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2007-2008 Accessibility Plan

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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 the fall of 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 These obligations will remain in effect until they are repealed and replaced by standards under the new act.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 Labour. It highlights the achievements of the 2006-07 plan and outlines the commitments for 2007-08 so that no new barriers are created and, over time, existing ones are removed.

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

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Message from the Minister



This year marks the second anniversary of the landmark [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005](#), (AODA)--legislation that will require the development, implementation and enforcement of accessibility standards in key areas of daily living.

As the Minister of Labour, I am committed to fairness and balance for the province's workplaces and for all citizens. This commitment includes accessibility for all Ontarians with disabilities.

I am proud that the Ministry of Labour (MOL) is building on the success of our previous four plans and is 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 general public, or ministry stakeholders.

Along with striving for barrier-free service, whether it is in person, at a MOL regional office, or accessing a document on our website, I am proud that the Ministry of Labour is the lead Ministry for the development of the Employment Accessibility Standards under the AODA.

Under the [Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001](#) (ODA) 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 is the fifth year that plans have been written and are being implemented by organizations such as ours across the province.

This Accessibility Plan outlines what we have done and are doing to support and complement the government's achievements to date in improving accessibility, including:

- 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 the fall of 2007.

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

This ministry continues to work to better educate staff on accessibility. In the past year we have participated in the Assistant Deputy Ministers' Committee to support the implementation of AODA and we have taken the lead for the development of employment accessibility standards under the AODA. 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,

The Honourable Steve Peters
Minister of Labour

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Report on Achievements

2006 - 2007 Accessibility Improvement Initiatives

The Ministry of Labour was successful in achieving the planned commitments outlined in its 2006-07 accessibility plan. The commitments for 2007-08 were developed within the ministry's various program areas. Most of the commitments were continued from the previous year, as ongoing monitoring and improvement initiatives in those areas were required.

Customer Service

Section 5 of the ODA--Accessibility in Procurement of Goods and Services

Commitment:

Program areas will be required to take accessibility issues into account when procuring goods and services and to implement the [Ministry of Government Services](#) (MGS) guidelines on procurement.

Action:

1. MGS guidelines were provided to new managers and staff through the ministry's orientation information package.
2. Ministry procurement practices were reviewed regularly; they continue to meet requirements of the MGS guidelines.
3. Guidance and direction was provided to managers and staff responsible for procurement in regard to accessibility issue.
4. Managers, with the help of the Economics and Transportation Cluster (ETC), adhered to the ministry's requirement that all Internet applications being procured were accessible to people with disabilities.

Timeframe:

On-going throughout 2006-07 for all the above.

Section 6 of the ODA--Improvements in Accessibility of Ministry Internet Sites

Commitment:

Continue to ensure that all new information posted to the existing external websites and all new external websites being developed is fully accessible to people with disabilities.

Action:

1. The Economics and Transportation Cluster (ETC) and the Communications and Marketing Branch (CMB) championed accessibility and advised program areas on website accessibility issues.
2. ETC and CMB continued to ensure that new Internet applications implemented and managed by ETC were accessible to people with disabilities. A ministry process was established that provides for ETC to notify the website administrator and provide assistance where possible in those instances where websites are managed by a customer.
3. The MOL LabNet intranet site was the focus of an e-communications review this past year and as a result, will be redesigned to be more user-friendly and accessible with a focus on internal business. The CMB continued to advocate for the production of new published materials in accessible alternative formats.
4. The CMB continued to champion accessibility and advise program areas on intranet accessibility issues. The CMB provided guidance to program areas that requested assistance in preparing publications in alternate format.

Timeframe:

On-going throughout 2006-07 for all the above.

Programs and Services

Commitment:

Ensure that ODA requirements are taken into account in Results-based Plans.

Action:

1. Finance and Administration Branch (FAB) provided advice on ODA requirement to the program areas.
2. The ministry's accessibility working group worked with the Finance and Administration Branch (FAB) to develop a process and guidelines for any new

initiatives to ensure that accessibility issues, if any, are appropriately addressed.

Timeframe:

On-going throughout 2006-07 for all the above.

Commitment:

Enhance ODA awareness for managers and employees.

Action:

1. Human Resources Branch (HRB) continued to provide the latest ODA information and tips to managers and employees on improving accessibility.
2. ODA issues were incorporated into an orientation package developed by HRB and distributed to managers and employees. The orientation package will be updated as per amendments or changes in the act on an on-going basis for new employees.
3. Timely implementation of the ministry's commitments and strategies continue to be an ongoing responsibility for ministry managers and staff, including the ministry's accessibility planning working group.

Timeframe:

On-going throughout 2006-07 for all the above.

Commitment:

Respond to and assist the general public to resolve disability issues.

Action:

1. The ministry's ODA e-mail account is monitored regularly for requests for assistance from different program areas in resolving disability issues from both internal and external sources.
2. HRB provided the latest/available ODA information and tips to improve/resolve the accessibility issues. There has been ongoing consultation with the program areas, the Accessibility Directorate Office (ADO) and other ministries.

Timeframe:

On-going throughout 2006-07 for all the above.

Section 10 of the ODA--Ministry Accessibility Planning

Commitment:

The ministry's accessibility planning working group will continue to coordinate and monitor the development and implementation of the ministry's accessibility plan.

Action:

1. Finance & Administration Branch (FAB) and Human Resources (HRB) worked with program areas on a case-by-case basis to identify and address accessibility issues.
2. Updates on the accessibility plans, including program area commitments are being established with quarterly reports going to Senior Management Committee (SMC).
3. Communications & Marketing Branch (CMB) & HRB continue to provide managers and employees, through established internal communications and other channels (e. g. the ministry's ODA e-mail account), with suggestions for accessibility improvement.

Timeframe:

On-going throughout 2006-07 for all the above.

Commitment:

The ministry's accessibility planning working group will continue to look for ways to improve the ministry's accessibility plan.

Action:

1. Joint Health and Safety Committee/ODA Planning Team began a pilot program of co-operative site inspections at head office during 2006-07. The program will continue in 2007-08.
2. The site inspection reporting process is being developed with senior management for completion in the second quarter of 2007.

Timeframe:

2006-07

Employment

Section 8 of the ODA--Employment Accommodation

Commitment:

Accommodate the accessibility needs of employees/applicants with disabilities.

Action:

1. Reminders about the importance of accommodating the needs of employees and job applicants with disabilities were communicated through internal email, including one-on-one discussions with managers and human resources staff.
2. Tele-typewriter (TTY) staff training was provided to program areas as needed.
3. The ministry applied to the Employment Accommodation Fund (EAF) to meet identified accessibility needs during the 2006-07 period with six applications submitted and approved.

Timeframe:

On-going throughout 2006-07 for all the above.

Commitment:

Ensure that our managers and supervisors take the ODA on-line training.

Action:

1. All new managers/supervisors are directed by HR through email to complete the ODA on-line training within 90 days.
2. The ministry is in the process of including ODA on-line training as part of a Ministry orientation program for newly appointed managers/supervisors.

Timeframe:

On-going throughout 2006-07 for all the above.

Policies

Commitment:

Continue to monitor the application of staffing policy/process to ensure that accessibility issues are properly addressed and accommodated.

Action:

1. Human resources staff were reminded through internal communications to ensure that applicants with accessibility issues were reasonably accommodated and that Human Resources Branch (HRB) provide advice and assistance to managers on these matters.

2. A variety of methods were used for recruitment activities to ensure timely and effective communication with applicants, including those with disabilities, e.g.
 - Phone broadcast service (for applicants with a visual impairment).
 - Mass e-mail communication (specialized testing methods for applicants with a hearing loss).
3. Managers who hired employees under the Summer Experience Program (SEP) were reminded of the higher age limit for people with disabilities (29 instead of 24) and to provide appropriate accommodation for qualified candidates. This reminder will be included as part of the SEP information package to managers in 2007-08.

Timeframe:

On-going throughout 2006-07 for all the above.

Communications and Information

Section 7 of the ODA--Publications in Alternative Format

Commitment:

Provide publications in alternative formats to people with disabilities.

Action:

1. The Communications and Marketing Branch (CMB) has continued to publish almost exclusively in accessible electronic formats. The occasional print piece (e.g., new Family Medical Leave brochure) has also been made available online in PDF and HTML formats. The Occupational Health & Safety Branch (OHSB) publications have been transferred to Service Ontario--Publications Ontario, which is better equipped to provide publications in alternative format for people with disabilities. All publications are in a PDF format that allows viewing at large magnification and printed copies are provided as per request.
2. The CMB provided guidance to program areas requiring assistance in preparing publications in alternative formats. All publications are in a PDF format that allows viewing at large magnification. Printed copies are provided on request.
3. The CMB continued to advocate for the production of new published materials in alternative formats.

Timeframe:

On-going throughout 2006-07 for all the above.

Built Environment

Section 4 of the ODA--Accessibility to Government Buildings, Structures and Premises

Commitment:

Ensure that ministry facilities (including future locations) are accessible to people with disabilities.

Action:

1. Ontario Realty Corporation (ORC) Barrier-Free Guidelines have been applied during renovations to the following locations:
 1. Office of the Worker Adviser--Toronto (in progress)
 2. Regional Office--Newmarket
 3. Regional Office--North Bay
2. Business Service Unit of Finance & Administration Branch (FAB) worked with managers to identify opportunities and address areas that require accessibility improvement.

Timeframe:

On-going throughout 2006-07 for all the above.

Acts and Regulations

Commitment:

Will continue to monitor the application of ministry related acts and regulations to ensure that there are no barriers to people with disabilities.

Action:

1. Legal Service Branch (LSB) and Policy and Labour Management Services Division (PLMS) continue to be vigilant in monitoring the application of ministry related statutes and regulations to identify accessibility barriers or issues.
2. The Ministry of Labour will continue to be the lead ministry for the development of the Employment Accessibility Standard related to the AODA, 2005.

Timeframe:

1. Ongoing, pending amendments to existing acts and regulations or enactment of new acts and regulations.
2. 2007-09

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Measures to Prevent New Barriers

Commitments and Strategies for 2007-2008

The commitments for 2007-08 have been developed with input from various program areas in the ministry. Many of the commitments continue from last year, as ongoing monitoring and improvement initiatives.

Customer Service

Section 5 of the ODA--Accessibility in Procurement of Goods and Services

Commitment:

Program areas will take accessibility issues into account in procurement of goods and services and adhere to the [Ministry of Government Services](#) (MGS) guidelines on procurement.

Status:

Ongoing, continue to build on 2006-07 success.

Action:

1. MGS guidelines will be provided to new managers and staff who have procurement responsibilities through the ministry's orientation package.
2. Current and new procurement practices will be continuously reviewed to ensure they meet requirements of the MGS guidelines.
3. Guidance and direction will be provided to managers and staff responsible for procurement as and when required.
4. Managers, with the help of the Economics and Transportation Cluster (ETC), will continue to apply the ministry's requirement that all Internet applications being procured are accessible to people with disabilities.

Timeframe:

Ongoing for all the above.

Section 6 of the ODA--Improvements in Accessibility of Ministry Internet Sites**Commitment:**

All new information posted to the existing and new external websites are fully accessible to people with disabilities.

Status:

Ongoing

Action:

1. The Communications and Marketing Branch (CMB) will continue work closely with program areas to address website accessibility issues.
2. CMB and The Economic and Transportation Cluster (ETC) will ensure that new Internet applications implemented and managed by ETC are accessible to people with disabilities. Established ministry process will be followed that provides for ETC to notify the website administrator and provide assistance where possible in instances where websites are managed by a customer.
3. As identified through the 2006-07 e-communication review, the MOL intranet site, that focuses on internal business, will be redesigned to be user-friendly and accessible.
4. The CMB will continue to advocate for the production of new published materials in accessible alternative formats.
5. The CMB will also continue to advise program areas on intranet accessibility issues and provide guidance to program areas that request assistance in preparing publications in alternative formats.

Timeframe:

On-going for all the above

Programs and Services**Commitment:**

Ensure that ODA requirements are taken into account in Results-based Planning.

Status:

Ongoing

Action:

1. Program areas will be reminded of the need to consider ODA requirements in developing or implementing any new activities and initiatives.
2. New initiatives will be reviewed by Finance & Administration Branch (FAB) to ensure accessibility issues, are taken into account during the Results-based Planning process.

Timeframe:

On-going for all the above

Commitment:

Enhance ODA awareness for managers and employees.

Status:

On-going

Action:

1. Human Resources Branch (HRB) will continue to provide ODA information and tips on improving accessibility to managers and employees via internal communication tools.
2. ODA issues will be maintained as a standard feature in the orientation package developed by HRB and updated as needed for distribution to new employees.
3. Implementation of the ministry's accessibility commitments and strategies will continue to be an ongoing responsibility for ministry managers and staff, including the ministry's accessibility planning working group.

Timeframe:

On-going for all the above.

Commitment:

Resolve disability issues by responding to and assisting the general public.

Status:

Ongoing

Action:

1. Human Resources Branch (HRB) will provide ODA information and tips on improving accessibility to managers and employees via internal communication tools.
2. HRB will provide the latest available ODA information and tips to improve the accessibility issue, and resolve disability issues from both internal and external sources. There will be ongoing consultation with the program areas, the Accessibility Directorate Office (ADO) and other ministries.

Timeframe:

On-going for all the above.

Section 10 of the ODA--Ministry Accessibility Planning

Commitment:

The ministry's accessibility planning working group will remain accountable for coordinating and monitoring the development and implementation of the ministry's accessibility plan.

Status:

On-going

Action:

1. As part of their on-going responsibilities, the Ministry's Finance & Administration Branch (FAB) and Human Resources Branch (HRB) will continue to work closely with program areas to address and identify accessibility issues.
2. Updates on the ministry's accessibility plan and program area will be established with quarterly reports going to Senior Management Committee (SMC).
3. Communications & Marketing Branch (CMB) & HRB will continue to provide managers and employees, through established internal communications and other channels (e. g. the ministry's ODA e-mail account), with suggestions for accessibility improvement.

Timeframe:

On-going for all the above.

Commitment:

The ministry's accessibility planning working group will continue to look for ways to improve the ministry's accessibility plan.

Action:

1. Representatives from Ministry's Accessibility Planning group, Joint Health & Safety Committee, Business Support Unit (responsible for facilities management) and Human Resources Branch, will continue to work toward the development and implementation of a strategy to enhance the ministry's efforts to improve accessibility for the employees and people with disabilities who come in contact with the ministry.
2. A joint review of the head office Emergency Evacuation Protocols will be undertaken to ensure staff with disabilities are adequately protected in case of Emergency Evacuation situations.

Timeframe:

1. Ongoing.
2. Third quarter 2007-08

Employment

Section 8 of the ODA--Employment Accommodation

Commitment:

Accommodate the accessibility needs of employees/ applicants with disabilities.

Status:

Ongoing

Action:

1. Reminders regarding the importance of accommodating the needs of employees and job applicants with disabilities will continue to be communicated through internal emails, one-on-one etc. to managers and human resources staff.
2. As an on-going commitment, tele-typewriter (TTY) staff training will be provided to program areas as needed.
3. Applications will be made to the Employment Accommodation Fund to meet accessibility needs of the ministry on an as-needed basis.

Timeframe:

On-going for all of the above.

Commitment:

Ensure that our managers and supervisors take the ODA on-line training.

Status:

Ongoing

Action:

1. All new managers/supervisors will be directed by HR to complete the ODA on-line training within 90 days.
2. The ministry is in the process of including ODA on-line training as part of the orientation program for newly appointed managers/supervisors on an on-going basis.

Timeframe:

On-going for all of the above.

Policies

Commitment:

Continue to monitor the application of staffing policy/process to ensure that accessibility issues are properly addressed and accommodated.

Status:

Ongoing

Action:

1. Human Resources staff will be reminded regularly to ensure that applicants with accessibility issues are appropriately accommodated. The Human Resources Branch (HRB) will provide appropriate advice and assistance on accessibility issues to managers as required.
2. A variety of recruitment methods are available to ensure timely and effective communication with applicants including:
 - o Phone broadcast service (for applicants with a visual impairment)
 - o Mass e-mail communication (for applicants with a hearing loss).
3. In order to provide appropriate accommodation for qualified candidates, managers hiring employees under the Summer Experience Program (SEP), will be reminded

and informed of any changes to the ODA act. This reminder has been and will continue to be included as part of the SEP information package to managers.

Timeframe:

On-going for all of the above

Communications and Information

Section 7 of the ODA--Publications in Alternative Format

Commitment:

Provide publications in alternative formats for people with disabilities.

Status:

Complete

Action:

1. Continue to provide publications in electronic alternative, accessible formats, as technology permits.
2. Continue to work with Publications Ontario to provide the ministry's new and existing publications in alternate formats to people with disabilities, as requested.
3. Recommend the publication of new materials in alternative formats for people with disabilities as appropriate.
4. Provide guidance to program areas requesting assistance in preparing publications in alternative formats.

Timeframe:

On-going for all of the above.

Built Environment

Section 4 of the ODA--Accessibility to Government Buildings, Structures and Premises

Commitment:

Use every effort to ensure that ministry facilities (including future locations) are accessible to people with disabilities.

Status:

Ongoing

Action:

1. ORC Barrier-Free Design Guidelines will be applied in all relocation/ renovation projects.
2. Business Service Unit of Finance & Administration Branch (FAB) continue to work with managers to identify opportunities and address areas that require accessibility improvements (as an employer and a service provider).

Timeframe:

On-going for all of the above.

Acts and Regulations**Commitment:**

Continue to monitor the application of ministry related acts and regulations to ensure that there are no barriers to people with disabilities.

Status:

Ongoing

Action:

1. Legal Service Branch (LSB) and Policy and Labour Management Services Division (PLMS) will continue to be vigilant by monitoring the application of ministry related statutes and regulations to identify accessibility barriers or issues.
2. As part of the standards development process under AODA 2005, the Ministry of Labour will continue to be the lead ministry, working with and supporting an Employment Accessibility Standards Development Committee (EA-SDC). The EA-SDC will develop the proposed employment accessibility standard.

Timeframe:

1. Ongoing, pending amendments to existing acts and regulations or enactment of new acts and regulations.
2. 2007-2009

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For More Information

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

Please phone:

General inquiry number: 416-326-7200

TTY number: 416-314-5811

E-mail: ODAinquiries@ontario.ca

Ministry website address: www.labour.gov.on.ca

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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