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## Accessibility Plans

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## Ministry of Energy 2006-2007 Accessibility Plan

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## Introduction

In June 2005, the Ontario government took a strong stand on accessibility when it passed the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) into law.

The AODA lays out a comprehensive road map to make Ontario accessible to all people through the development, implementation and enforcement of new, mandatory accessibility standards for some of the most important aspects of people's lives. The first two standards that are currently being developed cover the areas of transportation and customer service. On June 13, the first anniversary of the passage of the AODA, the government announced the development of three new standards that will address information and communications, the built environment, and employment.

While the government is moving forward to implement the AODA, there will be a transition period where government and the broader public sector will continue to meet their obligations under the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA). These obligations will remain in effect until they are repealed and replaced by standards under the new act.

Under the ODA, Ontario government ministries, municipalities, hospitals, school boards, colleges, universities and public transportation organizations are required to develop annual accessibility plans to make policies, practices, programs, services and buildings more accessible to people with disabilities. These plans must be made available to the public. Accessibility planning efforts to date have developed a strong foundation for the development of accessibility standards that will mean real and effective change.

This document is the fourth annual accessibility plan developed by the Ministry of Energy. It highlights the achievements of the 2005-06 plan and outlines the commitments for 2006-07 so that no new barriers are created and, over time, existing ones are removed.

This ministry intends to build on its achievements by implementing initiatives that support the government's commitment to continue to make Ontario an inclusive and accessible province where people of all abilities have a chance to fully achieve their potential.

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## Message From the Minister



All public sector and broader public sector organizations are required by law to have an annual accessibility plan and to make it available to the public. This is the fourth year in which plans have been written and are being implemented by organizations such as ours across the province.

This year marks the first anniversary of the landmark Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, (AODA) – legislation that will foster the development, implementation and enforcement of accessibility standards in key areas of daily living.

To commemorate this milestone, three new accessibility standards to be developed in the areas of communications and information, the built environment, and employment were recently announced. This is in addition to two standards already being developed, which deal with customer service and transportation.

My ministry is committed to improving accessibility through identifying, removing and preventing barriers, working together within our ministry, across government and with our stakeholders in key areas of customer service, employment, communications and information, and the built environment.

Here at the Ministry of Energy, we are building on the success of our previous three plans and continuing to look for ways to better meet the needs of people with disabilities who come into contact with this ministry, regardless of whether they are staff, members of the general public or ministry stakeholders.

This ministry continues to work to better educate staff on accessibility. Examples of this work in the past year include: conducting a survey to assess employees' level of knowledge about accessibility issues, holding Lunch and Learn sessions to promote staff awareness, and ensuring that managers complete online ODA training. More examples are provided in the pages that follow. The Ministry remains committed to continuing to improve the accessibility of its internet and intranet sites, and providing effective support mechanisms and equipment for ministry staff .

If you have any comments or concerns, I encourage you to send them using the contact information located at the end of this document.

Sincerely,

**Honourable Dwight Duncan**

**Minister of Energy**

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## Report on Achievements

### 2005 - 2006 Accessibility Improvement Initiatives

The Ministry of Energy was successful in achieving the planned commitments outlined in its 2005-2006 accessibility plan. This section provides a status report.

### Customer Service

- **Commitment:** Procedures for how to respond to requests for accessible formats will be available on intranet for staff.
- **Status:** Completed and ongoing
- **Action:** Ministry ODA intranet page has been updated and reflects current information.
  
- **Commitment:** Continue to ensure that all new information posted on the existing inter/intranet sites is fully accessible to people with disabilities as required by Section 6 of the ODA.
- **Status:** Completed and ongoing
- **Action:** All material to be posted on the intranet/internet sites is reviewed for accessibility to people with disabilities.
  
- **Commitment:** Conduct an employee survey to assess level of knowledge about accessibility issues.
- **Status:** Completed
- **Action:** Survey developed and conducted, and results rolled up and summarized. Findings included that: 75% of respondents were somewhat to very familiar with the ODA, most staff felt it was important for all staff to know about it, 59% preferred to learn more through the intranet, and 93% felt that their workplace would accommodate a person with a disability.
- **Timeframe:** Survey conducted in fall 2005.
  
- **Commitment:** Promote emergency and evacuation procedures to encourage staff who may require assistance to identify themselves to their managers.
- **Status:** Completed and ongoing
- **Action:** Information on emergency and evacuation procedures, including self-identification, is communicated to staff on a regular basis through e-mails, phone calls, meetings, etc.

## Employment

- **Commitment:** Promote staff awareness of accessibility issues and the ODA through Lunch and Learn sessions.
- **Status:** Completed
- **Action:** Lunch and Learn sessions planned and offered to staff in fall 2005.
- **Timeframe:** Lunch and Learn sessions held in fall 2005.
  
- **Commitment:** Ensure barrier-free access for employment competitions and interviews.
- **Status:** Completed and ongoing
- **Action:** Interview facilities are barrier-free in most cases; in others, alternative arrangements are available and offered.

## Communications and Information

- **Commitment:** Continue to provide publications in accessible formats to the public and members

of staff.

- **Status:** Completed and ongoing
- **Action:** Alternate formats for publications are investigated and made available, upon request.
- **Commitment:** Ensure that ODA is communicated on a regular basis through the distribution of quarterly brochures to staff.
- **Status:** Completed and ongoing
- **Action:** Continue to include ODA items in the quarterly Corporate Services Energy Inc. brochure and other ministry newsletters.

## Built Environment

- **Commitment:** Continue to work with the Ontario Realty Corporation and building management to ensure barriers are identified in common areas and are addressed and eliminated.
- **Status:** Completed and ongoing
- **Action:** Barrier-free standards are applied to all building projects and ongoing maintenance.

## Acts and Regulations

- **Commitment:** Review the following Acts internally to ensure the appropriate use of language with respect to people with disabilities, as well as identify any programs established in law that may have an impact on people with disabilities. -
    - Electricity Restructuring Act, 2004
  - **Status:** Completed
  - **Action:** A review of Bill 100 (the Electricity Restructuring Act, 2004, which amends both the Electricity Act, 1998 and the Ontario Energy Board Act, 1998) has been completed, and the language is considered to be quite neutral from the perspective of people with disabilities.
- 

## Ongoing Accessibility Improvement Initiatives

The Ministry of Energy was successful in achieving ongoing commitments described in the accessibility plans it issued before 2005 - 2006. This section provides a status report.

## Customer Service

- **Commitment:** Contracts with service providers will ensure that accessibility requirements are met.
- **Status:** Completed and ongoing
- **Action:** Accessibility requirements are included in all service level agreement negotiations.

- **Commitment:** Update the ministry-specific “employment accommodation for people with disabilities” operating policy with the development of a business planning checklist for accommodations and procurement purposes.
- **Status:** Completed and ongoing
- **Action:** Business planning checklist addresses accommodations and procurement requirements for people with disabilities.

## Employment

- **Commitment:** Accessibility awareness will be built into staff orientation binders and orientation sessions for new employees.
- **Status:** Completed and ongoing
- **Action:** Staff orientation binders and orientation sessions for new employees include accessibility awareness components.
  
- **Commitment:** Continue to ensure that 100% of managers complete online ODA training.
- **Status:** Ongoing
- **Action:** All new managers are advised to obtain online ODA training and compliance is assessed through follow-up.
  
- **Commitment:** All job descriptions and job advertisements will be reviewed to ensure that the content and language are consistent with the requirements of the ODA and respect people with disabilities.
- **Status:** Completed and ongoing
- **Action:** Human Resources reviews all job descriptions and job advertisements to ensure that the content and language are consistent with the requirements of the ODA and respect people with disabilities.

## Communications and Information

- **Commitment:** Managers and supervisors will be given guidance on considering accessibility in all procurement activities.
- **Status:** Completed and ongoing
- **Action:** Procurement guidelines with accessibility requirements are in place and available to managers and supervisors to promote compliance.

## Built Environment

- **Commitment:** Specifications are in place for procurement of furniture and furniture accessories in accordance with ergonomic standards.
- **Status:** Completed and ongoing
- **Action:** Ergonomic standards are followed in the procurement of all furniture and furniture

accessories.

## Acts and Regulations

- **Commitment:** Review the following Acts internally to ensure the appropriate use of language with respect to people with disabilities, as well as identify any programs established in law that may have an impact on people with disabilities.
    - The Energy Efficiency Act, RSO 2990;
    - Reliable Energy and Consumer Protection Act, 2002
  - **Status:** Completed
  - **Action:** A review of the Acts has been completed, and the language is considered to be quite neutral from the perspective of people with disabilities.
- 

## Commitments — Measures to Prevent New Barriers

In the coming year, the ministry commits to take the following steps to prevent new barriers to accessibility for persons with disabilities. This section summarizes these commitments.

### Customer Service

- Address accessibility requirements in all new contracts that are negotiated with service providers.
- Ensure that the needs of people with disabilities are considered when reviewing emergency and evacuation procedures on an annual/semi-annual basis and communicating them to all staff.

### Employment

- Promote new staff's awareness of the ODA and accessibility issues by posting the Accessibility Plan and related information and links on the intranet site, and including information in orientation binders and sessions.
- Ensure that all new managers are made aware of and complete online ODA training.
- Ensure that the content and language of all new job descriptions and job advertisements are consistent with ODA requirements and respect people with disabilities.

### Communications and Information

- Ensure that all new information posted on existing and new inter/intranet sites is fully accessible to people with disabilities by following government web guidelines and using appropriate

technology.

- Provide new publications in formats that are accessible to people with disabilities.
- Ensure that staff engaging in procurement activities are made aware of accessibility requirements in procurement guidelines to promote compliance.

## Built Environment

- Apply barrier-free standards to all new building projects and maintenance activities.
- Follow ergonomic standards in the procurement of all furniture and furniture accessories.

## Acts and Regulations

- Ensure that new Acts use appropriate language with respect to people with disabilities and meet the objectives of the ODA.
- Continue to review existing Acts to ensure the appropriate use of language with respect to people with disabilities and to identify any programs established in law that may have an impact on people with disabilities.

## Commitments — Barriers to be Addressed

The Ministry of Energy commits to identify, remove and prevent barriers to persons with disabilities in the coming year. This section summarizes these commitments.

### Customer Service

- **Barrier:** Business continuity planning may not meet needs of people with disabilities.
- **Commitment:** Consider and address the needs of people with disabilities when reviewing, updating and testing the ministry's Continuity of Operations Plan.
- **Responsibility:** Jennette Frost, Director, Service Management Branch
- **Timeline:** Plan is reviewed annually.
  
- **Barrier:** Services and products offered by service providers may not meet the needs of people with disabilities.
- **Commitment:** All new service level agreements that are negotiated with service providers will consider and address accessibility requirements.
- **Responsibility:** Cynthia Iskiw, Manager, Shared Services, Service Management Branch
- **Timeline:** Ongoing
  
- **Barrier:** Services and products obtained by ministry business areas through procurement activities may not meet the needs of people with disabilities.

- **Commitment:** Promote awareness of and compliance with accessibility requirements in procurement guidelines.
- **Responsibility:** Robert Maieron, Coordinator, Advisory Services, Service Management Branch provides advice and guidance. All staff engaging in procurement activities are responsible for compliance.
- **Timeline:** Ongoing

## Employment Accommodation

- **Barrier:** People with disabilities may not be able to access government jobs.
- **Commitment:** Review all new job descriptions and job advertisements to ensure that the content and language are consistent with the requirements of the ODA and respect people with disabilities, and that barrier-free interview facilities are made available. Provide job descriptions and job ads in an accessible format, upon request.
- **Responsibility:** Kate Johnstone, Manager, Workforce Planning and Information
- **Timeline:** Ongoing
  
- **Barrier:** Managers may not recognize and accommodate the needs of employees with disabilities.
- **Commitment:** All new managers are to complete online ODA training, and offer accommodations to staff.
- **Responsibility:** All ministry managers are responsible for taking the training. Service Management Branch will promote awareness and compliance through advisory and follow-up communications.
- **Timeline:** Ongoing
  
- **Barrier:** Staff may lack awareness of the ODA and accessibility issues.
- **Commitment:** Promote new staff's awareness of the ODA and accessibility issues by posting updated ODA-related information (including the most current Accessibility Plan) and links on the ministry's intranet site.
- **Responsibility:** Jeff McCartney, Communications and Web Site Coordinator, Communications Branch
- **Timeline:** Ongoing

## Communications and information

- **Barrier:** The ministry's websites may be inaccessible to people with disabilities.
- **Commitment:** Ensure that the ministry's public websites are accessible to people with disabilities in accordance with Section 6 of the ODA. Endeavour to accommodate the accessibility needs of public sector employees in developing the new intranet sub-site for corporate services.
- **Responsibility:** Jennette Frost, Director, Service Management Branch (for development of

intranet sub-site's content) and Jeff McCartney, Communications and Web Site Coordinator, Communications Branch (for accessibility of Energy public websites)

- **Timeline:** Ongoing
- **Barrier:** People with disabilities may not be able to access ministry publications.
- **Commitment:** Provide ministry publications in accessible formats to the public and members of staff, upon request.
- **Responsibility:** Kevin Powers, Director, Communications Branch
- **Timeline:** Ongoing

## Built Environment

- **Barrier:** Offices and common areas may not be accessible to people with disabilities.
- **Commitment:** Work with building management and accommodation service providers to ensure that barrier-free standards are applied to all building projects and ongoing maintenance, common areas are kept free of obstacles, ergonomic furniture is procured, and special tools/equipment are obtained to meet the needs of people with disabilities.
- **Responsibility:** Jasna Boyd, Vice President, Account Executive, Ontario Realty Corporation
- **Timeline:** Ongoing

## Acts and regulations

- **Barrier:** Acts and regulations may not use appropriate language with respect to people with disabilities and meet the objectives of the ODA.
- **Commitment:** Review new and existing Acts and regulations to ensure the appropriate use of language and to identify any programs established in law that may have an impact on people with disabilities.
- **Responsibility:** James Girling, Deputy Director, Legal Services
- **Timeline:** Ongoing

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## For more information

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

**General inquiry number:** 1-888 668-4636 or in Toronto 416-326-4483

**TTY number:** 1-800 387-5559

**E-mail:** [write2us@energy.gov.on.ca](mailto:write2us@energy.gov.on.ca)

Visit the Ministry of Citizenship's Accessibility Ontario web portal at: [www.mcass.gov.on.ca/accessibility/](http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/accessibility/). The site promotes accessibility and provides information and resources on how to make Ontario a barrier-free province.

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ISSN 1708-3362 Accessibility Plan - Ontario. Ministry of Energy (Online)  
ISSN 1708-3370 (en français)

Ce document est disponible en français.

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Printed from the Ministry of Energy website:

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