



# AODA – Multi-Year Accessibility Plan for the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR)

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## Introduction

Smith's Funeral Homes is committed to working towards full compliance with all standards under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 ("AODA") as they are introduced. In doing so, we affirm our commitment to providing quality services in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities. The Multi-Year Accessibility Plan outlines the policies, achievements and actions that Smith's has put in place to improve opportunities for people with disabilities. The current plan covers a five-year period (2019 to 2024) to address the policies and actions that Smith's Funeral Homes will put in place to improve opportunities for people with disabilities.

## Statement of Commitment

Smith's Funeral Homes is committed to excellence in serving all client families and guests (all customers), including people with disabilities, and works hard to remove and prevent barriers to accessibility. Smith's believes in equal opportunity and is committed to providing a barrier-free environment that allows all people to maintain their independence and dignity, striving at all times to provide goods, services and opportunities in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. As a company we are committed to giving people with disabilities the same opportunity to benefit from the same services and opportunities, in the same place and in a similar way as others. As an organization, we respect and uphold the requirements set forth under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (2005) and its associated Regulations and strive to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities in a timely and effective manner.

## Section One: Past Achievements to Remove and Prevent Barriers

Smith's Funeral Homes has worked diligently to ensure that barriers to accessibility have been addressed in all aspects of our business – including communication, service-delivery, access to goods and services, and our facilities. Some examples of our past achievements include:

- Updating our website and enlarging the font, limiting the use of italics, ensuring there is a strong contrast between the background and text.
- Informing the public that feedback can be provided through various methods/formats.
- Ensuring employees who answer the phone speak clearly and slowly and provide service in a manner that meets the customer's needs.
- Asking people before their arrival if they have any accommodation needs, and making these accommodations as required.
- Ensuring pathways to our establishments are clear, well lit and safely maintained (especially relating to weather conditions).
- Ensuring entrance doors have automatic buttons.
- Building fully accessible washrooms.
- Accommodating employees with specific ergonomic solutions (i.e. purchasing specialized seats, keyboards, etc.)
- Developing individual accommodation plans with employees who return to work after an absence due to a disability.

- Implementing a “fragrance-free” policy to accommodate employees with allergies or sensitivities to certain scents and/or products.
- Contacted a local business with the ability to create Braille signage, should it be required.

## Section Two: Strategies and Actions

### Customer Service

Smith’s Funeral Homes is committed to providing accessible customer service to people with disabilities. This means that we will provide goods and services to people with disabilities with the same high quality and timeliness as others. Smith’s has remained in compliance with the Customer Service Standard, and uses reasonable efforts to ensure that its policies, practices and procedures are consistent with the following principles:

- Services are provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.
- The provision of services to persons with disabilities, and others, is integrated unless an alternate measure is necessary, whether temporarily or on a permanent basis.
- Persons with disabilities may use assistive devices and/or support persons in the access of goods and services.
- Persons with disabilities and their service animals are accommodated in all aspects of service provision (unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law).
- Smith’s employees, when communicating with a person with a disability, will do so in a manner that takes into account the person’s disability.

The following measures have been implemented by Smith’s:

- A member of management, the Administrative Coordinator and human resources representative, has been designated to present and/or revise practices and procedures. A policy review occurs annually.
- The Accessible Customer Service Policy is published on Smith’s Funeral Homes’ website.
- Notice will be provided on the website, email, over the phone or in writing where applicable when a service disruption occurs and will be done as quickly as possible if the disruption is unexpected.
- Training on AODA Customer Service is part of mandatory onboarding for all new hires.
- Completion of training of all employees is tracked and recorded.
- Comments relating to our programs and services with regard to customer service are welcomed and appreciated. A process has been established to encourage feedback regarding the way that Smith’s provides goods and services to people with disabilities. The feedback process is posted on our website, and comments can also be made verbally, by email or in writing. All feedback will be directed to the Administrative Coordinator and human resources representative (currently Jennifer Rayworth) by email and phone.
- All feedback collected from client families, staff or the general public is reviewed and analyzed to identify potential gaps in customer services, and to ensure appropriate actions are taken.
- Letting customers know what to expect upon arrival, such as parking conditions and addressing any accessibility needs before their arrival (and then making the necessary accommodations).
- Arranging for transportation, if required.

### Information and Communications

Smith’s Funeral Homes is committed to making our information and communications accessible to people with disabilities. We will consult with people with disabilities to determine their information



and communication needs. We want to achieve the most effective and efficient access to information for all users.

To achieve this objective, Smith's has undertaken the following plans to ensure compliance with the IASR standard:

- Smith's will ensure that essential information is accessible to persons with disabilities.
- A feedback process has been established that is accessible. Alternate formats are also available such as telephone, mail, text, email and in-person. These processes have been communicated to the public and are available on our website.
- Our website has been designed to be user-friendly for people with a range of needs. We will continue to ensure that large, clear text is used and the use of italics is limited or removed.
- Consult with our website developer and host to ensure that our website conforms with WCAG 2.0 Level AA by January 1, 2021.
- Continue to assess accessibility of existing website organization and content.
- Post a notice on the website that information is available in a variety of accessible formats.
- Utilize external sources and time-frames for formatting to alternative formats that are not feasible to do in-house (i.e. captioning, video-description, conversion to Braille, etc.)
- Training on the AODA Information and Communication Standards is provided to all staff upon orientation and hiring.

## Accessible Emergency Information

Smith's Funeral Homes is committed to providing customers, the public, and employees with emergency information in an accessible way upon request. As an employer, Smith's Funeral Homes' priority is to keep our employees safe, especially in emergencies. As such, we provide individualized emergency response information to employees with disabilities which includes making our emergency information accessible, or developing a plan to help an employee with a disability during an emergency. We will work with our staff to determine what they need in an emergency situation.

During the onboarding process for new hires, Smith's Funeral Homes' informs new hires of the availability of individual emergency response plans that takes into account their disability. Smith's is committed to providing employees and the public with publicly available emergency information, plans or public safety information in an accessible manner upon request. Smith's has provided and will continue to provide employees with disabilities with individualized emergency response information when necessary, and as soon as practically possible. If an employee who receives individualized workplace emergency response information requires assistance, with the employee's consent the workplace emergency response information will be given to the designated employee providing the assistance.

Smith's will continue to review any individualized workplace emergency response plans when necessary, such as when the location of an employee changes or whenever we review the employee's accommodation needs or our emergency policies and procedures.

## Employment

Smith's Funeral Homes is committed to inclusive and accessible employment practices that attract and retain individuals with disabilities. We have taken the following steps to notify the public and

employees, that when requested, Smith's will accommodate people with disabilities throughout all phases of the employment relationship, which are detailed more fully below.

### **Recruitment**

Smith's Funeral Homes is committed to ensuring that our recruitment and assessment processes are fair and accessible. All management involved in hiring are required to complete AODA and Human Rights training.

Smith's will take the following steps to ensure compliance with this standard:

- Specify that accommodation is available for applicants with disabilities in recruitment material, and with regards to interviews and assessments.
- When making offers of employment, Smith's will notify successful applicants of policies for accommodating employees with disabilities.
- All job postings will state that accommodations will be available on request for persons with disabilities.
- Provide updated information on accommodation policies to employees when they occur.
- Consult with employee to determine suitability of format or support.

### **Documented Individual Accommodation Plans**

Smith's Funeral Homes is committed to providing documented individual accommodation plans that include the following:

- Participation of the employee requiring the individual accommodation plan.
- Requesting outside medical evaluation, to the extent necessary, to determine if accommodation can be achieved and how.
- Ensuring a high level of privacy is maintained, and that information is only disclosed to individuals as necessary and in order to achieve the accommodation needs of the person with a disability.
- Providing regular review, updates and communications with employee during the accommodation process.
- Providing an employee with information if a request for accommodation is denied.
- Providing Individual Accommodation Plans in a format that takes into account the needs of the employee.
- If required, including individualized workplace emergency response information.

### **Return to Work**

Smith's Funeral Homes is committed to developing and putting in place a process for developing individual accommodation plans and return-to-work policies for employees that have been absent due to a disability or injury.

Smith's has developed and maintains a return-to-work process for our employees who have been absent from work due to a disability and require disability-related accommodations in order to return to work. The accommodation process is outlined in our Accommodation Policy, and includes steps Smith's takes to facilitate the return-to-work process and uses the documented Individual Accommodation Plan.



## **Performance Management, Career Development and Redeployment**

Smith's Funeral Homes is committed to ensuring that the accessibility needs of employees with a disability are taken into account with regards to performance management, career development and the redeployment process. Smith's will review the following information and update all relevant accommodation policies to include the following:

- Policies that support addressing the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities, as well as taking into account individual accommodation plans when using performance management processes.
- Policies that take into account individual accommodation plans when providing career development and advancement opportunities.
- Policies that take into account individual accommodation plans when redeploying employees with disabilities.

## **Training**

Smith's Funeral Homes will provide training to employees on Ontario's accessibility laws and on the *Human Rights Code* as it relates to people with disabilities. Training will be provided in a manner that best suits the duties and needs of employees and every person who deals with the public on behalf of Smith's, including third parties (i.e. employees, volunteers or management).

Smith's has taken the following steps to ensure employees were provided with the training needed to meet Ontario's accessible laws:

- Developed a process that determines and ensures that correct training is delivered on the requirements of the IASR and the Ontario Human Rights Code.
- Providing educational or training resources or materials in an accessible format that takes into account the accessibility needs of a person with a disability upon request.
- Ensure that all new employees complete AODA training within two weeks of employment.
- Maintains a record of the training, participant's names and dates of training.

## **Design of Public Spaces and Facilities**

Smith's Funeral Homes will meet the Accessibility Standards for the Design of Public Spaces when building or making major modifications to public spaces, which include outdoor public areas and paths of travel (i.e. sidewalks, ramps, stairs, curb ramps, etc.) and service-related elements (i.e. waiting areas, foyers, etc.)

Smith's has taken the following steps to ensure public spaces and facilities are as accessible as possible:

- Installation of grab bars in washrooms to assist with sitting and standing.
- Ensuring all stairways are well lit, with safety rails and carpeting or anti-slip tread.
- Asking customers how we may assist them and allowing solutions such as removing excessive chairs (or other furniture), increased lighting, assigning them a room or providing seating that is easily accessible and near washrooms and exits.
- Availability of fully accessible washrooms.

- Installation of power-operated doors at all entrances.