

This policy covers Tides Canada Foundation and Tides Canada Initiatives Society, collectively called Tides Canada.

Tides Canada is committed to the principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity for persons with a disability in our work places.

Dignity: Dignified interaction means not treating people with disabilities as an afterthought, or forcing them to accept lesser quality or convenience. With dignified interactions the person with a disability maintains his or her self-respect and the respect of other people.

Independence: Independence is creating an environment in which people with disabilities are able to do things on their own without unnecessary help or interference from others.

Integration: Integration is allowing people with disabilities to benefit from the same interactions in the same place and in the same or similar ways as people without disabilities.

Equal Opportunity: Equal opportunity means affording people with disabilities with the same changes, options and benefits as people without disabilities.

This policy applies to all Tides Canada employees, volunteers, board members and consultants who deal with the public or other third party individuals or organizations on behalf of Tides Canada, both on and off Tides Canada premises.

Definitions

The following terms carry the noted meanings for purposes of this policy and any related procedures, guidelines and training.

Assistive Device – a technical aid, communication device or other instrument used to maintain or improve functional abilities of persons with disabilities. A personal assistive device is typically a device that a person brings with them (such as a wheelchair, walker or a personal oxygen tank) that might assist in hearing, seeing, communicating, moving, breathing, remembering and/or reading.

Disability – includes:

- any degree of physical disability;
- a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability
- a learning disability;
- a mental disorder; or
- an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under a provincial or territorial worker safety act; and
- specifically includes any disability prescribed by a relevant provincial or territorial government.

Guide Dog – a highly-trained working dog trained to provide mobility, safety and increased independence for people who are visually impaired.

Service Animal – a dog or other animal, other than a guide dog for the visually impaired, when it is readily apparent to an average person that the animal is used by the person with a disability for reasons relating to the disability.

If it is not readily apparent that an animal is being used by the person for reasons relating to his or her disability, Tides Canada may request verification from the person. Verification may include:

- a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability;
- a certificate of training from a recognized guide dog or service animal training school; or
- a valid identification card signed by the Attorney General of Canada.

Support Person – an individual who accompanies a person with a disability in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care, medical needs or access to goods and services.

Guidelines for Interacting with a Person with a Disability

A. Engaging with Persons with Disabilities

Tides Canada will make all reasonable efforts to ensure that its policies, practices and procedures are consistent with the principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity by:

- ensuring that all members of the public receive the same value and quality;
- allowing persons with a disability to do things in their own way and at their own pace when interacting with a Tides Canada representative as long as this does not present a safety risk;
- using alternative methods when possible to ensure that persons with disabilities have access to the same interactions, in the same place and in a similar manner; and
- communicating in a manner that takes into account the person's disability.

B. Assistive Devices

Persons with disabilities may use their own assistive devices when interacting with a Tides Canada representative.

In cases where the assistive device presents a safety concern, or where accessibility might be an issue, other reasonable measures will be used to ensure a positive interaction with a Tides Canada representative. For example, where elevators are not present and where an individual requires an assistive device for the purposes of mobility, the interaction could instead take place in a location that meets the needs of the person with the disability.

C. Guide Dogs and Service Animals

A person with a disability accompanied by a guide dog or service animal will be allowed access to premises that are open to the public unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law. "No pet" policies do not apply to guide dogs and service animals.

Food Service Areas: A person with a disability accompanied by a guide dog or service animal will be allowed access to food service areas that are open to the public unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law.

Exclusions: If a guide dog or service animal is excluded by law, Tides Canada will offer reasonable alternative methods to enable the person with a disability to interact with Tides Canada whenever possible. For example, the service animal may be secured in a safe location and guidance offered by the Tides Canada representative.

Care and Control of the Animal: The person who is accompanied by a guide dog or service animal is responsible for maintaining care and control of the animal at all time.

Allergies: If a health and safety concern presents itself, for example in the form of a severe allergy to the animal, Tides Canada will make all reasonable efforts to meet the needs of all individuals.

D. Support Persons

If a person with a disability is accompanied by a support person, Tides Canada will ensure that both persons are allowed to enter the premises together and that the person with a disability is not prevented from having access to the support person.

If Tides Canada is charging admission to an event, admission fees should not be charged for the support person.

In situations where confidential information might be discussed, consent will be obtained from the person with the disability prior to any conversation where confidential information might be discussed.

E. Notice of Disruptions in Availability

In the event of temporary disruptions affecting accessibility to a Tides Canada office or event, all reasonable efforts will be made to provide advance notice. This clearly posted notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated length of time and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available.

The notice will be communicated as appropriate for the circumstance, for example, placed on the relevant web site, or, communicated directly to a disabled person with whom a meeting is scheduled and in a manner appropriate for the disability. In some circumstances, such as in the situation of unplanned temporary disruptions, advance notice may not be possible.

F. Feedback Process

Feedback regarding the way Tides Canada has interacted with a person with a disability is welcome and appreciated. Feedback may be made verbally (in person or by phone), in writing (by letter or email) or via Tides Canada's Feedback Policy (posted on tidescanada.org). Anyone providing feedback to Tides Canada will receive

acknowledgement of their feedback along with any resulting action relating to the submitted concern or complaint in accordance with Tides Canada's Feedback Policy.

G. Training

Training will be provided to all Tides Canada employees, volunteers, board members and contractors who deal with the public or other third parties to ensure they are familiar with appropriate ways to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disabilities.

H. Notice of Availability and Format of Documents Tides Canada will provide its Accessibility Policy and Plan upon request and in a format that takes into account a person's disability. They will also be posted in a conspicuous place at Tides Canada premises accessed by the public, on Tides Canada's website and otherwise made apparent in a reasonable manner depending on the location.