

# Boardwalk Accessibility Policy

## STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

Boardwalk is committed to diversity, inclusion, and accessibility in everything we do. These core values are paramount to the way we operate our business and come through in the service experiences we create for our Resident Members, both prospective and existing. We are committed to eliminating barriers and improving accessibility for persons with disabilities in a timely manner and we strive to operate and maintain our communities, so they are accessible to all persons with disabilities.

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

## GENERAL

Overall, Boardwalk is committed to providing our services based on the principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity. We will make reasonable efforts to ensure our policies, practices and procedures abide by the above principles. In addition, we will strive to ensure that persons with a disability have the same opportunity to access housing and housing services, in a similar way as other members of the public.

We understand that information in relation to an individual's disability is personal and private and we are committed to dealing with such information in a confidential manner.

## TRAINING

Boardwalk will ensure that all persons to whom this policy applies receive training as required by the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*. In addition, training will be provided on a continuous basis to all newly hired Associates and partners of Boardwalk as part of our ongoing process. The Human Resources Department will keep records of the training outlining the nature of training, date of training and individuals who attended.

Training will include, but is not limited to:

- An overview of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* and the requirements of the *Customer Service Standard*.
- Information on how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities.
- Information on how to interact with people with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or a support person.
- Information on how to use the equipment or devices on site to assist a person with a disability.
- Information about Boardwalks' policies and procedures pertaining to the services offered to persons with disabilities.
- What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing our organization's services or facilities.
- An overview of *The Ontario Human Rights Code* and the *Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation*.

Training will be provided as soon as practicable upon an individual being hired, as well as on an ongoing basis as changes occur to the company's policies, procedures and practices in dealing with persons with disabilities.

## **ASSISTIVE DEVICES**

People with disabilities may use their personal assistive devices to access any Boardwalk community. 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 services or facilities. It is the responsibility of the person with a disability to ensure their assistive device is always operated in a safe and controlled manner.

Boardwalk may also provide other measures to help an individual within their apartment suite such as safety grab bars in the bathroom.

## **SERVICE ANIMALS**

Boardwalk welcomes people with disabilities and their service animals. Service animals are allowed on the parts of our premises that are open to the public and third parties, except those areas excluded by law.

If service animals are prohibited by another law, we will do the following to ensure people with disabilities can access our services or facilities:

- explain why the animal is excluded
- discuss with the customer another way of providing goods, services or facilities.

While on site, it is the responsibility of the person with the service animal to always ensure care and control of the animal. We will train our Associates and partners on how to interact with people who are accompanied by a service animal.

## **SUPPORT PERSONS**

A Person with a disability may enter any Boardwalk premises accompanied by a support person and always have access to that support person. The company may require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person while on the premises in situations where it is necessary to protect the health and safety of the person with a disability, or the health and safety of others.

Before making a decision, Boardwalk will:

- consult with the person with a disability to understand their needs.
- consider health or safety reasons based on available evidence.
- determine if there is no other reasonable way to protect the health or safety of the person or others on the premises.

Given the nature of information which may be discussed in the presence of a support person, consent from the person with a disability is required when communicating private and confidential matters.

## **NOTICE OF DISRUPTION IN SERVICE**

Boardwalk will make reasonable efforts to provide Resident Members or prospective Resident Members with notice in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption to services or facilities. This notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available. Boardwalk may not be able to give advance notice in the case of an emergency disruption.

To ensure information is accessible, signs and printed notices will be displayed prominently at the entrance to the community and/or other prominent common area locations within the community. Resident Members will also receive communication via the Resident Member portal, Yuhu.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION**

Boardwalk will communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability. We will endeavour to provide communications in accessible formats as well as communication supports to a person with a disability.

We will train our Associates and partners on how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities. We will consult with the person making the request in determining the suitability of an accessible format or communication support.

We offer our Resident Members various accessible options for making rental payments such as pre-authorized payment, post-dated cheques, and on-line payments.

We will also meet internationally-recognized Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level AA website requirements in accordance with Ontario's accessibility laws.

## **EMPLOYMENT**

Boardwalk notifies Associates, job applicants and the public that accommodation can be made during recruiting and hiring process.

We notify job applicants when they are individually selected to participate in an assessment or selection process that accommodation is available upon request. If a request is made, we will consult with the applicant and provide or arrange for suitable accommodation.

Boardwalk will notify successful applicants of policies for accommodating Associates with disabilities when making offers of employment. We notify Associates that support is available for those with disabilities as soon as practicable after they begin their employment. We provide updated information to Associates whenever there is a change to existing policies on the provision of job accommodation that consider an Associate's accessibility needs due to a disability.

Boardwalk will consult with Associates when arranging suitable accommodation in a manner that considers the accessibility needs due to disability. We will consult with the individual regarding:

- a) information that is needed to perform the Associate's job
- b) information that is generally available to Associates in the workplace

## **WORKPLACE EMERGENCY INFORMATION**

Boardwalk will provide customized emergency information to help an Associate with a disability during an emergency. With the Associate's consent, we will provide workplace emergency information to a designated person who will aid that Associate during an emergency.

We will provide the information as soon as practicable after we become aware of the need for accommodation due to the Associate's disability.

Individualized workplace emergency response information is reviewed:

- a) when the Associate moves to a different location in the organization.
- b) when the Associate's overall accommodation needs or plans are reviewed.
- c) when Boardwalk reviews its general emergency response policies.

We have a written process to develop individual accommodation plans and a written process for Associates who have been absent from work due to a disability and require disability-related accommodation to return to work.

Our performance management and career development processes consider the accessibility needs of all Associates.

## **FEEDBACK PROCESS**

Boardwalk welcomes feedback on how we provide accessible customer service. Customer feedback will help us identify barriers and respond to concerns. We will investigate and respond to all complaints in a timely, thorough, and objective manner.

All prospective and existing Resident Members can submit feedback or questions to 1-800-310-WALK (9255), via fax to 403-531-9565, via email, live chat or in person at any one of our communities.

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

## **AVAILABILITY & FORMAT OF DOCUMENTS**

All documents required by the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disability Act*, including this Accessibility Policy are available upon request or may be accessed on Boardwalk's website at [www.bwalk.com](http://www.bwalk.com).

Boardwalk will provide these documents in an accessible format or with communication support, on request. We 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 and at no additional cost.

## **MODIFICATIONS TO EXISTING POLICIES**

Boardwalk is committed to developing policies that respect and promote the dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity for people with disabilities. Boardwalk retains the right to amend or change our policies at any time; however, any such change will only be made after considering the impact on people with disabilities.