

- [Accessibility and This Site](#)
- [Energy Dashboard Info](#)
- [Contact Information](#)



[Print this page](#)

External Links

- [Accessible Transportation Standard Public Review](#)

Invitation for public review of the Initial Proposed Accessibility Transportation Standard.

[Search Links Database](#)

[External Links Disclaimer](#)

Accessibility Plans

- [2007-2008](#)
- [2006-2007](#)
- [2005-2006](#)
- [2004-2005](#)
- [2003-2004](#)

Ministry of Energy 2007-2008 Accessibility Plan

- [Introduction](#)
- [Message From the Minister](#)
- [Report on Achievements](#)
 - [2006 - 2007 Accessibility Improvement Initiatives](#)
 - [Ongoing Accessibility Improvement Initiatives](#)
- [Commitments - Measures to Prevent New Barriers](#)
 - [Customer Service](#)
 - [Employment](#)
 - [Communications and Information](#)
 - [Built Environment](#)
 - [Acts and Regulations](#)
- [Commitments — Barriers to be Addressed](#)
 - [Customer Service](#)

- [Employment Accomodation](#)
 - [Communications and Information](#)
 - [Built Environment](#)
 - [Acts and Regulations](#)
 - [For more information](#)
-

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.

Five key areas have been identified for the first accessibility standards: customer service, transportation, information and communications, the built environment and employment.

The accessible customer service regulations were approved by the Lieutenant-Governor and will come into force on January 1, 2008.

An initial proposed standard on accessible transportation has been developed by the Transportation Standards Development Committee. It was posted for public review on June 27, 2007 and will be available for public comment until September 28, 2007.

The Standards Development Committee that will draft the proposed information and communications standard was established and began meeting in April 2007. The committees developing the accessible built environment and accessible employment standards have been selected and will begin meeting in fall 2007.

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 fifth annual accessibility plan developed by the Ministry of Energy. It highlights the achievements of the 2006-07 plan and outlines the commitments for 2007-08 to remove barriers and ensure that no new barriers are created.

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

Message From the Minister



Under the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001, 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 year marks the second anniversary of the landmark Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) - legislation that requires the development, implementation and enforcement of accessibility standards in key areas of daily living.

The accessible customer service regulations were approved by the Lieutenant-Governor on August 11, 2007 and will come into force on January 1, 2008.

An initial proposed standard on accessible transportation has been developed by the Transportation Standards Development Committee and was posted for public review between June 27 and August 31, 2007.

The Standards Development Committee that will draft the proposed information and communications standard was established and began meeting in April 2007. The committees developing the accessible built environment and accessible employment standards have been selected and will begin meeting in fall 2007.

Here at the Ministry of Energy, we are building on the success of our previous four 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 public or stakeholders.

The Ministry of Energy is committed to improving accessibility through identifying, removing and preventing barriers, working together within our ministry, across government and in our relationships with stakeholders.

This ministry continues to work to better educate staff on accessibility. Examples of this work in the past year include:

- Considering and addressing the needs of people with disabilities in emergency evacuation and business continuity planning
- Applying barrier-free standards to all building projects and ongoing maintenance
- Promoting awareness of and compliance with accessibility requirements in procurement practices
- Sharing information on accessibility planning through the ministry web site and other communications vehicles

More examples are provided in the pages that follow. 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

Report on Achievements

2006 - 2007 Accessibility Improvement Initiatives

The Ministry of Energy was successful in achieving the planned commitments outlined in its 2006-2007 Accessibility Plan. This section provides a status report.

Customer service

- **Commitment:** Consider and address the needs of people with disabilities when reviewing, updating and testing the ministry's Continuity of Operations Plan.
- **Status:** Completed
- **Action:** As part of the emergency evacuation procedures included in the 2006-07 Continuity of Operations Plan, benches and phones were installed in the Designated Waiting Areas near the elevators on each floor of 880 Bay Street to accommodate people with disabilities requiring emergency evacuation assistance. Faulty fire doors were fixed to prevent the rapid spread of smoke into these areas. Large floor numbers were added near the elevators for enhanced visibility and better orientation. An e-mail was sent out to all ministry staff asking anyone requiring emergency evacuation assistance to self-identify to their fire warden and complete a confidential form.
- **Timeframe:** The 2006-07 Continuity of Operations Plan, including revised emergency evacuation procedures, was completed on November 15, 2006.

- **Commitment:** All new service level agreements that are negotiated with service providers will consider and address accessibility requirements.
 - **Status:** Completed
 - **Action:** Accessibility requirements were considered in negotiations for the French Language Services and Information Resource Centre service level agreements with the Ministry of the Environment.
 - **Timeframe:** The French Language Services and Information Resource Centre service level agreements were signed in September 2006.
-
- **Commitment:** Promote awareness of and compliance with accessibility requirements in procurement guidelines.
 - **Status:** Completed
 - **Action:** Procurement guidelines with accessibility requirements based on the Procurement Directive and Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act were in place and made available to managers and supervisors for use in 2006-07 procurement initiatives.

Employment accommodation

- **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.
 - **Status:** Completed
 - **Action:** Human Resources reviewed all job descriptions and job advertisements for 2006-07 to ensure that the content and language were consistent with the requirements of the ODA and respected people with disabilities. Interview facilities were barrier-free in most cases; in others, alternative arrangements were available and offered.
-
- **Commitment:** All new managers are to complete online ODA training, and offer accommodations to staff.
 - **Status:** Completed
 - **Action:** Managers were advised by e-mail to access and complete online ODA training. According to recently provided statistics maintained by OPS Learning and Development since September 2006, 17 individuals have accessed this training.

- **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.
- **Status:** Completed
- **Action:** The 2006-07 Accessibility Plan was posted on the ministry's intranet site in fall 2006, along with links to other ODA-related resources.

Communications and information

- **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.
 - **Status:** Completed
 - **Action:** All material posted on the ministry's intranet/internet sites in 2006-07 was reviewed for accessibility to people with disabilities by a web coordinator with knowledge/expertise in adaptive technologies and accessible web design.
-
- **Commitment:** Provide ministry publications in accessible formats to the public and members of staff, upon request.
 - **Status:** Completed
 - **Action:** Alternate formats for publications were investigated and made available in 2006-07, upon request.

Built environment

- **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.
- **Status:** Completed
- **Action:** Barrier-free standards were applied to all building projects and ongoing maintenance during 2006-07. The ministry worked closely with Ontario Realty Corporation and Profac to have problems with washrooms, firedoors, firehoses, etc. fixed at 880 Bay Street, and continues to monitor building improvements.

Acts and regulations

- **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.
 - **Status:** Completed
 - **Action:** Acts and regulations were reviewed by Legal Services Branch in 2006-07 to ensure the appropriate use of language and to identify any programs established in law that might have an impact on 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 2006 - 2007. This section provides a status report.

Customer service

- **Commitment:** Promote emergency and evacuation procedures to encourage staff who may require assistance to identify themselves to their managers.
 - **Status:** Ongoing
 - **Action:** Information on emergency and evacuation procedures, including self-identification, has been communicated to staff on a regular basis through e-mails, phone calls, meetings, etc.
-
- **Commitment:** Ensure that accessibility requirements are met in contracts with service providers.
 - **Status:** Ongoing
 - **Action:** Accessibility requirements have been addressed in all service level negotiations.
-
- **Commitment:** Offer guidance to managers and supervisors on considering accessibility in all procurement activities.
 - **Status:** Ongoing
 - **Action:** Procurement guidelines with accessibility requirements based on the Procurement Directive and AODA were in place and made available to managers and supervisors to promote compliance.

- **Commitment:** Make procedures for responding to requests for accessible formats available on the intranet to staff.
- **Status:** Ongoing
- **Action:** The ministry's ODA intranet page has been updated and reflects current information.

Employment accommodation

- **Commitment:** Ensure that the content and language in all job descriptions and advertisements are consistent with the requirements of the ODA and respect people with disabilities, and that there is barrier-free access for employment competitions and interviews.
 - **Status:** Ongoing
 - **Action:** Human Resources has reviewed all job descriptions and job advertisements to ensure that the content and language were consistent with the requirements of the ODA and respect people with disabilities. Interview facilities were barrier-free in most cases; in others, alternative arrangements were available and offered.
-
- **Commitment:** Ensure that all managers complete online ODA training.
 - **Status:** Ongoing
 - **Action:** All new managers have been advised about the availability of and need to complete online ODA training.
-
- **Commitment:** Promote new staff's awareness of the ODA and accessibility issues by posting updated ODA-related information on the ministry's intranet site.
 - **Status:** Ongoing
 - **Action:** The Accessibility Plan and links to other ODA-related resources have been posted on the ministry's intranet site each year.

Communications and information

- **Commitment:** Ensure that all new information posted on existing internet and intranet sites is fully accessible to people with disabilities, as required by Section 6 of the ODA.

- **Status:** Ongoing
 - **Action:** All material to be posted on ministry websites has been reviewed for accessibility to people with disabilities by a web coordinator with knowledge/expertise in adaptive technologies and accessible web design.
-
- **Commitment:** Provide publications in accessible formats to the public and members of staff.
 - **Status:** Ongoing
 - **Action:** Alternate formats for publications have been investigated and made available, upon request.

Built environment

- **Commitment:** Work with Ontario Realty Corporation and building management to ensure that barriers in common areas are identified, addressed and eliminated.
 - **Status:** Ongoing
 - **Action:** Barrier-free standards have been applied to all building projects and ongoing maintenance.
-
- **Commitment:** Ensure that specifications are in place for the procurement of furniture and furniture accessories in accordance with ergonomic standards.
 - **Status:** Ongoing
 - **Action:** Ergonomic standards have been followed in the procurement of all furniture and furniture accessories.

Acts and regulations

- **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.
- **Status:** Ongoing
- **Action:** Acts and regulations have been reviewed by Legal Services Branch to ensure the appropriate use of language and to identify any programs established in law that might have an impact on 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

- Ensure that the needs of people with disabilities are considered when reviewing the Continuity of Operations Plan and emergency evacuation procedures on an annual basis and communicating them to all staff.
- Address accessibility requirements in all new contracts that are negotiated with service providers.
- Ensure that staff engaging in procurement activities are made aware of accessibility requirements in procurement guidelines to promote compliance.

Employment Accommodation

- Ensure that the content and language of all new job descriptions and job advertisements are consistent with ODA requirements and respect people with disabilities, and that there is barrier-free access for all competitions and interviews.
- Ensure that all new managers are made aware of and complete online ODA training.
- 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.

Communications and Information

- Ensure that all new information posted on existing and new internet and 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.

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.
- Perform checks of offices and common areas to identify and address any impediments to health and safety.

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 the needs of people with disabilities.
 - **Commitment:** Consider and address the needs of people with disabilities when reviewing, testing and updating the ministry's Continuity of Operations Plan, including the emergency evacuation procedures, by incorporating recommendations and advice from the Emergency Preparedness Guide for People with Disabilities/Special Needs.
 - **Responsibility:** Jennette Frost, Director, Service Management Branch
 - **Timeline:** Plan is reviewed, tested and revised on an annual basis, and will be submitted to Ministry of Government Services for evaluation on November 15, 2007.
-
- **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:** Service Level Agreements will be negotiated, as needed, during 2007-08.
-
- **Barrier:** Services and products obtained by ministry business areas through procurement activities may not meet the needs of people with disabilities.
 - **Commitment:** Reinforce awareness of and compliance with accessibility requirements through roll-out of procurement framework to ministry staff, and promotion of Accessible Procurement E-Module Training Tool and Checklist.
 - **Responsibility:** Robert Maieron, Coordinator, Advisory Services, Service Management Branch provides advice and guidance. All staff engaging in procurement activities are responsible for compliance.
 - **Timeline:** Roll-out of procurement framework is planned for 2007.

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:** Jane Albright, Manager, Workforce Planning and Information
 - **Timeline:** Ongoing throughout 2007-08
-
- **Barrier:** Managers may not recognize and accommodate the needs of employees with disabilities, and/or have attitudinal barriers.
 - **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. Jane Albright, Manager, Workforce Planning and Information will review new quarterly updates on training statistics maintained by OPS Learning and Development, and promote awareness and compliance through e-mails sent to managers on a quarterly basis.
 - **Timeline:** Ongoing
-
- **Barrier:** Staff may lack awareness of the ODA and accessibility issues, and/or have attitudinal

barriers.

- **Commitment:** Promote staff awareness of the ODA and accessibility issues, and encourage participation in special events such as the Accessibility Expo by posting the 2007-08 Accessibility Plan and updated ODA-related information and links on the ministry's intranet site, as part of the revamped Corporate Services Division's sub-site.
- **Responsibility:** Jeff McCartney, Communications and Web Site Coordinator, Communications Branch
- **Timeline:** 2007-08 Accessibility Plan will be posted on ministry intranet after its public release on September 28, 2007.

Communications and information

- **Barrier:** The ministry's websites may be inaccessible to people with disabilities.
- **Commitment:** Ensure that the ministry's public website is accessible to people with disabilities in accordance with Section 6 of the ODA, and accommodate the accessibility needs of public sector employees in revamping the 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 web site)
- **Timeline:** New version of Corporate Services Division's intranet sub-site will be launched in 2007.

- **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 throughout 2007-08.

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
- **Barrier:** Office equipment may not be accessible for use by people with disabilities.
- **Commitment:** Consider accessibility features as part of the replacement strategy for ministry photocopiers.
- **Responsibility:** Robert Maieron, Coordinator, Advisory Services, Service Management Branch
- **Timeline:** Implementation of the photocopier replacement strategy is planned for 2007.
- **Barrier:** Offices and common areas may have obstacles, hazards or other impediments to the occupational health and safety of people with disabilities.
- **Commitment:** Perform checks of offices and common areas, as part of Occupational Health and Safety Act requirements, to identify and address any impediments to the health and safety of employees, with consideration to the needs of people with disabilities.
- **Responsibility:** Ministry's Joint Health and Safety Committee
- **Timeline:** Monthly checks of office and common areas, on an ongoing basis.

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 throughout 2007-08.

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

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

Alternate formats of this document are available free upon request from:

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