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# Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities (AODA) Policy

## 2021

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Freeman Herbs

Authored by: Human Resources



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## Commitment to Accessibility

Here at Freeman Herbs, we strive to meet the needs of our employees and customers with disabilities, and are working hard to remove and prevent any barriers to accessibility.

Freeman Herbs is committed to fulfilling our requirements under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act. This accessibility policy outlines the steps Freeman Herbs is taking to meet those requirements and to improve opportunities for people with disabilities.

The policy shows how Freeman Herbs will play its role in making Ontario an accessible province for all Ontarians while following the principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity.

## Scope and Application

### *1. Scope:*

This policy is intended to meet the requirements of *Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07* (the “Customer Service Standards”) under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (the “AODA”), and applies to the provision of goods and services customers, visitors, and other third parties in Ontario (collectively, “Customers”).

### *2. Applicability:*

This policy applies to employees, contractors and volunteers who deal with the Customers or other third parties on behalf of Freeman Herbs in Ontario, including when the provision of services occurs off the premises of Freeman Herbs.

This policy also applies to all employees who participate in the development of Freeman Herbs policies, practices and procedures with respect to the provision of services to customers in Ontario.

## Information and Communications

Freeman Herbs is committed to making all procedures, policies, practices and any other information accessible to people with disabilities.

If an employee needs accommodation in the way information is communicated, employees can contact Human Resources or their Supervisor at any time. Together, an accommodation plan that suits them best can be created. For example, information can be provided verbally, in large print, in e-reader format or other suitable alternatives to the point of undue hardship.

Freeman Herbs will provide this document in an accessible format or with communication supports, on request. That employee will be consulted, to determine the suitability of the format or communication support. The accessible format will be delivered in a timely manner and, at no additional cost to employees.

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## Employment

Freeman Herbs is committed to fair and accessible employment practices, including our recruitment and selection processes.

All job postings and advertisements clearly state that Freeman Herbs is an equal opportunity employer, and is happy to accommodate any way we can throughout the recruitment and selection process. It also encourages applicants with disabilities to apply to our vacancies. If a request for accommodation is made at any point of the interview or assessment process, the individual will be consulted to determine the best course of action for accommodation.

Once an offer of employment has been made, inquiries will be stated again about any accommodations. This way, if any are required, they can be in place before the start date. It is encouraged that all requests be made in a timely manner so there is ample time to get the proper accommodations in place before the job begins.

In the event of a current employee needing an accommodation, it is encouraged they voice this to their supervisor or Human Resources. Disabilities are not always permanent, so even if a temporary accommodation needs to be made, please do not hesitate to ask. Freeman Herbs' commitment to accommodation applies beyond the recruitment process.

Should you require an accommodation, please refer to the Accommodation Policy for information on how this process will be handled. This policy goes over the procedure, and each party's responsibilities in accommodation, while outlining the shared goal of an efficient and positive experience.

## Talent and Performance Management

Freeman Herbs is interested in investing in its employees and encouraging them to grow with the company. Freeman Herbs has made sure that it considers the needs of employees with disabilities when it comes to performance reviews, transfers or promotions.

Some examples include but are not limited to:

- making documents available in accessible formats (e.g., large print for people with low vision)
- providing feedback and coaching in a way that is accessible (e.g., using plain language for someone with a learning disability)
- providing the accommodations, needed to successfully learn new skills or take on more responsibilities

## Training

Freeman Herbs is committed to providing training on requirements of Ontario's accessibility laws and the Ontario Human Rights Code as it applies to people with disabilities. Freeman Herbs will provide accessible customer service training to:

- all employees and volunteers
- anyone involved in developing our policies
- anyone who provides goods, services or facilities to customers on our behalf.

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All new staff will be trained before they even start work.

Training will include the purpose of the AODA, it's scope, our AODA policies, best practices and tips on interacting with individuals with various types of disabilities.

Existing employees will have the opportunity to participate in annual AODA training to make sure everyone is up to date with the current policies and information.

Staff will also be trained when changes are made to our accessible customer service policies.

## Individualized Emergency Response Plans

Freeman Herbs is committed to the safety of its workers in all circumstances. If a worker requires help in the event of an emergency, all parties will work together to come up with an individualized emergency response plan.

This plan will be communicated to necessary personnel [supervisors, managers, coworkers (as necessary)] and will be updated should anything changes (accommodation requirements, location of worker...).

## Customer Service

Freeman Herbs 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.

Although there are not normally members of the public on the property, Freeman Herbs prides itself on customer service in dealing with clients and vendors. Having a working knowledge of the AODA customer service requirements will only enhance that reputation. Use the information provided in this policy to help guide you.

If any further assistance is required or any questions arise, please contact Human Resources.

## Providing Goods, Services or Facilities to People with Disabilities

Freeman Herbs is committed to meeting its current and ongoing obligations under the Ontario Human Rights Code respecting non-discrimination.

Freeman Herbs understands that obligations under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) and its accessibility standards do not substitute or limit its obligations under the Ontario Human Rights Code or obligations to people with disabilities under any other law.

Freeman Herbs is committed to excellence in serving all customers including people with disabilities.

Our accessible customer service policies are consistent with the principles of independence, dignity, integration and equality of opportunity for people with disabilities.

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## Assistive Devices

People with disabilities may use their personal assistive devices when accessing our goods, services and facilities, or while under the employ of Freeman Herbs.

In cases where the assistive device presents a significant and unavoidable health or safety concern or may not be permitted for other reasons, other measures will be used to ensure the person with a disability can access our goods, services or facilities or work under our employ to the point of undue hardship.

## Service Animals

We welcome people with disabilities and their service animals. Service animals are allowed on all parts of Freeman Herbs' property.

When an animal cannot easily be identified as a service animal, supervisors may ask a person to provide documentation (template, letter or form) from a regulated health professional that confirms the person needs the service animal for reasons relating to their disability.

A service animal can be easily identified through visual indicators, such as when it wears a harness or a vest, or when it helps the person perform certain tasks.

## Support Persons

A person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person will be allowed to have that person accompany them on our premises.

## Feedback Process

Freeman Herbs welcomes feedback on how we provide accessible customer service as well as employee accessibility. Customer and employee feedback will help us identify barriers and respond to concerns.

Customers and employees who wish to provide feedback on the way Freeman Herbs provides goods, services or facilities to people with disabilities can provide feedback in the following way(s):

- contact their supervisor
- advise their contact within the company (sales, marketing HR)
- contact the Human Resources department

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

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## Modifications to This or Other Policies

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

Any updates or modifications to this policy will be communicated timely and appropriately to all employees.

Last Reviewed: July 2021