

**MINISTRY OF COMMUNITY SAFETY AND CORRECTIONAL
SERVICES**



2008-2009 Accessibility Plan

Reviewed/Approved By:

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Introduction

Ontario is making progress toward building an accessible province by 2025. The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) has laid the foundation to meet this goal. Under the act, Ontario is developing standards that will remove the barriers faced by people with disabilities.

On January 1, 2008, the first accessibility standard under the act came into force. Through the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, people of all abilities will be able to get the service they need. Public sector organizations, including the Ontario government, will need to comply with this standard by 2010. Private sector and non-profit organizations will need to comply by 2012.

Next year, more standards will be released in other important areas, including:

- Information and communications
- Transportation
- Employment
- The built environment.

The Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services' sixth annual accessibility plan highlights 2007-2008's achievements to break down barriers for people with disabilities. It also outlines this ministry's commitments in the coming year to make programs, policies and services more accessible for all Ontarians.

The ministry has continued to focus on education and raising awareness. In 2007-2008, over 503 managers received in-person training on employment accommodation and return to work, bringing the total to over 1,900 since 2003. In addition, as of October 1, 2008, 2,192 managers and supervisors (87%) participated in the mandatory online training module "ODA: Maximizing the Contribution of Employees with Disabilities".

This year, the ministry developed and began implementing a strategy to raise awareness and engage employees, in particular employees with disabilities, in accessibility planning activities in the ministry. As a result, accessibility planning information, tools and resources are now available to all employees on the ministry's intranet site.

The ministry has continued its efforts to remove physical barriers in ministry facilities. For example, in 2007-2008, the ministry successfully completed a project to renovate a classroom at the Ontario Police College to provide full access to persons with physical disabilities.

On September 10, 2008, the ministry's Emergency Management Ontario was the proud recipient of the Canadian Red Cross Humanitarian Service Award in recognition for its leadership in the development of the "Emergency Preparedness Guide for

People with Disabilities/Special Needs". The guide, released in May 2007, provides special emergency preparedness considerations and advice to the estimated 1.5 million Ontarians with disabilities and/or special needs.

Looking forward to the future, the ministry's goal is to focus on accessibility for persons with disabilities in four key areas under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 – customer service, employment, built environment, and information and communication. With the passing of the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, in January 2008, the ministry will focus on this area as a priority for the next accessibility planning cycle. Details are provided in the pages that follow.

This accessibility plan is unique, because it reflects our transition between the AODA and the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA). The ODA applies to the Ontario government and all broader public sector organizations. Under this act, the ministry develops annual accessibility plans to make its policies, programs, services and buildings more accessible to people with disabilities.

Through the ODA, accessibility planning has laid a strong foundation for the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services to build on. This ministry will continue to help make Ontario more accessible for people with disabilities and a more inclusive society for all Ontarians.

An executive summary of all Government of Ontario Ministry Accessibility Plans is available at:

http://www.mcsc.gov.on.ca/mcsc/english/pillars/accessibilityOntario/planning/ministries_accplans09.htm

Report on Status of Customer Service Requirements

The Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, came into force on January 1, 2008.

This section highlights the ministry's customer service initiatives undertaken in the previous planning cycle and planned for in the next accessibility planning cycle.

Focus Area: Customer Service

Commitment: Ongoing

The ministry will ensure that it is in compliance with the training requirements of the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service (Ontario Regulation 429/07).

Results Achieved:

All ministry employees are required to participate in the online course "May I Help You? Welcoming Customers with Disabilities" by December 31, 2009.

During the 2007-2008 planning year, this requirement and instructions on accessing the online course were communicated across the ministry. For example, articles were published in three ministry newsletters with a broad audience – OPP Review, Correctional Update and the Insider. Members of the ministry's Accessibility Planning Working Group communicated this requirement through presentations to senior managers in their respective divisions. In addition, a memorandum to all employees was circulated in November 2008.

Planned Actions:

As of January 2009, the ministry will begin tracking compliance with this commitment. Quarterly reports, identifying employees who have not yet completed the training, will be provided to each division head/executive to monitor progress and to ensure full compliance.

It is anticipated that supplementary online training on customer service will be available from the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario in Fall 2008. The ministry will review the supplementary module as soon as it is available and will determine how to implement it in the ministry.

Implementation Timeframe: September 2007 – December 2009

Focus Area: Customer Service

Commitment: New

The ministry will take steps to ensure that it is meeting the policy requirements of the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service.

Planned Actions:

The ministry will work with the Ministry of Government Services, the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario and the network of accessibility leads from different ministries in order to ensure a consistent and coordinated approach in relation to implementing this commitment. A work plan will be developed and implemented.

Implementation Timeframe: January 2009 – December 2009

Focus Area: Customer Service

Commitment: New

The ministry will initiate a project involving accessibility to law enforcement services by members of the deaf and hard of hearing community.

Planned Actions:

To ensure equal access to law enforcement services by members of the deaf and hard of hearing community, the Ontario Provincial Police will be involved in a pilot project in partnership with Bell Canada to implement Video Relay Interpreting (VRI). VRI is a cost-effective means of enabling deaf and hearing individuals who are in the same location to easily conduct conversations through a remote interpreter, video conferencing technology, and a high-speed Internet connection. VRI and Video Relay Services (VRS) were only recently approved, in January 2008, by the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) for use in four provinces in Canada, including Ontario.

Implementation Timeframe: January 2009 – December 2009

Focus Area: Customer Service**Commitment:** New

The ministry will assist the Ministry of the Attorney General with a project involving accessibility of full-time courts throughout the province.

Planned Actions:

The Ministry of the Attorney General is implementing a "Site Accessibility Information Project" at all full-time courts in Ontario. Each site will have a Site Accessibility Information Coordinator who will be responsible for receiving requests for accessible service or accommodation and, using the resources of the court, for arranging for the provision of the required service or accommodation.

There are occasions where policing or correctional services personnel are the first point of contact with persons who have a need for accessible service or accommodation before they are brought before the court. The Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services will undertake to inform and educate appropriate staff of the Ontario Provincial Police and Correctional Services about this project and will ensure that the accessibility/accommodation needs of ministry clients who are being brought before the court are communicated to the appropriate Site Accessibility Information Coordinator in the Ministry of the Attorney General.

Implementation Timeframe: January 2009 – December 2009

Focus Area: Customer Service

Commitment: New

Emergency Management Ontario (EMO) will make some of the materials and products it develops in accessible formats.

Planned Actions:

EMO will develop select EMO products in alternate formats, for example Braille. Also, efforts will be made to improve web accessibility possibly including audio portions, large print, ASL video translation, etc.

Implementation Timeframe: January 2009 – December 2009

Focus Area: Customer Service

Commitment: New

The Emergency Management Ontario (EMO) will offer learning opportunities to some of its staff in relation to communicating with members of the deaf community using American Sign Language (ASL).

Planned Actions:

Emergency Management Ontario will offer a weekly in-house series of approximately 20 “Lunch and Learn” signing sessions for staff. The curriculum for the training is being developed by the Canadian Hearing Society using the Master ASL.

Implementation Timeframe: January 2009 – December 2009

Report on Other Accessibility Commitments

This section provides a status report on completed or multi-year initiatives and outlines new initiatives in the ministry to identify, remove or prevent barriers in preparation for standards currently under development under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005.

Focus Area: Employment

Impact: Program

Commitment: Ongoing

The ministry will continue its efforts to ensure that managers are aware of their responsibilities in relation to employment accommodation, return to work and accessibility and know how to access the appropriate tools and resources as needed.

Results Achieved:

During the 2007-2008 planning year, the ministry delivered in-person training to a total of 503 managers. This brings the total of trained managers to over 1,900 since 2003.

In addition, the ministry tracked the number of managers who completed the online training module "ODA: Maximizing the Contribution of Employees with Disabilities". Quarterly reports were distributed to all areas identifying managers who have not yet taken the training to ensure full compliance by December 31, 2008. As of October 1, 2008, 87% of ministry managers completed the online module.

Planned Actions:

The ministry will continue to partner with the Ontario Correctional Services College, the Centre for Employee Health, Safety and Wellness (Ministry of Government Services) and the Career Development Bureau (Ontario Provincial Police) to provide employment accommodation training opportunities to managers.

The ministry will continue to monitor compliance with the mandatory online training module "ODA: Maximizing the Contribution of Employees with Disabilities".

Employment Accommodation information will be posted on the ministry's Accessibility web page as soon as it is developed and launched.

Implementation Timeframe: September 2007 – March 2010

Focus Area: Employment

Impact: Program

Commitment: Completed

The ministry will make employees aware of roles, responsibilities and available resources related to employment accommodation.

Implementation Timeframe: September 2007 – November 2008

Results Achieved:

An "Information Sheet" for all employees was developed on employment accommodation, return to work and accessibility. This information was provided to members of the ministry's Accessibility Planning Working Group members for use within their divisions as appropriate. The information sheet will also be included in the ministry's Accessibility web page as soon as it is developed and launched.

Focus Area: Employment

Impact: Policy

Commitment: New

The Ministry will strengthen the integrity of pre-employment fitness screening used in the recruitment of correctional officers such that fitness-screening criteria address bona fide occupational requirements from a physical demands perspective.

Planned Actions:

Expert knowledge/advice from a human rights and equity perspective will be provided to this initiative by conducting analysis and critique with respect to adverse impact on racialized persons, Aboriginal Peoples, women and persons with disabilities. The capacity for identifying adverse impact will be increased, and a

model for barrier elimination in other Correctional Services policies, processes and practices will be established.

Implementation Timeframe: January 2009 – March 2010

Focus Area: Information and Communications

Impact: Service

Commitment: Completed

The ministry will ensure that any new forms developed for the public are available in an accessible format.

Implementation Timeframe: September 2007 – November 2008

Results Achieved:

A number of new forms were introduced with the implementation of the new Private Security and Investigative Services Act. The ministry's Private Security and Investigative Services (PSIS) Branch has set up a protocol to ensure that any PSIS forms intended for the public, including any new forms, are accessible to persons with disabilities. PSIS Branch worked with Form Management Services, Ministry of Government Services, in this regard.

Focus Area: Information and Communications

Impact: Service

Commitment: Ongoing

The ministry will inform employees about accessibility planning and how they can participate in related activities in the ministry.

Results Achieved:

The ministry's Accessibility Planning Working Group increased its membership to ensure representation from all divisions. The Working Group developed and obtained approval for a Terms of Reference. In addition, the Working Group developed and began implementing a communication and engagement strategy, for example: Publish articles in two ministry newsletters related to accessibility planning in the ministry;

- Development of an Accessibility Web Page on the ministry's Intranet site, including an Accessibility Suggestion Box;
- Adding accessibility information to regularly scheduled employment accommodation training;
- Delivering presentations to divisional management teams on accessibility planning in the ministry;
- Increasing participation in accessibility planning by ministry employees, in particular employees with disabilities;
- Developing an informal process to recognize "Accessibility Champions" – ministry employees who volunteer their time outside of work to disability related causes/organizations.

Planned Actions:

The ministry will continue its efforts to raise awareness and encourage participation of ministry employees in accessibility planning activities in the ministry. On a regular basis, the ministry's Accessibility Planning Working Group will review the contents and links on the Accessibility Web Page on the ministry's intranet to ensure it is current and accurate.

Similarly, the Working Group will monitor and review employee ideas and suggestions submitted through the Accessibility Suggestion Box and will respond as appropriate.

The Working Group will contact employees (as well as their managers), who express an interest in getting involved in accessibility planning, in order to determine the nature and extent of the involvement.

The informal recognition process for "Accessibility Champions" – ministry employees who volunteer their time outside of work to disability-related causes or organizations will be communicated and implemented. The Working Group will select "Champions" on an annual basis and will determine the best way to recognize these employees, e.g., story in ministry newsletter; certificate; letter of appreciation; etc.

Implementation Timeframe: September 2007 – March 2010

Focus Area: Information and Communications

Impact: Service

Commitment: Ongoing

The ministry will, upon request, make ministry publications (intended for the public) available in a format accessible to persons with disabilities, unless it is not technically feasible to do so.

Results Achieved:

The Accessibility Lead for the ministry contacted the Alternate Format Coordinator at Publications Ontario (PO) who coordinates alternate format document requests received either directly or by referral from a ministry/agency. The OPS Alternate Format Coordinator confirmed that there have been no such requests during the 2007-2008 accessibility planning cycle. It was agreed that the Alternate Format Coordinator would inform the ministry's Accessibility Lead of any requests in the future. PO and the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario have developed a Guide to Multiple Formats for Government Publications, to provide guidance to government staff on the process for handling requests for publications in alternate formats.

Planned Actions:

We will post the Guide to Multiple Formats for Government Publications on the ministry's Accessibility web page. The ministry's Accessibility Planning Working Group will follow up with the OPS Alternate Format Coordinator at Publications Ontario on a regular basis in order to track requests and ensure that they are addressed in an appropriate and timely manner.

Implementation Timeframe: September 2007 – March 2010

Focus Area: Information and Communications

Impact: Service

Commitment: New

The ministry will ensure that employees who provide direct service to the public can obtain business cards in alternate formats with the approval of their manager.

Planned Actions:

The ministry will communicate guidelines and related information to assist cost centre managers with decisions whether to purchase business cards in alternate formats, e.g., large print and Braille, for selected staff.

Implementation Timeframe: January 2009 – March 2010

Focus Area: Built Environment

Impact: Service

Commitment: Ongoing

The ministry will develop a prioritized list of its facilities with no drop-off zone to determine the most effective way to provide access for persons with disabilities.

Results Achieved:

The ministry's Facilities Emergency Management and Security Branch developed a list containing the scope of work to provide designated drop-off zones at its correctional institutions.

Planned Actions:

The Facilities Emergency Management and Security Branch will consider requesting funding through the Infrastructure Plan for the provision of designated drop-off zones at its correctional institutions in accordance with the scope of work document mentioned above.

The Facilities, Emergency Management and Security Branch will initiate construction of drop-off zones in accordance with funding approved through the Infrastructure Plan.

Implementation Timeframe: September 2007 – March 2010

Focus Area: Built Environment

Impact: Service

Commitment: Completed

The ministry will initiate a project to reconfigure and remove tiered flooring in classrooms at the Ontario Police College, in order to provide full access to persons with physical disabilities.

Implementation Timeframe: September 2007 – November 2008

Results Achieved:

The Facilities, Emergency Management and Security Branch completed the project by April 2008. The classroom is now fully accessible.

- All desks are height adjustable, to accommodate a variety of wheel chairs
- The spacing between the rows of desks is greater than the required minimum to facilitate the use of wheelchairs and scooters
- All wiring is run in conduit under the floor and up through the legs and undersides of the desk. There are no tripping hazards due to cables on the floor
- High quality sound system to accommodate students with hearing disabilities
- High resolution video system to accommodate students with visual disabilities
- Suspended lighting to reduce glare
- Chairs with full range of ergonomic adjustments to accommodate students with a limited range of movement

Focus Area: Built Environment

Impact: Service

Commitment: Ongoing

The ministry will continue to reduce existing barriers within ministry facilities to accommodate special needs as they may arise and to improve accessibility for persons with disabilities.

Results Achieved:

The Facilities, Emergency Management and Security Branch provides regular updates to the Assistant Deputy Minister, Corporate Services Division, on accessibility improvement projects which have been undertaken. Examples include: the Ontario Police College, the North Bay Jail and counter spaces at several Probation and Parole Offices.

Planned Actions:

In accordance with available funding, the Facilities, Emergency Management and Security Branch will initiate additional accessibility enhancement projects at the Ontario Police College, and will continue to address barriers as they are identified in ministry occupied facilities. The Branch will continue to provide the Assistant Deputy Minister, Corporate Services Division, with regular updates on accessibility projects which have been undertaken.

Implementation Timeframe: September 2007 – March 2010

Focus Area: Built Environment

Impact: Service

Commitment: New

The Ministry will enhance accessibility of its buildings and facilities for persons with disabilities.

Planned Actions:

The Facilities Branch will ensure that all new ministry facilities being built meet the Standards for Barrier-Free Design of Ontario Government Facilities.

The Facilities Branch will also ensure that, where possible, retrofitting of ministry facilities meets the Standards for Barrier-Free Design of Ontario Government Facilities.

Implementation Timeframe: January 2009 – March 2010

For More Information

Questions or comments about the ministry's accessibility plan are always welcome.

Please phone:

General inquiry number: 1-416-317-9911 or 1-416-326-5000
TTY number: 1-416-326-5511
Toll free number: 1-866-517-0571
E-mail: jus.g.sgcs.webmaster@jus.gov.on.ca

Ministry website address: <http://www.mcscs.jus.gov.on.ca>

Visit the Ministry of Community and Social Services Accessibility Ontario web portal at: www.mcscs.jus.gov.on.ca/accessibility/index.html. The site promotes accessibility and provides information and resources on how to make Ontario a barrier-free province.

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