

## What You Need to Know About Customers with Speech or Language Impairments

Some people have problems communicating. It could be the result of cerebral palsy, hearing loss, or another condition that makes it difficult to pronounce words, causes slurring or stuttering, or not being able to express oneself or understand written or spoken language. Some people who have severe difficulties may use communication boards or other assistive devices.

Here are some tips on serving customers with speech or language impairments:

- Just because a person has one disability doesn't mean they have another. For example, if a customer has difficulty speaking; don't assume they have an intellectual or developmental disability as well.
- If you don't understand, ask your customer to repeat the information.
- If you are able, ask questions that can be answered 'yes' or 'no'.
- Be patient and polite, and give your customer whatever time he/she needs to get his/her point across.
- Don't interrupt or finish your customer's sentences. Wait for them to finish.
- Patience, respect and a willingness to find a way to communicate are your best tools.