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2008-2009 Accessibility Plan

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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 Energy and Infrastructure's inaugural 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.

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 Energy and Infrastructure 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 [here](#).

Report on Status of Customer Service Requirements

Focus Area: Customer Service

Commitment: New

Planned Action(s):

The Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure does not provide direct service to the public. Public access points i.e. entrances to offices are AODA compliant. The Ministry's primary application of the AODA is focused on ensuring that employees have healthy, safe and accessible work places. This is achieved through working with professional partnerships to appropriately accommodate staff and train managers to understand their roles and responsibilities.

Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure customers/clients are internal. We accommodate clients by providing guidance and consultation services on aspects of work such as manager responsibilities to employees to ensure an accessible work environment. We will provide information on mandatory manager training sessions to all managers and roll out various forms of training to both managers and staff with the ministry.

We will provide information to managers on the accommodation fund to ensure that managers have knowledge of accessing the fund for various accessibility and accommodation issues affecting staff. In addition, we will provide links to relevant websites and training.

Corporate services will monitor, track and report on attendance at mandatory sessions that managers and staff will be enrolled in.

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 07 - Mar 10

Results Achieved:

Ongoing support and guidance to managers within the ministry was provided in 2007/08. This included advice on accessing the accommodation fund and providing the necessary supports to managers to accommodate staff within their divisions. Individual accommodations requests were met by divisions as required.

Report on Other Accessibility Commitments

Focus Area: Customer Service

Commitment: New

Planned Action(s):

All managers are to complete online ODA training, and offer accommodation to staff.

The ministry will roll-out “the Ontarians with Disabilities Act: Maximizing the Contribution of Employees with Disabilities” course to all managers. We will also roll-out the “May I help you” course (part A) to managers in the fall/winter and to staff in the winter/spring. The ministry will consider the timing of rolling-out part B of the course when it becomes available. These training initiatives will be linked to personal staff learning plans by advising managers that the courses can be used as part of the learning plans.

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 07 –Mar 10

Results Achieved:

The ministry will roll out comprehensive training as outlined above.

The ministry held 2 sessions related to diversity training. Ministry managers attended a half day session on February 25, 2008 and April 23, 2008 related to diversity training. The course allowed for a dialogue among managers about their role in promoting diversity including access for individuals with diverse accommodation needs. Management in attendance was representative of all divisions in the Ministry.

2008 - 2009 Accessibility Improvement Initiatives

Focus Area: Other

Impact: Service

Commitment: Completed (Sept 07 – Nov 08)

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.

Implementation Timeframe: completed Sept 07 – Nov 08

Results Achieved:

Revised plan was submitted to Ministry of Government Services for evaluation on November 15, 2007 and accepted. No further expectations were recommended.

Focus Area: Other

Impact: Service

Commitment: Completed (Sept 07 – Nov 08)

Consider accessibility features as part of the replacement strategy for ministry photocopiers.

Planned Action(s):

Replace photocopiers in the ministry in the next year. Ease of use consideration will be addressed.

Implementation Timeframe: Completed Sept 07 –Mar 10

Results Achieved:

The new photocopiers in the ministry were replaced in February 2008 and ease of use was considered as a primary factor in determining products for procurement. Machines have controls at a level that are easily reachable for a wheelchair height. They are easy to use for someone with limited dexterity and are easily readable for those with a visual disability.

Focus Area: Information & Communication

Impact: Service

Commitment: Sept 07 – Nov 08

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.

Implementation Timeframe: Completed Sept 07 – Nov 08

Results Achieved:

Procurement framework roll-out and promotion of e-module training was completed in October 2007. 40% of administrative staff and EA's from the Ministry (former Energy) attended this training module. Accessibility considerations were included. The procurement of more accessible new photocopier equipment demonstrated the Ministry's commitment to tangibly improving the accessibility of the workplace.

Focus Area: Information & Communication

Impact: Service

Commitment: Ongoing

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.

Planned Action(s):

The ministry will undertake an awareness campaign surrounding accessibility issues such as Braille, accessible formats and allowing guide dogs. This will also include the promotion of the Employment Accommodation and Return to Work operating policy to managers and staff and promote awareness of the need for making meetings and events accessible through the provision of training and information.

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 07 –Mar 10

Results Achieved:

The 2007-08 accessibility plans were posted on the intranet sites of the former Ministry of Energy and Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure . The accessibility page of the Corporate Services Division sub-site contains several links to pages containing information related to accessibility.

Focus Area: Information & Communication

Impact: Service

Commitment: Ongoing

Ensure that all new material posted to the ministry's intranet websites continue to comply with standards for usability by people with disabilities, reflecting the broad definition of 'disability' under the ODA.

Planned Action(s):

Will be addressed on as needed basis

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 07 –Mar 10

Results Achieved:

The new version of the Corporate Services Division intranet sub-site was launched in the fall of 2007 (September 2007). The newly launched Intranet sites continue to be accessible and adhere with accessibility and access standards for users with disabilities. The construction of a new website combining the best elements of previous websites is underway ensuring that accessibility is a consideration. Central Agencies Cluster (CAC) will be consulted along with their partners in testing to ensure adoption of accessibility technologies that can be utilized (i.e. voice activated compatibility for access).

Focus Area: Information & Communication

Impact: Service

Commitment: Ongoing

Work with Publications Ontario to ensure that materials are produced and provided in accessible formats to the public and members of staff, upon request.

Planned Action(s):

The ministry will continue to provide publications in accessible formats upon request.

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 07 –Mar 10

Results Achieved:

The 2007/08 ODA plan met the required accessible format.

Focus Area: Employment

Impact: Service

Commitment: Ongoing

Review job descriptions and job advertisements to ensure that the content and language are consistent with the requirements of the ODA and respect to people with disabilities, and that barrier-free interview facilities are made available. Provide job descriptions and job ads in an accessible format, upon request.

Planned Action(s):

Work with Human Resources as necessary to ensure all new job descriptions and job advertisements are consistent with the requirements of the ODA. Barrier-free interview facilities will be made available and documents in accessible format will be provided, as requested.

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 07 –Mar 10

Results Achieved:

In 2007/08, 62 job competitions were held in the ministry. The job competition process in all cases was conducted in accordance with the requirements of the ODA and considered the needs of people with disabilities.

Focus Area: Built Environment

Impact: Service

Commitment: Ongoing

All new service level agreements that are negotiated with service providers will consider and address accessibility requirements.

Planned Action(s):

The ministry is negotiating a new service level agreement with facility services and is expected to complete the negotiation by the fall of 2008. The new agreement will address accessibility requirements.

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 07 –Mar 10

Results Achieved:

No new service level agreements were negotiated in 07-08. As such, agreements from previous years that addressed accessibility requirements were in place.

Focus Area: Built Environment

Impact: Service

Commitment: Ongoing

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.

Planned Action(s):

These matters will be addressed as requests for this activity are made. For example, provisions were made for the arrival of a new employee who uses a wheelchair in September 2008.

We plan to work with building management to ensure entranceway and emergency phones are accessible to people with disabilities. For example, installing amplifying equipment on phones, if possible, so that people with hearing difficulties can use the phones.

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 07 –Mar 10

Results Achieved:

Three employees needed assistance last year. An ergonomic assessment was undertaken to assist one of these employees who then received a new work chair to address a recent injury and the other two received specialized equipment to meet their specific needs around their workstations.

All new construction (through Infrastructure Ontario) is being planned to include accessibility requirements.

Focus Area: Other

Impact: Service

Commitment: Ongoing

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.

Planned Action(s):

Set up a joint health and safety committee in the coming year to perform these checks.

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 07 –Mar 10

Results Achieved:

Ongoing work with collective bargaining agents to assess volunteer interest in forming the committee.

Focus Area: Other

Impact: Act Regulation

Commitment: Ongoing

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.

Planned Action(s):

Review new acts and regulations as they arise.

Implementation Timeframe: Completed Sept 07 – Nov

Results Achieved:

Legal counsel completed a review of the numerous regulations and one legislative amendment (addition of S. 3 provisions to the Electricity Act, 1998 dealing with reliability standards) promulgated in 2008. Legal counsel determined that none of these regulations or amendments contained barriers nor did counsel characterize wording as inappropriate (such as pejorative) language.

Focus Area: Built Environment

Impact: Regulation

Commitment: New

Planned Action(s):

In relation to Capital Improvements, MEI's new accessibility design standard for government space is currently under development though the ministry's work with the ORC. These

standards will revise the existing barrier free design standards currently used by the ORC and ministries in the design of new space. In 2008/09 the ORC plans to complete accessibility requirements at Osgoode Hall, as well as accessible washrooms and elevators to be installed in the Macdonald Block complex. Ongoing work is being planned for 2009/10 including completing building audits to identify accessibility needs.

All new construction (through Infrastructure Ontario) is being planned to include accessibility requirements.

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 07 –Mar 10

Results Achieved:

MEI continues to consult with ORC on accessibility design standards for government owned buildings.

For more information

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

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Visit the Ministry of Community and Social Services Accessibility Ontario web portal at: www.mcass.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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