

Customer Service Accessibility Policy

Maitland Valley
Conservation Authority

November 14, 2024
To be reviewed: September 17, 2025





Maitland Conservation Customer Service Accessibility Policy

1. Intent and Scope

The Maitland Valley Conservation Authority is committed to providing a high level of service to all our clients and partners. We are working to provide people with disabilities with equal access to our programs and services. Our goal is to improve accessibility for persons with disabilities in a way that respects their independence and dignity.

We are committed to ensuring that we meet the needs of people with disabilities in a timely manner. We will do so through the implementation of this policy and by meeting our accessibility obligations under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and Ontario's accessibility laws.

It is Maitland Conservation's policy that our training, working and facility environments will be maintained free from discrimination and harassment as prohibited by the Ontario Human Rights Code and the AODA.

This policy is applicable to all policies, procedures and processes of Maitland Conservation.

2. Training

Maitland Conservation is committed to ensuring training is provided on the requirements of the accessibility standards to all Members, employees, volunteers and other persons who provide goods, services facilities on behalf of the organization.

Training will relate to the specific roles of Members, employees, volunteers, and other persons. Training content will include:

- Maitland Conservation's Accessibility Policy
- How to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities
- How to interact with people with people with people who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or support person
- How to use the equipment or devices available on-site or otherwise that may help people with disabilities attending events and meetings or accessing services and facilities. This includes front doors and accessible washroom features at the Administration Centre, large format plotter, and meeting equipment (monitor, camera, speakers).

Specifically, all staff and volunteers will complete:

- General Requirements of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation training
- and Accessible Customer Service training through the *accessforward* training modules.

In addition, Communications staff will complete the Information and Communications Standard module.

Coordinators may assign additional modules or other training opportunities if determined to be relevant to specific positions.

For new staff this training is a component of on-boarding procedures and is to be completed as soon as is practical. If an employee takes on a new role within the organization their Coordinator or Supervisor will determine if new or refresher accessibility training would be appropriate.

Records of training will be kept in personnel files.

3. Assistive Devices

People with disabilities may use their personal assistive devices when participating in our events and meetings or accessing facilities and services.

4. Communication

Maitland Conservation will communicate with people with disabilities in ways that consider their disability. We will work with persons with disabilities to determine how we can effectively communicate with them. This may include providing:

- text or visual information in an enlarged format
- voice notes of written material
- text of audio or visual presentations

5. Service Animals

We welcome people with disabilities and their service animals. Service animals are permitted at our events, meetings and facilities that are open to the public. It is the responsibility of the person with the disability to always be in control of the service animal. If our staff cannot readily identify that it is a service animal, they may ask the person with disabilities for documentation from a regulated health professional confirming that the animal is a service animal.

6. Support Persons

A person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person will be allowed to have that person accompany them at our meetings, events and facilities. Where confidentiality is a concern, Maitland Conservation may request the support person to sign a confidentiality agreement.

The customer or client will determine if a support person is needed.

Fees will not be charged to a support person for day-use admission to Falls Reserve Conservation Area. Fees will not be charged to the support person for group camping at Falls Reserve. All other FRCA fees (pond fishing permit, firewood etc.) apply to support persons. A support person camping at FRCA will be counted as one of the six persons allowed per campsite. Maximum occupancy of a campsite is six people.

7. Notice of Temporary Disruption

Temporary disruptions in services or at facilities may occur for a wide variety of reasons that may or may not be within our control or knowledge. We will make every effort to promptly notify watershed residents and clients of disruptions including information about the cause of disruption, its expected duration and possible alternative facilities or services if appropriate. Notification methods may include:

- Website posts
- Social media posts
- Temporary signage at facility or property
- Emails to specific partners or agencies
- Voicemail messages

For planned disruptions our goal is to provide notice one week prior to the disruption. In the case of unanticipated disruptions notice will be provided as soon as possible under the circumstances.

8. Feedback Process

Feedback from the public and our partners is welcome as it assists us in identifying barriers to our events, services and facilities and helps us to improve program delivery.

Feedback relating to the provision of accessible customer service can be provided to Maitland Conservation in any manner that is convenient including:

- in-person at our Administration Centre located at 1093 Marietta St., Wroxeter
- by mail to: Communications Coordinator - Maitland Conservation, Box 127, Wroxeter ON N0G 2X0
- by phone or voice mail at 519 335 3557 extension 226
- by text to 519 357 6670
- by email to jthompson@mvca.on.ca

The above information is posted on the Maitland Conservation website (mvca.on.ca). A feedback form is available on the website, at the Administration Centre, by emailing jthompson@mvca.on.ca or calling 519 335 3557 extension 226.

All feedback, regardless of how it is received, will be reviewed by the General Manager – Secretary Treasurer and the relevant Service Area Coordinator or Supervisor. All feedback will be used solely to improve our customer service.

Where possible (if contact information is available) Maitland Conservation will acknowledge receipt of the feedback within 1 week of receiving it and clients can expect to receive an outcome response within 30 days. Recommendations to address feedback will be prepared by the relevant Service Area Coordinator or Supervisor and reviewed by the General Manager – Secretary Treasurer.

9. Notice of Availability of Documents

Maitland Conservation's Accessible Customer Service policy and other documents considered to be important in the delivery of services are posted on the Maitland Conservation website (mvca.on.ca).

When requested, Maitland Conservation will provide documents in an accessible format or with communication support. We will work with the person making the request to determine a suitable format or communication support. Requested documents or communication supports will be provided in a timely manner and at a cost that is no more than the regular fee charged to other clients.

10. Procurement

Maitland Conservation incorporates accessibility criteria and features when tendering for or acquiring goods and services. This includes considering the technical features of equipment and software and ensuring event facilities can accommodate people with disabilities.

11. Information and Communications

Accessible Formats

When requested Maitland Conservation will provide or arrange for the provision of information about our services and programs in accessible formats or with communication supports. This support will be provided in a timely manner taking into account the person's accessibility requirements. Accessible documents or communication supports will be provided at a cost that is no more than the regular fee charged to other clients.

We will consult with the person making the request to determine a suitable format or communication support. If we determine that the information or communications material are not convertible, we will:

- provide the individual with an explanation of why we were not able to provide it an alternate format
- provide a summary of the information or communication materials to the individual.

Information about the availability of accessible formats and communications supports is posted on the Maitland Conservation website (mvca.on.ca).

Public Safety Information

Flood and erosion safety messages will be provided in alternate formats upon request as soon as possible within the constraints of flood and erosion events. Maitland Conservation's mandate is to provide messaging to member municipalities as opposed to the general public.

If Maitland Conservation prepares emergency procedures or plans relating to properties or events and makes this information available to the public, we will provide the information in an accessible format or with communication supports upon request. This will be completed in a timely manner.

Website Content

Maitland Conservation will work to ensure our website conforms to Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 AA criteria.

12. Employment

Recruitment and Selection

Job postings include a note that accommodations are available upon request. In addition, applicants selected for interviews will be notified that accommodations are available upon request. We will consult with the applicants and provide suitable accommodation during the assessment and selection process.

Not all positions at Maitland Conservation can be adjusted to accommodate persons with disabilities. The Supervisor will evaluate the position and consider whether modifications are possible when accommodation related to a disability is requested.

Employee Supports

When making offers of employment Maitland Conservation will notify the successful applicant of policies for accommodating employees with disabilities. We will consult with the employee, taking into account accessibility needs, when arranging for suitable accommodation. We will also consult with the person making the request in determining the suitability of accessible formats or communication supports specifically for:

- information needed by the employee to perform their job
- information generally available to workplace employees

Workplace Emergency Response Information

Maitland Conservation is committed to ensuring the safety of all employees.

Workplace emergency response information will be provided to employees in an alternate format or with communication support when requested.

Customized emergency response plans will be developed for employees with a disability. This information will be developed as part of the employee on-boarding process or when Maitland Conservation becomes aware of the need for accommodation. The customized plan will be updated:

- when the employee moves to a different work location within the organization
- when the employee's needs change
- when the organization reviews general emergency response procedures

With the employee's consent, we will provide workplace emergency information to designated colleagues who will provide assistance to that employee during an emergency.

13. Design of Public Spaces Standards

Maitland Conservation will comply with AODA Design of Public Spaces Standards (Accessibility Standards for the Built Environment) when undertaking the construction or redevelopment of publicly accessible spaces, in accordance with accessibility laws.

14. Changes to Existing Policies

Any policies of this organization that do not respect and promote that principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity for people with disabilities will be modified or removed.

15. Review

This policy is scheduled for review on September 17, 2025 by the Membership of Maitland Conservation. If updates are requested by the Membership, all employees will be provided with a link to the updated copy within 30 days of the Memberships' approval of the changes.