



# **Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation:**

**A Training Booklet for Small Private and  
Not-for-Profit Organizations**

February 2023

## Disclaimer

Completion of this AccessForward training course by an individual should not be construed as compliance by them or their organization with the AODA and its regulation.

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This training resource is not legal advice and should you require assistance in interpreting the legislation or the regulation, please contact your legal adviser. This resource has been created to assist in understanding the legislation and/or regulation and does not replace the official version of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation, Ontario Regulation 191/11 and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA). If there is any conflict between this resource, the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation and the AODA, the regulation and the AODA are the final authorities.

This resource may be used for non-commercial, not-for-profit purposes only in assisting organizations in meeting the training requirements under section 7 and section 80.49 of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation 191/11.

A glossary of terms used in this booklet is available on the AccessForward website at:  
<https://accessforward.ca/additional-training-resources/>

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# Introduction

## About this Training Booklet

### Who can use this booklet for training?

This booklet can be used by small private and not-for-profit organizations with 1-49 employees to complete the required accessibility training for their employees and volunteers<sup>1</sup>. It's an additional format option if you prefer not to use the AccessForward training modules or don't have access to a computer.

### What does this booklet cover?

It covers the requirements specific to small private and not-for-profit organizations with 1-49 employees. It can be used for the required training on:

- accessible customer service, and
- work-related training on the other accessibility requirements

This booklet does not include training on the Ontario Human Rights Code as it relates to people with disabilities, which is also a training requirement. Please refer to Appendix A for information about free training resources for the Ontario Human Rights Code.

### When must training be completed?

Training must be completed as soon as possible after an employee or volunteer joins your organization. Training must also be provided when there are any changes to your accessibility policies.

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*Footnote 1: In addition to the training covered in this booklet, educators and transportation service providers have additional training requirements under Ontario's accessibility law (Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation, under sections 16 and 36). This booklet does not address those requirements.*

# About the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) is about identifying, removing and preventing barriers to inclusion for people with disabilities. Since the act was passed, the government has collaborated with the disability community, businesses and other partners to develop accessibility standards in key areas of daily life. The AODA's main goal is to achieve accessibility in Ontario by 2025 by developing, implementing and enforcing these standards. We will continue to review the AODA regularly to improve the lives of Ontarians beyond 2025 and consider new accessibility standards or amend existing ones.

These standards are rules that businesses and organizations in Ontario must follow to identify, remove and prevent barriers so that people with disabilities will have more opportunities to participate in everyday life. Standards address key areas of daily life, such as customer service, information and communications, and employment.

The accessibility standards are contained in one regulation under the AODA called the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation, also known as the IASR.

# Compliance

## Who has to comply with the regulation?

Every business and organization operating in Ontario that:

- provides goods, services or facilities to the public or other organizations, and
- has at least one employee in Ontario.

Under the regulation, organizations are divided into five categories:

1. The Government of Ontario and the Legislative Assembly
2. Large designated public sector organizations\* with 50 or more employees
3. Small designated public sector organizations\* with 1 to 49 employees
4. Large private or not-for-profit organizations with 50 or more employees
5. Small private or not-for-profit organizations with 1 to 49 employees

*\*Such as municipalities, hospitals, universities, colleges of applied arts and technology, district school boards, and organizations that provide public transportation*

# Accessible Customer Service Training

## (Customer Service Standard)

### What's covered

This part of the booklet covers these required training topics:

- the purpose of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005
- overview of the requirements of the Customer Service Standard
- how to interact 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 support person
- what to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing your goods, services or facilities<sup>2</sup>

### What's not covered

The following required training topics are unique to each organization and are not covered in this booklet, but you need to know about:

- your organization's policies on providing accessible customer service, and when any changes are made to those policies
- how to use any equipment or devices available in your organization that may help to provide accessible customer service to people with disabilities

### Who must be trained on providing accessible customer service?

- All employees and volunteers (including paid, unpaid, full-time, part-time and contract positions)
- Anyone involved in developing your organization's policies (including managers, senior leaders, directors, board members and owners), and
- Anyone who provides goods, services or facilities<sup>2</sup> to customers on your organization's behalf (such as, external contact centres or facilities management companies)
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*Footnote 2: "Facilities" in this case, refers to rooms or spaces used to provide a service (e.g., stadium or banquet hall). It does not refer to the physical structure of a building.*

# Purpose of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (or AODA ) is a provincial law. The AODA helps identify, remove and prevent barriers to inclusion for people with disabilities in Ontario. Its main goal is to achieve accessibility by developing, implementing and enforcing accessibility standards in key areas of daily life. These accessibility standards help move Ontario forward on its journey to create a more accessible and inclusive province. We will continue to work with the disability community, businesses and other partners beyond 2025 to ensure the act meets the needs of all Ontarians.

## Accessibility standards

The accessibility standards are the legal requirements that organizations in Ontario must follow to become more accessible to people with disabilities. They address key areas of daily life, including:

- customer service
- information and communications
- employment
- transportation
- design of public spaces

The standards are found in the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation which was established under the Act.

## Who must comply

The standards must be followed by

- the Ontario government and Legislative Assembly
- all designated public sector organizations, which include municipalities, universities, colleges, hospitals, school boards and public transportation organizations
- private businesses and not-for-profit organizations that have one or more employees in Ontario

### **What is a customer?**

A customer can be anyone who is accessing your organization's goods, services or facilities. They may include paying and non-paying members of the public, and individuals your organization might call customers, such as clients, members, patrons or patients. Customers can also be other businesses or organizations (also referred to as "third parties").

### **Definition of Disability and Being Alert to Barriers**

The Act uses the same definition of "disability" as the Ontario Human Rights Code, which includes physical disabilities, as well as vision, hearing, speech, developmental, learning and mental health disabilities. A disability can be temporary or permanent.

When you think about accessibility, be aware of both visible and non-visible barriers. Structural barriers such as stairs or doorways often come to mind first, but sometimes a certain process or policy can create barriers unintentionally. Or providing information in a format that may not be accessible to everyone can create a barrier. Attitudinal barriers can be based on stereotypes or lack of understanding, but they are within our power to change.

## **Requirements of the Customer Service Standard**

To provide accessible customer service, your organization must:

### **Create accessible customer service policies**

- Set up policies on providing accessible customer service to people with disabilities according to the requirements of the standard.
- Make reasonable efforts to ensure that these policies are consistent with the key principles of independence, dignity, integration and equality of opportunity.

### **Consider a person's disability when communicating with them**

- Communicate with a person with a disability in a way that takes into account their disability.

### **Allow assistive devices**

- Let people with disabilities use their personal assistive devices when accessing your goods, services or facilities.
- Identify the availability, if any, of other helpful measures your organization offers for people with disabilities to access your goods, services or facilities.

### **Allow service animals**

- Let people with disabilities bring their service animals with them into areas open to the public or third parties.
- In situations where the animal is prohibited by another law, provide another way for the person to access your goods, services or facilities.

### **Welcome support persons**

- Let people with disabilities bring their support persons with them while in areas open to the public or third parties.
- If your organization charges an admission fee or fare, let people know ahead of time what, if any, admission will be charged for a support person.
- When, in limited situations, your organization might require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person for health or safety reasons, the decision must be made by consulting with the person and considering available evidence. If it's determined a support person is required, waive any fee or fare for the support person, if one exists.

### **Inform the public when accessible facilities or services are temporarily unavailable**

- Let the public know when facilities or services that people with disabilities usually use are temporarily unavailable (for example, an elevator or accessible washroom that is out of service).
- Notice must include the reason for the disruption, how long it will last and of any alternatives, if available.

### **Invite customers to provide feedback**

- Set up a process for receiving and responding to feedback about the way your organization provides customer service to people with disabilities, including what action will be taken if a complaint is received.
- Make information about your feedback process available to the public.
- Ensure your feedback process is accessible by providing accessible formats or communication supports on request.

**Train your staff and others**

- Train all employees and volunteers on providing accessible customer service and how to interact with people with various types of disabilities.

# Serving People with Disabilities

## Introduction

Accessible customer service is about

- not making assumptions about what a person can or cannot do because of their disability
- inclusion – making everyone feel welcome and included
- understanding that people with disabilities may have different needs
- Serving customers with disabilities is also about showing sensitivity and respect. A good starting point is using appropriate language and terminology.

### Use the right words

- Use “disability” not “handicapped”.
- Remember to put people first. Say “person with a disability” rather than “disabled person”.
- Avoid sympathetic statements such as victim of, suffers with, confined to a wheelchair, physically challenged, or stricken with a particular illness or disability.

### People with physical or mobility disabilities

Only some people with physical disabilities use a wheelchair. Someone with arthritis may use a cane or walker, while someone with a heart or lung condition may not use a mobility device but may have difficulty walking longer distances.

#### Tips:

- Ask before you help. People with disabilities often have their own ways of doing things.
- Don't touch or move a person's equipment (e.g., walker, wheelchair) without permission.
- If you have permission to move a person's wheelchair, don't leave them in an awkward, dangerous or undignified position, such as facing a wall or in the path of opening doors.
- If you need to have a lengthy conversation with someone who uses a wheelchair or scooter, consider sitting so you can make eye contact at the same level.

- Think ahead and remove any items that may cause a physical barrier, such as boxes left in an aisle.
- If the service counter at your place of business is too high for a person using a wheelchair to see over, step around it to provide service. Have a clipboard handy if filling in forms or if a signature is required.
- Keep in mind that a person's physical disability may not be visible or obvious. For example, a person may have difficulty standing for long periods of time and may ask to sit while waiting to be served.

## People with vision loss

Vision loss can restrict someone's ability to read documents or signs, locate landmarks or see hazards. Some people may use a guide dog, a white cane, or a support person such as a sighted guide, but others may not.

### Tips:

- When you know someone has vision loss, don't assume the individual can't see you. Not everyone with vision loss is totally blind, many have some vision.
- Identify yourself when you approach and speak directly to your customer if they are with a companion.
- Ask if they would like you to read any printed information out loud to them, such as a menu, a bill or schedule of fees.
- When providing directions or instructions, be precise and descriptive.
- Offer your elbow to guide them if needed. If they accept, lead – don't pull.
- Identify landmarks or other details to orient the person to the surroundings. For example, if you're approaching stairs or an obstacle, say so.
- If you need to leave the customer, let them know by telling them you'll be back or saying good-bye.
- Don't leave your customer in the middle of a room – guide them to a comfortable location.

## People with hearing loss

People who have hearing loss may identify in different ways. They may be deaf, oral deaf, deafened, or hard of hearing. These terms are used to describe different levels of hearing or the way a person's hearing was diminished or lost.

A person with hearing loss may have preferred ways to communicate, for example, through sign language, by lip reading or using a pen and paper.

### Tips:

- Once the customer has self-identified as having hearing loss, make sure you face the customer when talking and that you are in a well-lit area so the person can see you clearly.
- As needed, attract the person's attention before speaking. Try a gentle touch on the shoulder or wave of your hand.
- Maintain eye contact. Use body language, gestures and facial expression to help you communicate.
- If the person uses a hearing aid, reduce background noise or if possible, move to a quieter area.
- If necessary, ask if another method of communicating would be easier, for example, using a pen and paper.
- When using a sign language interpreter, look and speak directly to the customer, not to the interpreter. For example, say "What would you like?" not "Ask her what she'd like."

## People who are deafblind

A person who is deafblind has some degree of both hearing and vision loss. People who are deafblind are often accompanied by an intervenor, a professional support person who helps with communication. Intervenors are trained in special sign language that involves touching the hands of the client.

### Tips:

- Speak directly to your customer, not to the intervenor.
- The customer is likely to explain to you how to communicate with them or give you an assistance card or a note.

## People with speech or language disabilities

Cerebral palsy, stroke, hearing loss or other conditions may make it difficult for a person to pronounce words or express themselves. Some people who have severe difficulties may use a communication board or other assistive devices.

### Tips:

- Don't assume that a person who has difficulty speaking doesn't understand you.
- Speak directly to the customer and not to their companion or support person.
- Whenever possible, ask questions that can be answered "yes" or "no."
- If the person uses a communication device, take a moment to read visible instructions for communicating with them.
- Be patient. Don't interrupt or finish your customer's sentences.
- Confirm what the person has said by summarizing or repeating what you've understood and allow the person to respond – don't pretend if you're not sure.
- If necessary, provide other ways for the customer to contact you, such as email.

## People with learning disabilities

The term "learning disabilities" refers to a range of disorders. One example is dyslexia, which affects how a person takes in or retains information. This disability may become apparent when the person has difficulty reading material or understanding the information you are providing.

People with learning disabilities just learn in a different way.

### Tips:

- Be patient and allow extra time if needed. People with some learning disabilities may take a little longer to process information, or to understand and respond.
- Try to provide information in a way that works for your customer. For example, some people with learning disabilities find written words difficult to understand, while others may have problems with numbers and math.
- Be willing to rephrase or explain something again in another way, if needed.

## People with developmental disabilities

Developmental disabilities (such as Down syndrome) or intellectual disabilities, can mildly or profoundly limit a person's ability to learn, communicate, do every day physical activities or live independently.

### Tips:

- Don't make assumptions about what a person can or cannot do.
- Don't exaggerate your speech or speak in a patronizing way.
- Use plain language.
- Provide one piece of information at a time.
- If you're not sure of what is being said to you, confirm by summarizing or repeating what was said, or politely ask them to repeat it – don't pretend if you're not sure.
- Ask the customer if they would like help reading your material or completing a form and wait for them to accept the offer of assistance.
- Be patient and allow extra time if needed.

## People with mental health disabilities

Mental health disability is a broad term for many disorders that can range in severity. A person with a mental health disability may experience depression or acute mood swings, anxiety due to phobias or panic disorder, or hallucinations. It may affect a person's ability to think clearly, concentrate or remember things.

You may not know someone has this disability unless you are told. Stigma and lack of understanding are major barriers for people with mental health disabilities.

### Tips:

- If you sense or know that a customer has a mental health disability, treat them with the same respect and consideration you have for everyone else.
- Be confident, calm and reassuring.
- Listen carefully, and work with the customer to meet their needs.
- Respect your customer's personal space.
- Limit distractions that could affect your customer's ability to focus or concentrate – loud noise, crowded areas and interruptions could cause stress.
- Respond to the person's immediate behaviour and needs. Don't be confrontational. If needed, set limits with the person as you would others. For example, "If you scream, I will not be able to talk to you."

## People who use service animals

There are various types of service animals who support people with various types of disabilities.

- People with vision loss may use a guide dog.
- Hearing alert animals help people with hearing loss.
- Other service animals are trained to alert a person to an oncoming seizure, or to assist people with autism, mental health disabilities, physical disabilities and other disabilities.

Under the Customer Service Standard, there are no restrictions on what type of animal can be used as a service animal.

An animal is considered a service animal if:

- you can easily identify it's a service animal through visual indicators, such as when it wears a harness or vest, or
- the person with a disability provides documentation from a regulated health professional<sup>1</sup> that confirms they need the service animal for reasons relating to their disability

### Tips:

- Don't touch or distract a service animal, it's not a pet. It's a working animal and has to pay attention at all times.
- If you're not sure if the animal is a pet or a service animal, you may ask your customer. You may ask to see their documentation from a regulated health professional.
- The customer is responsible for the care and supervision of their service animal. However, you can provide water for the animal if your customer requests it.

### **If another person's health or safety could be seriously impacted by the presence of a service animal, such as a severe allergy**

Consider all options and try to find a solution that meets the needs of both people. For example:

- creating distance between the two people
- eliminating in-person contact
- changing the time the two receive service
- any other way that would allow the person to use their service animal on the premises

### **If you can't easily identify that it's a service animal**

- Don't make assumptions. You can ask the person to provide documentation (such as a letter, note or form) from a regulated health professional<sup>3</sup> that states that they require the animal because of their disability.
- If the person shows you the documentation, then they must be allowed to be accompanied by their service animal.
- The person is not required to disclose their disability or demonstrate how the animal assists them.

## **When a service animal is prohibited by another law**

The law requires you to allow a person to bring their service animal with them into areas of your premises open to the public or to third parties.

Areas are considered open to the public even if they are only open to those people who have paid an admission fee, are members, or have met certain eligibility or entrance requirements. This may include, for example, a fitness club, a hotel, taxicab, or a school.

In cases where another law prohibits a service animal from entering certain areas (for example, a service animal would not be allowed in the kitchen of a cooking school), provide another way for the person to access your services.

While a service animal may be prohibited from certain areas, service dogs are allowed in areas where food is sold, served or offered for sale. This includes a restaurant's public dining area.

### **Tips if the service animal is prohibited by another law:**

- Explain why to your customer, and discuss other ways to serve them, for example,
- leaving the service animal in a safe area where its allowed, and offering assistance to the person while they're separated from the animal, or
- serving the customer in another area where the animal is allowed
- Consider options ahead of time that you could offer when a service animal is prohibited.

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*Footnote 3: Defined as a member of one of the following: College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists of Ontario; College of Chiropractors of Ontario; College of Nurses of Ontario; College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario; College of Optometrists of Ontario; College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario; College of Physiotherapists of Ontario; College of Psychologists of Ontario*

### **Tips for decision makers – When an animal is prohibited by law**

- Identify if there are any areas of your premises where a service animal would be prohibited by law, and if so, identify the law in your accessible customer service policy and the area(s) where service animals are prohibited.
- Consider options ahead of time that you or your staff could offer when a service animal is prohibited.

## **People with a support person**

A support person can be a paid personal support worker, an intervenor, volunteer, family member or friend. A support person might help your customer with communication, mobility, personal care or with accessing your services.

A person with a disability is permitted to bring their support person with them to any area of your premises that is open to the public or to third parties.

If your organization charges for admission, such as a movie theatre, it must provide advance notice of what admission fee or fare, if any, will be charged for a support person, for example, through a prominently placed sign or a notice on your website.

### **Tips:**

- If you're not sure which person is the customer, take your lead from the person using or requesting service, or simply ask.
- Speak directly to your customer, not to their support person.
- If your organization charges an admission fee or fare, be familiar with its policy on fees or fares for support persons.
- It's good practice to confirm with your customer that they want the support person to be present while confidential matters are being discussed.

### **For decision makers – When it may be necessary to require a support person**

In limited situations, you may require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person for health or safety reasons. You must first consult with the person with a disability and consider available evidence before you determine that:

- a support person is necessary to protect the health or safety of the person with a disability or the health or safety of others on the premises; and
- there is no other reasonable way to protect the health or safety of the person with a disability or the health or safety of others on the premises.

In such a situation, you must waive the admission fee or fare for the support person, if one exists.

**Tip:**

- Identify ahead of time if there are situations where a support person might be required to accompany a person with a disability for health or safety reasons and consider how you would handle such situations.

## People who use assistive devices

An assistive device is a piece of equipment a person with a disability uses to help with daily living, for example, a wheelchair or walker, white cane, hearing aid, an oxygen tank or communication board.

**Tips:**

- Don't touch or handle any assistive device without permission.
- Don't move assistive devices or equipment (such as canes, walkers) out of the person's reach.

If your organization offers equipment or devices that can help customers with disabilities access your services, make sure you know how to use them. It may be helpful to have instruction manuals handy or an instruction sheet posted where the device is located or stored.

Some examples of devices that your organization might offer include:

- mobility devices, such as a manual wheelchair or motorized scooter
- lift, which raises or lowers people who use mobility devices
- technology that makes it easier for people with disabilities to communicate or access information, such as certain computer software, an amplification system or a TTY phone line
- adjustable desk or workstation, which changes the height or tilt of a writing surface
- accessible interactive kiosk, which might offer information or services in braille or through audio headsets.

## Serving people with disabilities – At home or over the phone

### Tips for providing at-home service:

- Don't arrive unexpectedly. Confirm your arrival time in advance.
- Respect requests made by a customer with a disability to accommodate their needs. For example, a person with an environmental sensitivity may require that you refrain from wearing scented products in their home.
- Be patient. You may need to wait a few moments for your customer to open the door.
- Introduce yourself. Some customers may not be able to read identification cards and may want you to use a password. Check before you visit.
- Keep your customer informed of what you're doing.
- Make sure that you leave the home exactly as it was when you arrived. For example, someone with vision loss will expect that their furniture is in the same place and could trip if you've moved the sofa.

### Tips for providing over-the-phone service:

- Speak naturally, clearly and directly.
- Don't interrupt or finish your customer's sentences. Give your customer time to explain or respond.
- If you're not sure what is being said to you, politely ask the customer to repeat it, or repeat or rephrase what you heard and ask if you have understood correctly.
- If the customer is using an interpreter or a telephone relay service, speak naturally to the customer, not to the interpreter.
- If you encounter a situation where, after numerous attempts, you and your customer cannot communicate with each other, consider making alternate arrangements that may work best for them.

## If there are difficulties accessing your goods, services or facilities

If you notice that your customer is having difficulty accessing your goods, services or facilities, a good starting point is to ask "How can I help you?"

Often, there are simple solutions. For example,

**Your customer uses a wheelchair and cannot enter your shop because of a step at the door.**

You could offer to serve the customer at the door, at another more convenient location, by phone, or deliver to their home. You might also consider low-cost solutions such as a portable ramp that can be set out at your shop entrance on request and if suitable to the situation.

**Your customer with hearing loss has a question.**

Ask the customer in writing if using a pen and paper to communicate would be a good way to serve him. Remember, if you're discussing confidential information, offer to return the notes to the customer or to destroy them.

**Your customer can't reach some of your products because the displays or shelves are too high to reach from their scooter.**

Offer to bring the products to the customer.

**The menu cannot be read by a customer with low vision or a learning disability.**

Offer to read the menu out loud or post the menu online so they can access it beforehand.

**Your customer has a mental health disability that makes it difficult for her to be in crowded spaces with other people. She explains her disability-related needs when she enters your reception area.**

Offer her a place to wait her turn for service in an area apart from other customers.

**Your organization doesn't have automatic door openers.**

Be prepared to help open the door.

Your customers are your best source for information about their needs. Being flexible and open to suggestions will help to create a good customer experience. A solution can be simple and the customer will likely appreciate your attention and consideration.

# Work-Related Training on the Requirements of the Other Accessibility Standards

## What's covered

This part of the booklet covers these required training topics:

- General Requirements
- Information and Communications Standard
- Employment Standard
- Transportation Standard
- Design of Public Spaces Standard

Organizations must provide training on the requirements of the above standards as they relate to an individual's work duties.

The intent of this training is to provide people with an understanding of the requirements that may affect their duties and their organization's business practices.

## What's not covered

- This training is not about "how to" implement the requirements (putting the requirements into practice)
- You may require more in-depth knowledge of certain requirements depending your duties and responsibilities – and some people may need training on more requirements than others
- Resources to help your organization implement the requirements are available at the government of Ontario website: [Accessibility in Ontario | ontario.ca](http://www.ontario.ca/accessibility) ([www.ontario.ca/accessibility](http://www.ontario.ca/accessibility))

## Who must receive work-related training on the requirements?

- All employees and volunteers (including paid, unpaid, full-time, part-time and contract positions)
- Anyone involved in developing your organization's policies (including managers, senior leaders, directors and owners), and
- Anyone who provides goods, services or facilities on behalf of your organization (such as, external contact centres or facilities management companies)

# General Requirements

The Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation includes a section of general requirements that apply across all the standards in the regulation. Here are the general requirements.

## Training

In addition to accessible customer service training, organizations must provide training on the other requirements of the regulation as they relate to a person's duties – and on the Ontario Human Rights Code as it relates to people with disabilities.

This booklet does not include training on the Ontario Human Rights Code as it relates to people with disabilities, which is also a training requirement. Please refer to Appendix A for information about free training resources for the Ontario Human Rights Code

Your organization must train

- all existing and new employees and volunteers
- people who participate in developing your organization's policies
- other people who provide goods, services or facilities on your organization's behalf

In addition, training must be provided when your accessibility policies change.

Small organizations are not required to keep a record of the training provided.

## Accessibility policies

Under the Customer Service Standard, your organization must establish policies on providing accessible customer service to people with disabilities. In addition to those policies, your organization must develop accessibility policies describing what you do, or intend to do, to meet the other requirements of the regulation. These policies serve as rules that guide your organization's everyday practices.

### **An example of a policy might be:**

"Our organization will meet the information and communication needs of people with disabilities by providing, upon request, information and communications materials in accessible formats or with communication supports."

Small organizations are not required to document their accessibility policies in writing or make them publicly available.

## Self-service kiosks

A self-service kiosk is an interactive electronic terminal, such as a point-of-sale device you use at a grocery store checkout or for parking or fare payment. People with disabilities should be able to use a self-service kiosk as independently and securely as possible.

Your organization shall "have regard" for people with disabilities when designing, procuring, or acquiring self-service kiosks. This means organizations must consider what accessibility features they could build into their kiosks to best meet the needs of their customers and clients.

# Information and Communications Standard

In the information age, we all rely on easy access to information. The Information and Communications Standard outlines how organizations will be required to create, provide and receive information and communications in ways that are accessible for people with disabilities.

Here are the requirements:

## Accessible formats and communication supports

When requested, you must provide information and communications in an accessible manner to people with disabilities. Alternatives to standard print are often referred to as accessible formats, and ways to help communication between people are referred to as communication supports.

### Quick Fact

Some examples of accessible formats and communications supports: reading written information to a person directly, large print, text transcripts of audio or visual information, handwritten notes instead of spoken word, information written in plain language, an electronic document formatted to be accessible for use with a screen reader.

When a request is received, you must consult with the person to determine their accessibility needs. You have the flexibility to determine the most appropriate accessible format or communication support depending on the accessibility needs of the person and the capability of your organization to deliver.

Accessible formats and communication supports must be provided in a timely manner and at a cost that is not more than the regular costs charged to other people.

This requirement does not apply to:

- products and product labels
- information that you do not control directly or indirectly through a contract, unless your organization is involved in education or training as defined in the regulation
- information or communications that cannot be converted

When it's not possible to convert requested material, you need to provide the individual making the request with the following:

- an explanation as to why the information or communications are unconvertible, and
- a summary of the information or communications

### **Quick Fact**

Instances when information or communication might be unconvertible:

- the technology to convert the information is not readily available
- the information may be lost in the conversion process and cannot be conveyed in a meaningful way; for example, the visual information in an x-ray or architectural blueprint

## **Feedback processes**

Under the Customer Service Standard, organizations must establish a customer service feedback process for receiving and responding to feedback about how they provide goods, services or facilities to people with disabilities. Your organization may have other types

of external and internal feedback processes to receive and respond to the public and/or employees.

Under the Information and Communications Standard, if your organization has feedback processes in place, you must make them accessible. This may include

- arranging for accessible formats and communication supports on request
- notifying the public about the availability of accessible formats and communication supports

## Emergency procedures, plans or public safety information

If your organization provides emergency procedures, plans or public safety information to the public, you must provide these in an accessible format, on request.

Real-time emergency information (such as announcements and alarms) is not included in this requirement.

## Educational and training institutions

Are you an educational or training institution? If so, there are sections of the Information and Communications Standard that apply specifically to you.

Educational and training institutions such as:

- public and private elementary and secondary schools
- colleges and universities
- other educational and training organizations defined in the regulation

For more specific details of which educational and training institutions must comply, please refer to Appendix B.

Take a look at the sections below to see which, if any, apply to your organization.

## Educational and training resources and materials

If you belong to an educational or training institution and a student notifies you of a need due to a disability, you must provide learning resources or material, as well as student records and program information, in an accessible format that takes into account their accessibility needs.

You can provide the student with an accessible or conversion-ready electronic format, where available, or a comparable resource in an accessible or conversion-ready format if the resource cannot be obtained or converted into an accessible format.

## Training to educators

Educators need to know how to make their teaching accessible. Educational and training institutions must

- Provide educators with accessibility awareness training related to accessible course delivery and instruction
- Keep records of training provided, including the dates it was provided and number of individuals trained

## **Libraries of educational and training institutions**

Where available, libraries of educational or training institutions, as defined in the regulation, must provide an accessible or conversion-ready format of print, digital, or multimedia resources or materials, on request. However, there are a few exceptions. The following are exempt from the requirements: special collections, archival materials, rare books, and donations.

## **Producers of educational or training material**

Producers of educational or training textbooks and print-based learning resources who supply educational and training institutions must provide accessible or conversion-ready versions, when requested. Examples of producers include, but are not limited to, publishing companies, universities, and school boards.

# Employment Standard

The Ontario Human Rights Code requires all employers to meet the accommodation needs of employees with disabilities to the point of undue hardship. The Employment Standard builds on this requirement. It requires employers to have processes in place to determine an employee's accommodation needs. It addresses key processes in the life cycle of a job.

The requirements:

- apply to paid employees
- do not apply to volunteers and other non-paid individuals

Here are the requirements:

## Informing employees of supports

Employers must inform all employees, both new and existing, of their accessible employment practices. This includes, but is not limited to, policies on providing job accommodations that take into account an employee's accessibility needs due to disability. This will make all employees aware of how the organization will support them if they have a disability – or should they acquire a disability later in their career.

## Recruitment, assessment or selection process

When planning your accessible recruitment process, there are three requirements to follow:

- When advertising job positions, notify employees and the public that accommodations for job applicants with disabilities are available on request for your recruitment process.
- When inviting job applicants to participate in the selection process, inform them that accessibility accommodations are available on request for interviews and other selection processes.
- When offering a job to a successful applicant, inform them of your organization's policies on accommodating employees with disabilities.

## **Accessible formats and communication supports for employees**

Once hired, employees may request accessible formats and communication supports. This requirement is similar to those in the Information and Communications Standard. Employers must consult with employees to determine their accessibility needs and how best to accommodate them.

Accessible formats and communication supports can be requested for information required for the employee to perform their job, and information generally available to all employees.

## **Workplace emergency response information**

Employers must provide individualized workplace emergency response information to employees with disabilities if the disability makes it necessary, and the employer is aware of the need. With the employee's consent, you must ensure the information is shared with anyone designated to assist them in an emergency.

This information must be reviewed when:

- the employee moves to a different location in your organization
- the employee's overall accommodation needs are reviewed
- you review your organization's emergency response policies

## **Performance management, career development and advancement, and redeployment**

The standard requires that processes for performance management, career development, and redeployment take into account the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities.

These requirements apply only if the organization currently has these processes in place. Organizations are not required to establish these processes if they don't exist.

# Design of Public Spaces Standard

The Design of Public Spaces Standard sets requirements for specific features of our physical environment that will make it easier for people with disabilities to move through, use and enjoy what our communities have to offer.

## The scope of the requirements

The standard requires organizations to incorporate accessibility when:

- Building new public spaces, or
- Making planned significant alterations to existing public spaces.

Organizations are not required to retrofit public spaces to meet the requirements. This means that your organization is not required to alter its public spaces if it has no plans to do so.

Accessibility for elements related to buildings, for example, building entrances, washrooms and barrier-free paths of travel, are not addressed in this standard. They are addressed through Ontario's Building Code.

## Who must comply - owner or leaseholder?

The standard states that the organization that must comply with the requirements is the one that has authority or approval to build on or make planned significant alterations to the public space, but not necessarily an organization that may have approved the construction or otherwise have an interest in the property.

This may not necessarily be the owner of the land but could be the leaseholder or operator.

## Recreational trails and beach access routes

### What are recreational trails?

- Recreational trails are public pedestrian trails intended for recreational and leisure purposes, such as walking through a park or enjoying nature.
- It does not include wilderness trails, back country trails and portage routes, or trails only meant for cross-country skiing, mountain biking, or driving motorized recreational vehicles, such as snowmobiles and all-terrain vehicles.

## What are beach access routes?

- Beach access routes help people get to a public beach area. They are often constructed pathways, allowing people to access a beach from a parking lot, trail, or picnic area.
- They include both permanent and temporary routes (e.g., routes which may be removed for the winter months).

## Consultation requirements for recreational trails

When building new recreational trails, or making planned significant alterations to existing ones, organizations must consult with the public and people with disabilities to help determine particular trail features that affect the intended experience of the trail.

Municipalities must also consult with their accessibility advisory committee if one has been established.

Features you must consult on include:

- The trail's slope
- The need for and location of ramps on the trail, and
- The need for, location of, and design of rest areas, passing areas, viewing areas, amenities and other features on the trail

Your organization does not need to consult about beach access routes.

## Technical requirements for recreational trails and beach access routes

When building new or making planned significant alterations to existing recreational trails and beach access routes, your organization must follow certain technical requirements, including:

- Minimum width and height clearance measurements
- Surface characteristics

If your organization plans to add a boardwalk or ramp to a trail or beach access route, similar technical requirements apply.

# Accessible parking

## Requirements for accessible off-street parking

### What is off-street parking?

Off-street parking includes open and covered lots for short term parking by the public, such as a hair salon’s customer parking lot or an underground parking garage at a shopping centre. People may or may not need to pay to use off-street parking facilities.

When building new or making planned significant alterations to existing off-street parking facilities, certain technical requirements must be followed. For example:

- Off-street parking facilities must include two types of accessible parking spaces when two or more accessible spaces are required:
  - a wider space with signage that identifies the space as “van accessible”, and
  - a standard-width space
- Off-street parking facilities must include a minimum number of each type of accessible parking space, depending on the total number of parking spaces, as outlined in the standard. For example, where there are 1 to 12 parking spaces, the one accessible parking space required must be a wider space; where there are 13 to 100 parking spaces, four per cent must be accessible spaces, with generally equal numbers of wider spaces and standard spaces.
- Accessible parking spaces must have access aisles (a space between parking spaces) with a minimum width that provides people with disabilities the space to get in and out of their vehicles.
- Each accessible parking space must be identified with current signage requirements found in Regulation 581 (Accessible Parking for Persons with Disabilities) under the Highway Traffic Act.

## Obtaining services

The standard includes requirements for making service counters, fixed queuing guides and waiting areas accessible to people with disabilities. These elements can be located both inside and outside of buildings. It is important to note that these elements are not covered by Ontario’s Building Code.

### Service counters

When building new or replacing existing service counters, at least one service counter must be made accessible to people who use mobility aids, such as wheelchairs. You can make the counter accessible by making sure it:

- Is useable by someone sitting in a mobility aid, and
- Has enough clear space in front for a person using a mobility aid to approach the counter.

A queuing area is a place where people line up for services.

If your organization has one queuing line for several service counters, such as a coffee shop, each service counter must be accessible.

If your organization offers different types of service counters, each with its own queuing line, such as a regular and express line, you must make sure at least one of each type of service counter is accessible.

Where there are multiple queuing lines and service counters you must clearly identify all your accessible service counters with signage.

### **Fixed queuing guides**

Fixed queuing guides are permanent or built-in fixtures that require people to line up and follow a set path.

When installing new fixed queuing guides, you must make sure:

- The queuing area is wide enough for people using mobility aids, such as wheelchairs, and mobility assistive devices, such as canes, crutches and walkers, to move through the line, including when the line changes direction.
- People who are blind or have low vision can find the queuing guides with a cane.

### **Waiting areas**

When building new or making planned significant alterations to your organization's existing waiting areas that have seating fixed to the floor, you must make sure that at least three per cent of the new seating space is accessible (but there must be at least one accessible seating space).

Accessible seating means a space in the waiting area where someone using a mobility aid, such as a wheelchair, can wait to receive service in the same area as other customers or patrons.

For more information about the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation:

- View the entire regulation at: **[www.ontario.ca/e-laws](http://www.ontario.ca/e-laws)**, and search for "Integrated Accessibility Standards" or "Ontario Regulation 191/11".
- Refer to the Guide to the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation available at the Government of Ontario website at: **[www.ontario.ca/document/how-comply-integrated-accessibility-standards-regulation](http://www.ontario.ca/document/how-comply-integrated-accessibility-standards-regulation)**

# Appendix A: Resources for the Ontario Human Rights Code

## **Ontario Human Rights Code – Working Together training module**

The video-based training module on the Code as it relates to people with disabilities was developed to address the requirement under section 7 of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation. It's available on the Ontario Human Rights Commission website:

**[www.ohrc.on.ca/en/learning/working-together-ontario-human-rights-code-and-accessibility-ontarians-disabilities-act](http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/learning/working-together-ontario-human-rights-code-and-accessibility-ontarians-disabilities-act)**.

## **Disability and Human Rights brochure**

An easy-to-read brochure outlining the requirements of the Code as it relates to people with disabilities. It can be used as a supplementary resource, or small organizations might use it to train their employees and volunteers.

Available at the Ontario Human Rights Commission website at:

**[www.ohrc.on.ca/en/disability-and-human-rights](http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/disability-and-human-rights)**.

## **Policy and guidelines on disability and the duty to accommodate**

A comprehensive document providing guidance on interpreting and understanding the provisions of the Code related to people with disabilities. It sets out how individuals, employers, service providers, policymakers and others should make sure they and their organizations comply with the Code.

Go to: **[www.ohrc.on.ca/en/policy-and-guidelines-disability-and-duty-accommodate](http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/policy-and-guidelines-disability-and-duty-accommodate)**.

# Appendix B: List of Educational and Training Institutions

The educational and training institutions that must comply with those sections of the Information and Communications Standard that apply specifically to them:

- organizations that are governed by the Education Act or the Ontario Career Colleges Act, 2005
- organizations that offer all or part of a post-secondary program leading to a degree pursuant to a consent granted under the Post-secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act, 2000
- designated public sector organizations (colleges and universities) described in paragraph 3 or 4 of Schedule 1 of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation
- public or private organizations that provide courses or programs or both that result in the acquisition by students of a diploma or certificate named by the Minister of Education under paragraph 1 of subsection 8 (1) of the Education Act
- a private school within the meaning of the Education Act

## Disclaimer

Completion of this AccessForward training course by an individual should not be construed as compliance by them or their organization with the AODA and its regulation.

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