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Ministry of Energy Accessibility Plan, 2011-2012

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Introduction

Each year, the Government of Ontario sets a course to prevent, identify and remove barriers for persons with disabilities. Every ministry participates through its annual accessibility plans, as required under the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001* (ODA).

The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA) is Ontario's roadmap to become barrier-free by 2025. It includes accessibility standards in:

- ▶ customer service
- ▶ information and communications
- ▶ employment
- ▶ transportation
- ▶ the built environment
- ▶ procurement

This year, the accessibility plans will help to inform planning requirements under the new Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) enacted last summer under the AODA. The IASR requires the Government of Ontario to develop a multi-year plan to prevent and remove barriers for persons with disabilities.

Our annual accessibility plan outlines the specific steps the government is taking to improve opportunities for persons with disabilities.

Building on last year's plan, our 2011-12 accessibility plan will continue moving the Ministry of Energy toward the goal of an accessible province for all Ontarians.

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

Section One: Report on Measures to Identify, Remove and Prevent Barriers in 2010-11

The Government of Ontario is working to achieve an accessible province by 2025.

In 2010-11, the government continued to comply with the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service regulation and continued to implement initiatives to enhance accessibility in other areas: employment, information and communication, transportation, the built environment and procurement.

This document includes a summary of the initiatives the Ministry of Energy implemented in 2010-11..

Customer Service

The Ministry of Energy is committed to ensuring that people with disabilities receive accessible goods and services with the same high quality and timelines as others.

As such, in 2010-11:

- ▶ 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 September 12, 2011.
- ▶ Step-by-step transcripts were developed from the six new Mission Possible series of training videos from the OPS Diversity Office and were posted to the intranet site. These were developed to assist staff with developing accessible documents, preparing documents for Braille transcription, using TTY machines and the Bell relay service and for interacting with customers with disabilities.
- ▶ No feedback was received from the public about our products or services for people with disabilities. As such, the feedback methods were reviewed in order to be certain they were clear and provided various means for the public to communicate with the ministry. It was determined that the Ministry of Energy provided a sufficient number of formats including email, telephone, mail and TTY and that these avenues were easily found by members of the public.
- ▶ The Ministry of Energy continues to promote, track and report on the e-learning courses, *May I Help You – Welcoming Customers with Disabilities* and *May I Help You – Supplementary: Ten Things You Need to Know About Accessible Customer Service*. These courses are mandatory for all new staff members.
- ▶ 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 the disrupted service and any alternatives that may exist. The ministry will continue to work through Infrastructure Ontario (IO), 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.

Information and Communications

The Ministry of Energy is committed to making government information and communications accessible to people with disabilities. The information we provide and the ways we communicate are key to delivering our programs and services to the public. In 2010 -11 we undertook a number of internal steps to support accessibility goals and obligations.

- ▶ A memo was sent from the CAO to all staff on January 14th, 2011 informing them of accessibility requirements, resources available to them and our accessibility commitments.
- ▶ The Service Management Branch organized a managers' training session which was held on January 11th, 2011. At this session a representative from the OPS Diversity Office provided a demonstration of the OPS Inclusion Lens. The discussion and presentation informed the managers of the new requirements to use the lens, the ways in which to use it and to whom in the ministry it pertained.
- ▶ The Accessibility section of the ministry's internal-facing intranet site is continually updated to reflect any changes or additions to requirements, policies and regulations and to add new resources and tip sheets for staff use.
- ▶ In addition, we took steps to ensure that our public-facing internet site for the Ministry of Energy continues to be fully accessible. The public-facing internet site provides clear links to the Ontario accessibility site and ways to contact or provide feedback to the ministry. The ministry ensures that material and content posted to the ministry's

public-facing site is accessible and that the website continues to comply with standards for usability by people with disabilities. In addition, the Ministry of Energy ensures that, upon request, alternate or accessible formats of documents will be made available.

- ▶ The ministry's accessibility lead held a review of the software available to key staff members to ensure they have the necessary software to make accessible PDFs. This was to ensure all Portable Document Formats (PDFs) being sent out to staff via email are accessible.
- ▶ A memo was sent from the Service Management Branch on February 1, 2011 informing management of the requirement to send only accessible versions of PDFs when emailing memos and documents to staff. The memo referred to the software needed to perform this task, the way in which to acquire this software and the steps required to develop accessible PDFs.
- ▶ 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. Training videos prepared by, and endorsed by, the OPS Diversity Office help to support this work.

Employment

The Ministry of Energy is committed to fair and accessible employment practices that attract and retain talented employees with disabilities. As such, in 2010-11:

- ▶ The Ministry of Energy worked with the Regional Recruitment Centre to be certain all new job descriptions and job advertisements were consistent with the requirements of the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001* (ODA).
- ▶ The Ministry of Energy ensured all interview facilities were fully accessible and barrier-free. The option to have documents provided in accessible formats was also made available.
- ▶ Managers were informed of the Employment Accommodation Fund available to financially assist with accommodations needed for staff with disabilities.

Built Environment

The Ministry of Energy is committed to greater accessibility in, out of and around the buildings we use. As such, in 2010-11:

- ▶ The Ministry of Energy ensured that accessibility design guidelines were applied to all building projects and ongoing maintenance; common areas were kept free of obstacles, ergonomic furniture was procured, and special tools/equipment were obtained to meet the needs of people with disabilities. These matters were addressed as requests for accommodations were made.
- ▶ The ministry included accessible work environment best practices into each facility initiative to ensure individual needs were respected and wise investment in facility assets and equipment were made. These best practices include integrating accessible office design guidelines, as well as accessibility and ergonomically supportive choices in products, furniture, fitting and finishes.

Procurement

The Ministry of Energy is committed to integrating accessibility considerations into our procurement processes. As such, in 2010-11:

- ▶ Policy and program areas considered the following when planning for procurement of goods and services:
 - ▶ The nature and impact of the barriers that the potential vendor with a disability might face in trying to respond to a procurement request for services;
 - ▶ Whether the goods or services being acquired would be used by employees with disabilities, members of the public with disabilities, including vendors or third party service providers.
- ▶ Reference to accessibility compliance was incorporated into ministry training materials.
- ▶ The ministry's intranet site provides a link to the Ministry of Government Services Supply Chain Management Division's tools/templates for quick access to the guidelines, checklist, and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) to help ensure ODA requirements are met when acquiring goods and services.

Other

- ▶ The Ministry of Energy performed inspections 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.
- ▶ The Ministry of Energy considered and addressed the needs of people with disabilities when reviewing, testing and updating the ministry's Continuity of Operations Plan.

Section Two: Measures Planned for 2011-12 and Beyond

This year, the Ministry of Energy's accessibility plan focuses on five areas. These initiatives will support compliance with the existing Accessibility Standards for Customer Service. They will also help us enhance accessibility in other areas:

- ▶ Employment
- ▶ Information & Communications
- ▶ The Built Environment
- ▶ Procurement

Customer Service

The Ministry of Energy is committed to ensuring that people with disabilities receive accessible goods and services with the same high quality and timelines as others. As such, the Ministry of Energy plans to focus on the following areas.

The Ministry of Energy will review any feedback received on accessibility related issues to ensure the ministry delivers goods and services to the public in a manner that takes their disability into consideration. The ministry's public-facing site will continue to offer the public multiple avenues to provide feedback, such as email, mail, phone and TTY.

All feedback provided will be collected and analysed 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.

Timeframe: Ongoing

The Ministry of Energy will continue to promote, track and report on the e-learning courses: *May I Help You – Welcoming Customers with Disabilities* and *May I Help You – Supplementary: Ten Things You Need to Know About Accessible Customer Service*.

The Ministry of Energy will continue to promote training courses for all staff. 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.

Timeframe: Ongoing

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

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.

We accommodate staff 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 continue to 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.

Timeframe: 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 the disrupted service and any alternatives there may be.

The Ministry of Energy will work through Infrastructure Ontario (IO), 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.

Timeframe: Ongoing

Information and Communications

The Ministry of Energy is committed to making government information and communications accessible to people with disabilities. The information we provide and the ways we communicate are key to delivering our programs and services to the public. As such, the Ministry of Energy plans to focus on the following areas.

The Ministry of Energy will ensure that material and content posted to the ministry's public-facing internet 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 alternate or accessible formats of documents posted to the public-facing intranet site are available upon request.

The Communications Branch Webmaster (visual identity coordinator) will ensure that the Ministry of Energy's public-facing internet site continues to be accessible.

Timeframe: 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.

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.

Timeframe: Ongoing

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

Staff will continue to be encouraged to watch training videos prepared by, or endorsed by, the Diversity Office. These training videos include creating accessible documents.

Service Management Branch will provide communication to all staff regarding best practices when sending documents and emails to ensure a greater level of accessibility.

Timeframe: Ongoing

The Ministry of Energy will continue to educate and inform staff of new regulations, acts, policies and requirements as they are introduced. The Ministry of Energy will also continue to inform staff of accessibility and diversity courses as they become available from the Centre for Leadership and Learning (CFL).

The Ministry of Energy will send emails to all staff, informing them of new acts, regulations, policies and other requirements and best practices. The Ministry of Energy will also alert staff of courses they are encouraged to take, particularly when these courses are considered mandatory. The Ministry of Energy will promote, track and report on attendance at these courses.

Timeframe: Ongoing

Employment

The Ministry of Energy is committed to fair and accessible employment practices that attract and retain talented employees with disabilities. As such, the Ministry of Energy plans to focus on the following areas.

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

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.

Timeframe: Ongoing

The Ministry of Energy will continue to enhance managers' awareness of ODA/AODA to improve their ability to accommodate staff with disabilities. We accommodate clients by providing guidance and consultation services on aspects of work such as manager responsibilities and ensuring an accessible work environment.

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 have enrolled in.

Timeframe: Ongoing

Built Environment

The Ministry of Energy is committed to greater accessibility in, out of, and around the buildings we use. As such, the Ministry of Energy plans to focus on the following areas.

The Ministry of Energy 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.

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

Timeframe: 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 ministry building projects.

The Ministry of Energy is dedicated to ensuring that accessibility design standards are applied to accommodation 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.

Timeframe: Ongoing

Procurement

The Ministry of Energy is committed to integrating accessibility guidelines into its procurement processes and will continue to incorporate accessibility considerations into its procurement activities. As such:

The Ministry of Energy will continue to consider accessibility when planning for procurement of goods and services and incorporate the requirements into the procurement process.

Procurement documents, where applicable, will specify the desired accessibility standards to be met and provide guidelines for the evaluation of the proposals with respect to those standards.

Guidelines and staff training will be provided as new Ministry of Government Services directives and/or policies are updated.

Accessibility links and information for staff reference will continue to be available on the ministry's intranet site.

Timeframe: Ongoing

Other

The Ministry of Energy is committed to identifying every method the ministry can incorporate to be barrier-free for persons with disabilities. As such, the Ministry of Energy also plans to focus on the following areas.

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.

The Ministry of Energy's Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC) meets on a regular basis to discuss the safety needs and concerns of the ministry. Accessibility guidelines are 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.

Timeframe: Ongoing

The Ministry of Energy will annually consider and address the needs of employees with disabilities when reviewing, testing and updating the ministry's Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) by incorporating recommendations and advice from the Emergency Preparedness Guide for People with Disabilities/Special Needs.

The Ministry of Energy will review the COOP plan components, including response, evacuation, recovery and communications sections to ensure accessibility requirements have been taken into account for staff with disabilities.

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

Timeframe: Ongoing

Section Three: Review of Acts, Regulations and Policies

In support of our commitment to improve accessibility for people with disabilities, the Ministry of Energy will continue to review government initiatives, including legislation and policies, to identify and remove barriers.

Acts, Regulations and Policies Reviewed in 2010-11

The Ministry of Energy is committed to ensuring that our Acts and Regulations are reviewed for potential accessibility barriers. As such:

- ▶ In April 2011, the Ministry of Energy participated in a training session for multidisciplinary teams from all ministries on how to use the OPS Inclusion Lens to review laws for accessibility barriers.
- ▶ The Ministry of Energy's Legal Branch conducted a thorough review of the *Energy Consumer Protection Act, 2010*. This review was conducted using the OPS Inclusion Lens to identify any potential barriers for persons with disabilities.
- ▶ A complete list of statutes administered by the Ministry of Energy was compiled to identify the Acts the Ministry of Energy is responsible for reviewing.

Acts, Regulations and Policies to Be Reviewed in 2011-12

Acts and Regulations

The Ministry of Energy is committed to reviewing all of its legislation by the 2015 deadline, and has established a flexible plan to manage the work involved. In this regard, the ministry intends to review the following statutes in the 2011-12 timeline:

Ministry of Energy Act, 2011

Electricity Act, 1998

Ontario Energy Board Act, 1998

However, where, for reasons of workload and resources, it is not possible to review certain particular statutes in one planning period, the ministry will commit to bringing that legislation forward to the next review period, and may, where possible, substitute other statutes it administers in its place, with a view to ensuring that the 2015 deadline is respected.

Policies

The Ministry of Energy is committed to ensuring that all future policies are developed using the OPS Inclusion Lens to be certain they are free of barriers. As such, in the future the ministry will:

Continue to encourage staff to include in their yearly learning plans the Inclusion Lens e-course available through the Centre for Leadership and Learning.

Continue to encourage staff to use the Inclusion Lens when developing or reviewing policies.

Timeline: Ongoing

Inclusion Lens

In 2011, the Ontario Public Service launched the Inclusion Lens. The Lens is an innovative tool to help address diversity and accessibility. With this tool, ministries can identify and address potential barriers to people with disabilities, and others that may be present in existing or proposed legislation, policies, programs, practices or services.

In 2010-11, the Ministry of Energy:

- Ensured that a multidisciplinary team attended the one-day training on using the Inclusion Lens to review legislation for barriers to persons with disabilities.
- Used the Inclusion Lens to review the *Energy Consumer Protection Act, 2010* to identify any potential barriers to persons with disabilities

In the future, the ministry will:

Continue to use the Inclusion Lens to review acts, policies, programs, practices, services and regulations.

Encourage staff to include in their yearly learning plans the Inclusion Lens e-course available through the Centre for Leadership and Learning.

Encourage staff to use the Inclusion Lens when developing or reviewing policies, programs or service.

Timeline: Ongoing

Glossary of Terms/Acronyms

AODA – Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act

CFLL – Centre for Leadership and Learning

COOP – Continuity of Operations Plan

FAQ – Frequently Asked Questions

IASR – Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation

IO – Infrastructure Ontario

JHSC – Joint Health and Safety Committee

ODA – Ontarians with Disabilities Act

OPS – Ontario Public Service

PDF – Portable Document Formats

For More Information

Questions or comments about the Ministry of Energy accessibility plan are always welcome.

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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 an accessible province for everyone.

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

[ServiceOntario Publications](#)

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