

MINISTRY OF NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT AND MINES

*2008-2009
Accessibility Plan*



ISSN# 1 708-3842

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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 Northern Development and Mines' sixth annual 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 Northern Development and Mines 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 at:

http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/mcass/english/pillars/accessibilityOntario/planning/ministries_accplans08.htm.

Report on Status of Customer Service Requirements

Focus Area: Customer Service

Commitment: New

Planned Action(s): The Ministry of Northern Development and Mines will conduct a Gap Analysis based on the 14 key areas of the Customer Service Standard and will incorporate Ontario's Customer Service Standard. The 14 key areas are:

1. Establish policies, practices and procedures on providing goods or services to people with disabilities.
2. Use reasonable efforts to ensure that your policies, practices and procedures are consistent with the core principles of independence, dignity, integration and equality and opportunity
3. Set a policy on allowing people to use their own personal assistive devices to access your goods use your services and any other measures your organization offers (assistive devices, services, or methods) to enable them to access your goods and use your services.
4. Communicate with a person with a disability in a manner that takes into account his or her disability.
5. Allow people with disabilities to be accompanied by their guide dog or service animal in those areas of the premises you own or operate that are open to the public, unless the animal is excluded by another law. If a service animal is excluded by law, use other measures to provide services to the person with a disability.
6. Permit people with disabilities who use a support person to bring that person with them while accessing goods or services in premises open to the public or third parties.
7. Where admission fees are charged, provide notice ahead of time on what admission, if any, would be charged for a support person of a person with a disability.
8. Provide notice when facilities or services that people with disabilities rely on to access or use your goods or services are temporarily disrupted.

9. Train staff, volunteers, contractors and any other people who interact with the public or other third parties on your behalf on a number of topics as outlined in the customer service standard.
10. Train staff, volunteers, contractors and any other people who are involved in developing your policies, practices and procedures on the provision of goods or services on a number of topics as outlined in the customer service standard.
11. Establish a process for people to provide feedback on how you provide goods or services to people with disabilities and how you will respond to any feedback and take action on any complaints. Make the information about your feedback process readily available to the public.
12. Document in writing all policies, practices and procedures for providing accessible customer service and meet other document requirements set out in the standard.
13. Notify customers that documents required under the customer service standard are available upon request.
14. When giving documents required under the customer service standard to a person with a disability, provide the information in a format that takes into account the person's disability.

Programs/operational policies will be reviewed to ensure they are consistent with the accessibility regulatory and policy framework and will make plans to address gaps, if any, that may be uncovered.

Implementation Timeframe: September 2008 - March 2009

Results Achieved: The ministry will report on results in next year's plan.

Focus Area: Customer Service

Commitment: New

Planned Action(s): The Ministry of Northern Development and Mines will create AODA Customer Service Standard written policies, practices and procedures on providing goods or services to people with disabilities.

These policies, practices and procedures will be consistent with the principles of independence, dignity, integration and equality of opportunity.

These policies, practices and procedures will address such areas as use of service animals and support persons, notice of temporary disruptions, training for staff and use of personal assistive devices to access goods and services.

Implementation Timeframe: March 2009 – September 2009

Results Achieved: The ministry will report on results in next year's plan.

Focus Area: Customer Service

Commitment: New

Planned Action(s): The Ministry of Northern Development and Mines will provide training to staff regarding proper customer service protocols for people with disabilities. This training will be provided to everyone in our organization who deals with the public as well as other third parties who act on our behalf.

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 2009 – January 2010

Results Achieved: The ministry will report on results in next year's plan.

Report on Other Accessibility Commitments

Focus Area: Other

Impact: Act

Commitment: Ongoing

The ministry will continue to consider acts or regulations for a barrier review analysis as part of the regular planning cycle. As well, the ministry will ensure that new statutes use appropriate language with respect to people with disabilities and meet the objectives of the AODA.

Planned Action(s): Legal Services Branch is currently rewriting the *Ontario Mining Act*. In doing so, the Legal Services Branch will use the OPS Accessibility Lens, which is a tool for policy and program development, to ensure that all amendments are AODA compliant. As well, the ministry will continue to consider new acts or regulations for a barrier review analysis as part of the regular planning cycle.

Implementation Timeframe: September 2008 – September 2009

Results Achieved: Due to the length and complexity of this act, the review process will take some time. The results will be reported in next year's ODA plan.

Focus Area: Employment

Impact: Program

Commitment: Ongoing

Provide training to all new managers on accommodating employees who have disabilities.

Planned Action(s): Human Resources/Strategic Business Unit will add the training to the new employee's checklist, which is provided in their orientation package and follow-up in the manager's first year to ensure that the training was completed.

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 2008 – January 2009

Results Achieved: The training was included in the new employee's checklist. Follow-up was conducted and all new managers had completed the training.

Focus Area: Built Environment**Impact: Service****Commitment: Completed**

Have regard for accessibility in government-funded capital programs in accordance with Barrier-Free Guidelines through new ServiceOntario Centres being built in Sudbury and Red Lake.

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 2008 – Dec 2008**Results Achieved:**

The centre in Sudbury has been completed according to Barrier-Free Guidelines, while the centre in Red Lake will be complete by December 2008.

Focus Area: Communications and Information**Impact: Program Service****Commitment: Ongoing**

Education and awareness will continue to be a priority to build employee awareness of types of disabilities and how to respond to persons with disabilities.

Planned Action(s):

Expand on Accessibility Awareness Week to include articles surrounding the new standards as they are implemented and include these articles as well “Accessibility Bites” in the ministry newsletter. Continue to provide accessibility awareness training to all ministry staff.

Implementation Timeframe: September 2008 – September 2009**Results Achieved:**

Articles surrounding different accessibility topics were posted on the ministry’s intranet site and sent out to staff through public folders during Accessibility Awareness Week. Accessibility Bites appear in the ministry newsletter.

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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ServiceOntario Publications
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TTY Service: 1-800-268-7095
Fax: 613-545-4223
Website: <http://www.serviceontario.ca/publications>

Queen's Printer for Ontario

ISSN # 1 708-3842

Ce document est disponible en français.