

MINISTRY OF Energy

2010-2011 ODA Accessibility Plan

English Version

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Introduction

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), 2005 sets out the roadmap to make Ontario accessible by 2025. Under this act, accessibility standards are being developed and implemented to break down barriers in key areas of everyday life.

These standards will increase accessibility for people with disabilities in the areas of customer service, information and communications, employment, transportation and the built environment.

The government of Ontario is preparing to lead the way towards an accessible province. In 2010 the government of Ontario was the first public service organization to report compliance with the first standard — Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Regulation (Ontario Regulation 429/07).

As we await additional standards under AODA, we are guided by the Ontario Human Rights Code and obligations set out in the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA).

Each year, the government sets the course to prevent, identify and remove barriers through annual accessibility plans required under the ODA.

Building on last year's plan, the 2010-11 accessibility plans will continue moving the Ministry of Energy towards the goal of an accessible province for all Ontarians.

To view other ministries' Accessibility Plans, please visit: Ontario.ca

Report on Accessibility Achievements for 2009-2010

Focus Area: Customer Service

Achievement

- The Ministry of Energy was in full compliance with the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Regulation 429/07 and reported as such by the scheduled due date of December 10, 2009.

Focus Area: Information and Communication

Achievements

- The Accessibility section of the ministry intranet was redeveloped for easier staff access to accessibility issues such as: documents, acts, regulations, tips sheets, policies, plans, standards, training, outside links and ministry contact information.
- The Ministry of Energy promoted staff awareness of the ODA and accessibility issues by posting the 2009-2010 MEI Accessibility Plan on the ministry intranet, as well as the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Regulation 429/07 and numerous tip sheets regarding accessible documents, alternative formats, hosting accessible meetings, TTY machines and the CNIB Clear Print Guide.
- The ministry Accessibility co-lead volunteered at this year's Accessibility Expo to aid in the day, as well as learn of new issues, advancements and upcoming standards.
- The Ministry of Energy's public facing website is fully accessible and continues to adhere to guidelines. In addition, the site adopted the use of accessibility technologies (i.e. - voice activated compatibility for access).

Focus Area: Employment

Achievement

- The Ministry of Energy worked with the Regional Recruitment Centre throughout the year and all new job descriptions and job advertisements were consistent with the requirements of the **ODA**. Also, all interview facilities were fully accessible and barrier-free. The option to have documents provided in accessible formats was also made available.

Focus Area: Other

Achievement

- The Ministry of Energy's legal branch conducted a review of the **Green Energy Act, 2009** (GEA) to ensure the appropriate language was used in the development of this act and to determine its effect on accessibility for persons with disabilities. In terms of language, the words, phrases and terms contained within the **GEA** appear to be quite neutral and do not, in legal's assessment, represent language which is inappropriate given the **ODA's** current language requirements.

Report on Accessible Customer Service Requirements

The Accessibility Standards for Customer Service (Ontario Regulation 429/07) came into force on January 1, 2008. All OPS ministries were required to comply with the Regulation by January 1, 2010.

The OPS was the first public organization to file its compliance report with the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario in January 2010. In order to sustain compliance with the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Regulation, it is vital that ministries continue to look for opportunities through their accessibility planning process, to continue to embed accessibility in all areas of planning, programs and policies.

Focus Area: Customer Service

Commitment: Ongoing

The Ministry of Energy will continue to enhance managers' awareness of **ODA/AODA** to improve ability to accommodate public/staff with disabilities.

Planned Actions:

The Ministry of Energy provides limited direct service to the public. The ministry's primary application of the **AODA** is focused on ensuring that employees have healthy, safe and accessible work places. This is achieved by working with partners to appropriately accommodate staff and train managers to understand their roles and responsibilities.

The majority of the Ministry of Energy's customers/clients are internal. We accommodate clients by providing guidance and consultation services on aspects of work such as manager responsibilities and ensuring an accessible work environment. We provide information on mandatory manager training sessions to all managers and roll out various forms of training to both managers and staff within the ministry.

Managers at the Ministry of Energy have been provided with information on the accommodation fund to ensure they are aware of how to access the fund for various accessibility and accommodation issues affecting staff. In addition, we will provide links to relevant websites and training.

The Service Management Branch will monitor, track and report on attendance at mandatory sessions that managers and staff will be enrolled in.

Implementation Timeframe: September 2007 - October 2011

Focus Area: Customer Service

Commitment: Ongoing

The Ministry of Energy will continue to review feedback on accessibility related issues and ensure that there will be continuous improvement in the way the ministry delivers goods and services to the public. The public facing site contains an email template to be used for feedback as well a TTY number for feedback

through this fully accessible route.

Planned Actions:

All feedback provided in person, in writing and by any other means will be analysed and collected to identify trends. These will be reviewed to ensure appropriate action was taken and to make improvements for the future.

The ministry has not received any feedback to date.

Implementation Timeframe: November 2010 – October 2011

Focus Area: Customer Service

Commitment: Ongoing

The Ministry of Energy will continue to promote, track and report on the e-learning courses: ***May I Help You*** and ***May I Help You – Supplementary***.

Planned Actions:

The Ministry of Energy will continue to encourage all staff to complete these training courses by encouraging staff to include them in their annual learning plans. These courses are mandatory for all new staff members.

As additional accessibility training becomes available it will be rolled out to staff and tracked to confirm participation rates.

Implementation Timeframe: November 2010 – October 2011

Focus Area: Customer Service

Commitment: Ongoing

The Ministry of Energy will continue to ensure timely investigation of disruptions within Ministry of Energy occupied buildings and ensure notices are posted to alert the public how they may access that specific location.

Planned Action:

The Ministry of Infrastructure will work through the Ontario Realty Corporation (ORC), the manager of government real estate assets, to ensure that disruption notices are posted in areas accessed by the public in a timely and accessible format.

Implementation Timeframe: October 2009 - October 2010

Information and Communication Commitments

Information and the methods of communication are key to delivering many government programs and services to the public. It is essential that we provide the same quality and service to everyone in the province.

In anticipation of the pending standards guiding Information and Communications, the government of Ontario is continuously looking for opportunities to prevent and remove barriers to person with disabilities when creating, procuring, conveying, receiving or distributing information and communications to the public.

Focus Area: Information and Communication

Commitment: Ongoing

The Ministry of Energy will ensure that materials and content posted to the ministry's internet site (public facing site) are accessible and that the website continues to comply with standards for usability by people with disabilities, reflecting the broad definition of 'disability' under the **ODA**.

In addition, the Ministry of Energy will ensure that, upon request, alternate or accessible formats of documents posted to the internal site/intranet are available to requesting staff as needed.

Planned Action:

The Service Management Branch will continue to meet and work with the Communications Branch and Webmaster (visual identity coordinator) to ensure that the Ministry of Energy's public facing site continues to be accessible and to discuss options and possible improvements to accessibility on both sites.

Implementation Timeframe: November 2010 – October 2011

Focus Area: Information and Communication

Commitment: Ongoing

The Ministry of Energy requires staff to incorporate accessibility considerations into the preparation of communication materials to ensure that communication products are accessible to everyone.

Planned Actions:

Encourage all staff to watch training videos prepared by the Diversity Office. These training videos include creating accessible documents.

Provide communication to all staff regarding best practices when sending documents and emails to ensure a greater level of accessibility.

Implementation Timeframe: November 2010 – October 2011

Focus Area: Information and Communication

Commitment: Ongoing

The Ministry of Energy will ensure continuous communication and liaison with Publications Ontario to maintain a list of products and documents that have been sent for accessible formatting, available in both French and English.

Planned Action:

The Ministry of Energy will continue to work with Publications Ontario by sending them all Ministry of Energy related public documents and publications. Through Publications Ontario, Ministry of Energy files will be made available by request to the public and employees in various accessible formats, such as Braille, large font and audio. Examples of Ministry of Energy documents obtainable through Publications Ontario are the **Green Energy Act** and other such pieces of legislation, the Multi-year Accessibility Plan, and other ministry policies and guidelines.

Implementation Timeframe: September 2007 – October 2011

Focus Area: Information and Communication

Commitment: Ongoing

The Ministry of Energy will continue to educate and inform staff of new regulations, acts, policies and requirements as they are introduced. For example, staff was notified that the Diversity Office's Inclusion Lens was finalized and that this tool was now meant to be used when developing new policies, regulations and communication to identify and remove barriers for people with disabilities.

Planned Action:

The Ministry of Energy will notify all staff when the planned CFLL course on using the Diversity Inclusion Lens is made available. This is to encourage all staff to learn of the new criteria and to implement it into their daily workings.

Implementation Timeframe: November 2010 – October 2011

Focus Area: Information and Communication

Commitment: Ongoing

The Ministry of Energy will continue to inform staff of accessibility & diversity courses as they become available from the CFLL.

Planned Action:

The Ministry of Energy will send emails to all staff, informing them of new courses they are encouraged to take and informing them when these courses are considered mandatory. Attendance in these courses will be promoted, tracked and reported upon.

Implementation Timeframe: November 2010 – October 2011

Focus Area: Information and Communication

Commitment: New

The Ministry of Energy supports investment in IT hardware and software which contribute to an accessible work environment and accessible information based products.

Planned Action:

Examples include purchase of PDF software which supports accessible formats, and promoting and educating on proper use of the technology (e.g link to intranet site), and adhering to corporate web design standards for both internal and external websites.

Implementation Timeframe: November 2010 – October 2011

Other Accessibility Commitments

Accessibility Improvement Initiatives to Identify, Remove or Prevent Barriers in preparation for AODA standards currently under development.

In anticipation of the upcoming standards, the Government of Ontario has planned several corporate initiatives in the following areas, Transportation, Employment, Built Environment and others. The goal of these focus areas is to make it easier for people with disabilities to travel in Ontario, ensure accessibility for people with disabilities across all stages of the employment life cycle and break down barriers in buildings. Many of the corporate initiatives identified for 2010-2011 aim to support ministries in their journey towards compliance with the upcoming standards.

To review a list of corporate initiatives please refer to the Ministry of Government Services 2010-2011 Accessibility Plan.

Focus Area: Employment

Commitment: Ongoing

The Ministry of Energy will work to ensure all new job descriptions and job advertisements are consistent with the requirements of the **ODA**.

Planned Action:

The Ministry of Energy will continue to work with the Regional Recruitment Centre throughout the year to ensure that all new job descriptions and job advertisements are consistent with the requirements of the **ODA**. Additionally, the ministry will commit to the implementation of fully accessible and barrier-free interview facilities. The option to have documents provided in accessible formats will also be made available.

Implementation Timeframe: November 2010 – October 2011

Focus Area: Built Environment

Commitment: New

The Ministry of Energy no longer has service level agreements with respect to facilities management and accommodation services. The Ministry will include accessible work environment best practices into each facility initiative to ensure individual needs are respected and wise investment in facility assets and equipment are made.

Planned Action:

These best practices include integrating accessible office design standards and engineering features, as well as accessibility and ergonomically supportive choices in products, furniture, fitting and finishes.

Implementation Timeframe: November 2010 – October 2011

Focus Area: Built Environment

Commitment: Ongoing

The Ministry of Energy will continue to work with building management and accommodation service providers to ensure that accessibility design standards are applied to all building projects.

Planned Actions:

The Ministry of Energy is dedicated to ensuring that accessibility design 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.

These matters will be addressed as requests for accommodations are made.

We plan to work with building management to ensure entranceway and emergency phones are accessible to people with disabilities.

Implementation Timeframe: November 2010 – October 2011

Focus Area:

Commitment: **Ongoing**

The Ministry of Energy will 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 Actions:

The Ministry of Energy committed to and established an active Joint Health and Safety Committee that meets on a regular basis to discuss the safety needs and concerns of the ministry. Accessibility guidelines will be a priority of the committee, paying special attention to ensuring that the workplace is kept free of physical barriers and always fully accessible. For example, by making sure that doorways are not blocked and that computer and network cables are tucked away neatly to prevent tripping.

Additionally, the ministry will continue to work with collective bargaining agents to assess volunteer interest in participating on the committee.

Implementation Timeframe: **September 2007 – October 2011**

Focus Area: **Other**

Commitment: **Ongoing**

The Ministry of Infrastructure will annually 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.

Planned Actions:

The Ministry of Energy will review the emergency plan and communication system to ensure accessibility requirements have been taken into account for staff with disabilities.

The Ministry of Energy will confirm that alternative work arrangements have been made, in the event of an emergency, for staff with disabilities.

Furthermore, The Ministry of Energy will review and update the recovery plans for all non-time critical services to include measures for employees with disabilities. An Accessibility Impact Statement will also be developed that defines barriers to accessibility, impacts on persons with disabilities and develops strategies for implementing solutions.

The ministry will continue to integrate the service disruption notice process into the Continuity of Operations Plan.

Implementation Timeframe: **October 2010 – September 2011**

Act(s), Regulation(s), Policy(s) being reviewed to prevent

Barriers to Persons with Disabilities

In support of the commitment to remove and prevent barriers for persons with disabilities, the Government of Ontario will continue to review all new legislation, and policies under development to identify and remove barriers.

The Ministry of Energy and its Legal Department has committed to continue to review all new legislation and regulations under development in order to identify and attempt to remove barriers to persons with disabilities. A link to the Diversity Office's Inclusion Lens has been dispersed to all staff members and will continue to be discussed and brought forward as a tool to be used when developing all policy, legislation, regulation, communication material and website content. When it becomes available, staff will be encouraged to take the CFLL Inclusion Lens course.

For the 2010-11 Ministry of Energy ODA Accessibility Plan, the Ministry of Energy has reviewed the Energy Consumer Protection Act, 2010 to identify and remove barriers to persons with disabilities. A summary of the suggested changes include:

- Information should be provided in alternative formats (electronic and text based, large print or audio/CD) for persons with disabilities;
- Recognition of an "electronic signature" as valid would present greater opportunity for independence in completing contractual relationships by persons with disabilities;
- Enhance existing consumer protection laws;
- Information should be available to consumers in different languages and plain language;
- The use of electronic media should be an acceptable format for contracting;
- The ability to cancel a contract without having to use any specific form would provide ample flexibility for persons with disabilities to provide for notification of cancellation in a host of different ways.

For More Information

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

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

Visit the [Ministry of Community and Social Services Accessibility Ontario](#) web portal. The site promotes accessibility and provides information and resources on how to make Ontario accessible province for everyone.

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

[ServiceOntario Publications](#)

Phone: 1-800-668-9938

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