

OVERVIEW AND DEFINITIONS

Issued: December 23, 2019

Introduction

The Grand Theatre has a long-established practice of providing high levels of customer service and accommodation to its patrons. We strive for excellence on our two stages; the experience that a patron encounters when interacting with employees and volunteers – whether on the phone, through written communication or in-person – also needs to meet this high standard. The Grand aspires to extend this level of customer service to all patrons, including those with a disability. Many changes to our programs, facilities and services in through the years have helped to improve our ability to serve patrons with disabilities.

Definitions

“Disability” as defined by the Ontario Human Rights Code means,

1. any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical co-ordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device,
2. a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability,
3. a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,
4. a mental disorder, or
5. an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997

“Access” means that the Grand is committed to making its premises and services available to patrons with a disability by removing barriers and in a manner that embraces the principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity.

“Dignity” means that service is provided in a way that allows the person with a disability to maintain self-respect and the respect of other people.

“Independence” means when a person with a disability is allowed to do things on their own, without unnecessary help or interference from others.

“Integration and Equal Opportunity” means that service is provided in a way that allows the person with a disability to benefit from the same services, in the same place, and in the same or similar way as other customers, unless an alternative measure is necessary to enable a person with disability to access goods or services. They should not have to make significantly more effort to access or obtain services. They should also not have to accept inconvenience or lesser quality. Sometimes this may mean that the Grand has to treat individuals slightly differently so they can benefit fully from the services.

The Grand recognizes that the provision of fully accessible services in accessible facilities is a process that is under constant review and improvement. Feedback on any aspect of the accessibility program at the Grand is encouraged from employees, volunteers, patrons and will be reviewed and embraced by the Joint Health and Safety Committee.

ASSISTIVE DEVICES & SERVICES

Issued: December 23, 2019

Policy:

The Grand is committed to serving all patrons with disabilities, and ensuring that those who use assistive devices will benefit from enjoying a fulfilling experience at the Grand Theatre.

Procedures:

The Grand will ensure that all employees and volunteers are aware of the various assistive devices provided by the theatre that may be used by patrons with disabilities while accessing our programs, products and services. Assistive devices are devices that are used to assist persons with disabilities in carrying out activities or accessing the services of persons or organizations.

The theatre currently provides the following to assist our patrons with disabilities while attending a theatre performance:

- A Wheelchair is available to borrow on a first-come, first-served basis, and is located in the coat check area
- Hearing assistive receivers are available free of charge for patrons who are hard of hearing or require hearing assistance, and may be borrowed from the coat check area. Patrons must deposit a form of identification (drivers license, etc.) when signing out devices, which will be returned to them upon receipt of the device. A limited number of dual ear headphones are available for loan. There are sufficient single-ear earphones available for all devices. Patrons are permitted and encouraged to bring earbuds or headphones they find comfortable to use with these devices, should they wish not to use the provided earphones.
- Motorized door controls on barrier-free doors
- Special access washroom with assistive bars
- Elevators in all levels for public use
- Wheelchair accessible seating and companion seats, which need to be reserved at the time of ticket purchase
- Hand rails in the theatre spaces
- Magnifying sheets (to assist in reading house programs or other materials) may be borrowed from the coat check area.
- Theatre employees and volunteers will assist patrons in locating and using assistive devices upon request.

The Grand also welcomes patrons who bring their own assistive devices (canes, wheelchairs, walkers, service dogs etc.). Due to fire regulations and space limitations, large assistive devices (eg. walkers) will be stored outside of the auditorium during performances. Employees will assist in storage and retrieval of assistive devices. The theatre is not responsible for any lost/damaged items if they are stored during a performance.

ADDITIONAL ASSISTIVE SERVICES

The Grand contracts bus companies to provide transportation to the theatre for Reaney Talk days from selected London locations. Patrons requiring accessible bus transportation need to reserve this in advance and request an accessible vehicle at the time of the reservation.

The Grand provides occasional American Sign Language interpreted performances for patrons who communicate using Sign Language. Specific performances with Sign Language interpretation will be denoted on the website. For these performances, a block of seats is reserved for those patrons using these services in a location that allows simultaneous viewing of the performance and the interpreters. Patrons wishing to book these seats should contact the box office directly by phone or email.

The Grand provides occasional Open Captioned performances for patrons who are D/deaf or hard of hearing. Specific performances with ASL interpretation will be denoted on the website. For these performances, a block of seats is reserved for those patrons using these services in a location that allows simultaneous viewing of the performance and the Open Captioned screen. Patrons wishing to book these seats should contact the box office directly by phone or email.

Patrons requiring these and/or other accessibility accommodations should discuss available options for accessible rooms with a member of the Box office staff.

The Grand is committed to researching and implementing additional assistive devices as technology evolves and additional solutions become available.

COMMUNICATION

Issued: December 23, 2019

Policy:

The Grand's customer service policies and procedures take a person's disability into account when communicating with the individual. Two-way communication is a process of providing, sending, receiving and understanding information. To communicate in an effective way, Grand employees and volunteers consider how the disability affects the way that the person expresses, receives or processes communications. Where possible, the Grand employee or volunteer asks the patron directly the best way to communicate with them.

Procedures:

The theatre uses a variety of ways, wherever possible, to make communications more accessible by:

- Considering the needs of people with disabilities during the planning stage or services and communication development
- Using plain language to make a document easier to read for people with certain learning disabilities.
- Offering information in alternate formats:
 - Passing hand-written or typed information back and forth
 - Printed hand-outs of commonly used information
 - Magnifying sheets for reading
 - Email as an alternate channel to provide accessible communication

The Grand is continuing to research new technologies and is committing to improving the communications options available to patrons with disabilities.

SERVICE ANIMALS

Issued: December 23, 2019

Policy:

The Grand Theatre welcomes patrons with disabilities who are accompanied by a trained, accredited service animal. A service animal may accompany a patron or any third party with a disability to all parts of the premises that are open to the public. Service animals may be used for, but not limited to, the following disabilities: vision loss, physical disability, hearing loss, autism, epilepsy etc. Although service animals are most commonly dogs, other trained accredited service animals could include other types of animals. The Grand ensures that all employees, volunteers and others dealing with public are properly trained in how to interact with people with disabilities, who are accompanied by a service animal.

Procedure:

To be considered a service animal under this standard, it must either be readily apparent that the animal is being used because of a person's disability or the person with a disability may be asked to provide a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that it is required because of their disability. The Grand enforces a general policy that does not permit pets on the premises, however, service animals are not considered pets – they are working animals. They are used by people with disabilities to overcome barriers much like assistive devices such as a white cane or a wheelchair.

Guide dogs or other trained accredited service animals, including those in training, are allowed to accompany people with disabilities on the theatre premises open to the public. If a patron with a service animal is intending to see a performance they need to advise the Box Office representative when purchasing tickets so that an appropriate seat (aisle or special access) may be assigned. The House Manager and Stage Manager of the performance will also be advised that a service animal will be in the theatre.

At times, due to capacity, patrons with disabilities accompanied by service animals may be advised that the crowded conditions may make it difficult to manoeuvre. If the service animal is

causing a disturbance for other visitors, the patron and accompanying service animal may be required to leave the area or Grand premises. The owner is responsible to “stoop and scoop”. Patrons bringing a service animal should review any patron advisories about special effects that are in a production that may affect their service animal (e.g. noise, lights, other animals, etc.).

This information may not be known at the time of booking, but can be confirmed by the box office staff and/or on-site staff closer to the date of the performance. The Grand anticipates there will be special situations and is prepared to make every effort to accommodate the circumstances on an individual basis as they arise, keeping safety to all patrons and service animals in mind.

For more information, patrons may contact our Box Office staff at 519 672 8800 or speak directly to an on-site staff member or volunteer when they visit our premises.

SUPPORT PERSONS

Issued: December 23, 2019

Policy:

The Grand Theatre is committed to welcoming patrons with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person. Any person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person is allowed to enter the Grand’s premises with their support person. At no time will a person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person be prevented from having access to their support person while on the Grand premises.

A support person is an individual hired or chosen by a person with a disability to provide services or assistance with communication, mobility, personal care, medical needs or with access to goods or services.

Procedure:

Each patron with a disability and their accompanying support person attending a performance or event is required to have a valid ticket to that performance or event. Admission prices will be charged for both attendees based on the location of the seating section chosen.

Complimentary admission for one support person accompanying a patron with a valid CNIB card or an Access2 card will be granted. Such bookings must be made directly with Box Office staff in-person, over the phone, or by email. The Grand will consider additional requests on a case by case basis.

Patrons may contact the Grand Box Office at 519 672 8800 for more information, or to request that their situation be considered.

TEMPORARY DISRUPTION OF SERVICE

Issued: December 23, 2019

Policy:

The Grand Theatre is aware that temporary disruptions of services (daily functions – elevators, physical operations) and programs may occur due to reasons that may or may not be within the Grand's control or knowledge. These disruptions of service may be particularly challenging for patrons with a disability.

The Grand will make all reasonable efforts to provide advance notice of the disruption to the public, including information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration and a description of alternative facilities or services, if any, that may be available.

Advance notice of a disruption of services will be made, if possible, through the following communication channels, as appropriate;

- The Grand Theatre website: www.grandtheatre.com
- Temporary on-site signage
- Social Media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter)

In the event of an unexpected disruption, advance notice may not be possible. In such cases, the Grand will provide on-site signage. Staff and volunteers will be kept informed through pre-shift meetings and emails as appropriate. Patrons with a disability who are inconvenienced, or cannot access the theatre premises due to a temporary disruption of service should speak to a Box Office representative or House Manager for assistance and accommodation.

FEEDBACK

Issued: December 23, 2019

Policy:

The Grand Theatre values feedback from its patrons and has established processes in place to receive and respond to such feedback, the theatre welcomes feedback from patrons with accessibility needs about their experience at the Grand, and the quality of their interactions with Grand employees and volunteers.

Procedures:

Patrons with accessibility needs can offer their feedback in the following ways:

- Mail correspondence to:
- Executive Director, 471 Richmond Street London, ON N6A 3E4
- E-mail to: dharvey@grandtheatre.com
- Telephone customer service at: 519 672 8800
- In person to theatre staff, management or volunteers

Patrons providing feedback will be asked to provide their name and contact information (phone, e-mail and/or address)

Once feedback is received, the following actions will be taken:

- The feedback will be directed to the appropriate person.
- The feedback will be assessed for appropriate action.

- A response, if required, will be made in a timely manner.

The feedback process is readily available to the public through:

- A notice on the website;
- A sign in all theatre locations;
- A document describing the feedback process, available on request in different formats.

TRAINING

Issued: December 23, 2019

Policy:

The Grand Theatre provides training to all employees and volunteers who work with patrons and all those who are involved in the development and approvals of customer service policies and procedures on providing goods and services to visitors with disabilities. The Grand also ensures that contracted third parties who deal with the public, have the required AODA training.

Procedures:

Individuals in the following positions will be trained by the theatre:

- Board of Directors
- Senior Management Staff
- Customer Service Staff
- Front Line Staff
- Volunteers

Training on servicing patrons with disabilities will supplement the larger training program, which includes basic orientation, training of effective communication, general customer service expectations, and specific Grand policies and procedures. A variety of training methods may be employed, including formal and informal sessions, presentations, e-training, hand outs, fact sheets and videos, depending on the type of position.

The training content, required by the Customer Service Standard, includes no less than the following:

- The Grand's commitment to access and customers with disabilities
- The history of the legislation and the purposes of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and the requirements of the customer service standard.
- How to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities
- How to interact with people with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or a support person
- How to use the assistive devices provided by the Grand
- What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing the Grand's goods and services.

- The Grand's policies and procedures relating to the customer service standard.
- On-going training in connection with any changes to the theatre's policies and procedures governing the provision of goods and services to people with disabilities.

Training records are kept for staff and volunteers who have completed training and include the name, date and content. An evaluation process is in place for continuous improvement in training content and delivery. Staff and volunteers receive training as soon as practicable, after an employee or volunteer commences their duties as well as training updates as applicable.

A sustainability plan for ongoing training has been developed and includes:

- Budget guidelines
- Resources
- Incorporating access into the orientation program
- Training updates

POSTING OF POLICIES

Issued: December 23, 2019

Policy:

Notices will be posted, informing the public that the documents required by the Customer Service Standard are available upon request and will be provided in a format that takes a person's disability into account.

Procedures:

Documents are available through the following networks, as appropriate:

- Website: www.grandtheatre.com
- Intranet and employee bulletin boards for staff and volunteers
- At the Box Office and House Manager's Office
- From the Box Office at 519 672 8800