health and safety reasons based on available evidence; and c) determine whether there is another reasonable way to protect the health and safety of the person who has a disability or others on the premises.

### Notice of Temporary Disruption

POGO will provide timely notification of a planned or unexpected disruption that affects services or access to our office for people with disabilities. The notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration and a description of an alternative location or services, if available. The notice will be sent by email if possible, posted on our website if applicable, posted at the entrance of our office or communicated by any other reasonable method given the circumstances.

### Training

POGO provides training to all POGO agents on the AODA and aspects of the Ontario Human Rights Code that relate to people with disabilities. Training will include:

- A review of the purpose of the AODA and requirements of the IAS/Ontario Human Rights Code;
- A review of this policy;
- How to interact and communicate with persons with various types of both visible and non-visible disabilities;
- How to interact with persons with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a guide dog, service animal or support person;
- How to learn about the use of various assistive devices; and,
- What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing our services or office.

Training will occur as soon as practicable upon commencement of affiliation with POGO and on an ongoing basis when changes are made to legislation, policies, practices or procedures. Training will be appropriate to the duties of the person receiving such training and records of training will be maintained.

### Information and Communication Standard

This Standard establishes processes that organizations must follow to create, provide and receive information and communications in ways that are accessible to people with disabilities. POGO is committed to ensuring its information and communication is accessible to people with disabilities.

#### Accessible Formats and Communication Supports

Upon request, POGO will provide or arrange accessible formats and communication supports, in a timely manner, for individuals with disabilities that take into account each individual's accessibility needs. POGO will consult with the person making the request to determine the suitability of an accessible format or communication support. POGO will also ensure that its process for receiving and responding to feedback is accessible to persons with disabilities by providing or arranging for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports upon request. Some examples of alternate formats and communication supports include reading written information to a person directly, large print, text transcripts of audio or visual information, handwritten notes instead of spoken word.

### Employment Standard

This Standard helps make hiring and employee support practices more accessible. POGO is committed to identifying, preventing and removing barriers at all stages of the employment life cycle for people with disabilities.

### Recruitment, Assessment and Selection Process

POGO welcomes and encourages applications from people with disabilities. POGO notifies job applicants about the availability of accommodation for people with disabilities in its recruitment process. We also notify job applicants selected to participate in an assessment or selection process that accommodations are available upon request. If a selected applicant requests an accommodation, we will consult with the applicant regarding suitable accommodation in a manner that takes into account the applicant's accessibility needs. When making offers of employment, POGO notifies the successful applicant of its policies for accommodating employees with disabilities.

### Accessible Formats and Communication Supports for Employees

Upon request, POGO will work with an employee with a disability to provide or arrange for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports needed in order for the employee to perform their job and to access information generally available to employees in the workplace. When determining the suitability of an accessible format or communication support we will consult with the employee making the request. POGO reserves the flexibility to decide on the most appropriate accessible formats or communication supports based on the needs of the specific employee and the capacity of the organization to provide the support.

### Performance Management and Career Development

POGO considers the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities in performance management processes and when offering career development or advancement opportunities.

### Workplace Emergency Response Information

POGO will provide individualized workplace emergency response information to employees with disabilities as soon as practicable upon becoming aware of the need for accommodation. In circumstances where the employee requires assistance, we will, with the consent of the employee, provide the workplace emergency response information to those designated to provide assistance to the employee (e.g., supervisor, fire warden, etc.). Individualized workplace emergency response information will be reviewed when an employee moves to a different location within the office, when the individual overall accommodation needs or plans are modified and when POGO reviews its general emergency response plans.

## **Procedures**

### Communicating Accessibility Policies

POGO will inform new and existing employees of its accessibility policies and any updates to the policies.

### Feedback Process

POGO welcomes and encourages feedback regarding this policy and its implementation to help us identify barriers and respond to concerns. Feedback can be provided by email to [hr@pogo.ca](mailto:hr@pogo.ca), through our website at [pogo.ca](http://pogo.ca), by telephone at 416 592-1232 or in person at 480 University Ave, Suite 1014, Toronto, ON when the POGO office reopens under pandemic protocols. All feedback is directed to Human Resources and responses will follow within ten business days of receipt. POGO

will ensure our feedback process is accessible to people with disabilities by providing or arranging for accessible formats and communication supports, on request.

Notice of Availability of Documents

This policy is available to any member of the public upon request and is posted on our website. POGO will provide this document in an accessible format or with communication support, upon request and will consult with the person making the request to determine the suitability of the format or communication support. We will provide the accessible format in a timely manner.

Modifications to this and Other Policies

POGO will amend or remove any of its policies that do not respect and promote the principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity for people living with disabilities.