

MINISTRY OF TOURISM

2008-2009 Accessibility Plan



ISSN # 1715-5282

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Report on Status of Customer Service Requirements	2
Report on Other Accessibility Commitments	7
Accessibility Improvement Initiatives to Identify, Remove or Prevent Barriers in preparation for AODA standards currently under development.	7
For More Information	19

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 Tourism's 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 Tourism 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_accplans09.htm.

Report on Status of Customer Service Requirements

The new Accessibility Standards for Customer Service came into force on January 1, 2008. To begin to transition OPS ministries to the new regulation, this section has been added to the ODA Planning Template to highlight customer service initiatives.

All OPS ministries must comply with the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service by January 1, 2010. To assist ministries with planning and compliance, initiatives in this section should correspond to the 11 requirements under the new Accessibility Standards for Customer Service under the AODA, as listed below.

NOTE: MGCS is currently working on a Service Directive, corporate policies and guidelines that may be used by each ministry to satisfy some of the following requirements. Further information on what can be used/leveraged will be provided to ministry ODA planning leads shortly.

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.

NOTE: This is a summary of requirements of the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service. To view the official regulation, go to www.e-laws.gov.on.ca, and click on “Current Consolidated Law” to do a keyword search for “429/07”.

Focus Area: Customer Service**Commitment: Ongoing**

The ministry's attractions, Fort William Historical Park and Huronia Historical Parks, will maintain their standing policy to provide free admission to the attendants of people with disabilities (with no identification required for either party).

Planned Action(s): Fort William Historical Park and Huronia Historical Parks maintain their standing policy regarding attendant admissions.

Implementation Timeframe: September 2007 - March 2010

Results Achieved: The Fort William Historical Park, maintained its long standing, Minister approved, policy on Disabled Persons Admissions as follows:

For all disabled persons regular admission fees will be charged. However, those requiring the assistance of an aide, the aide regardless of age will be admitted free of charge.

Focus Area: Customer Service

Commitment: New

Encourage all MTour staff to take the 'May I Help You?' e-course.

Planned Action(s): Post a link to the 'May I Help You?' e-course on MTour's intranet. Follow this up with an email from the DM encouraging all staff to take the course.

Implementation Timeframe: September 2007 - March 2010

Results Achieved: Pending.

Focus Area: Customer Service

Commitment: New

Huronian Historic Parks purchased two all terrain type wheel chairs for guests to borrow in order to increase accessibility to the site.

Planned Action(s): Huronia Historic Parks purchased two all terrain type wheel chairs for guests to borrow in order to increase accessibility to the site.

Implementation Timeframe: September 2007 – November 2008 (Completed March, 2008)

Results Achieved: Huronia Historic Parks has purchased two all terrain type wheel chairs for guests to borrow in order to increase accessibility to the site.

Focus Area: Customer Service**Commitment: New**

Huronian Historic Parks purchased a motorized scooter for guests to borrow in order to increase accessibility to the site.

Planned Action(s): Huronia Historic Parks purchased a motorized scooter for guests to borrow in order to increase accessibility to the site.

Implementation Timeframe: September 2007 – November 2008 (Completed March, 2008)

Results Achieved: Huronia Historic Parks has purchased a motorized scooter for guests to borrow in order to increase accessibility to the site.

Report on Other Accessibility Commitments

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

In the near future, the OPS will be obligated to comply with four new standards in the areas of transportation, information and communication, employment and the built environment. This section should focus ODA planning on readiness and preparation for these new standards currently under development. Therefore, initiatives described below to identify, remove and prevent barriers should be clearly identified by these four areas.

A “barrier” means anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of his or her disability, including a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, an information or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy or a practice. Examples of methodologies to identify barriers include a policy or program review, surveys or customer feedback mechanisms, etc.

This section identifies new initiatives and provides a status report on completed or multi-year initiatives that are currently underway.

- Identify whether initiatives have built environment, employment, transportation, or information & communication implications. Initiatives may have an impact on more than one AODA focus area.
- Identify whether the initiative will impact or include an assessment of Acts, regulation, policies, programs, or services.
- Report on results achieved for completed commitments. If implementation of the commitment spans multiple years identify planned activities for the next year and the results achieved in the last year.

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

The ministry will work with Ontario Realty Corporation and ProFac to find ways to work with landlords to make required improvements, if any, to the public or common space of the buildings occupied by the ministry.

Planned Action(s):

- The ministry identified potential accessibility upgrades for Queen's Park offices.
- Telephones in lobbies for two floors occupied by the ministry were replaced with phones with adjustable volume controls.
- A doorbell to a ministry office was lowered to a more accessible height.

Implementation Timeframe: September 2007 – November 2008**Results Achieved:** The work was completed in July 2007.**Focus Area: Built Environment****Impact: Policy, Service****Commitment: New Ongoing**

When a new Tourism office is built, ensure that it meets current accessibility requirements.

Planned Action(s): With regards to the likely move of several Ministry offices, the Ministry will ensure that barrier-free design is used in the design of future offices. Searches for new office space, if any, will consider the accessibility features of potential offices.

Implementation Timeframe: September 2007 – March 2010**Results Achieved:** Pending any future office moves.

Focus Area: Built Environment

Impact: Service

Commitment: Completed

Fort William Historical Park will modify the quantity, size, surface, vertical posts and pavement markings of parking spaces at the Visitor Centre and Administration Building. Further, modifications will be made to some public washrooms, exterior ramps and signage in order to increase accessibility.

Planned Action(s): Fort William Historical Park modified the quantity, size, surface, vertical posts and pavement markings of parking spaces at the Visitor Centre and Administration Building.

Implementation Timeframe: September 2007 – November 2008

Results Achieved: Fort William Historical Park modified the quantity, size, surface, vertical posts and pavement markings of 11 parking spaces at the Visitor Centre and Administration Building.

Focus Area: Built Environment

Impact: Program Service

Commitment: New Ongoing

Huronian Historic Parks will install a new power assisted door in order to increase accessibility to barrier free washrooms for the education program students using the new school lunch room.

Planned Action(s): Huronia Historic Parks will install a new power assisted door in order to increase accessibility to barrier free washrooms.

Implementation Timeframe: September 2007 – March 2010

Results Achieved: Huronia Historic Parks will install a new power assisted door in order to increase accessibility to barrier free washrooms for the education program students using the new school lunch room. Pending.

Focus Area: Built Environment

Impact: Service

Commitment: Completed Ongoing

Fort William Historical Park will modify the quality, size and surface of its outdoor amphitheatre to increase accessibility. When completed patrons with a disability will have access to any location in the amphitheatre including food vending, washrooms, beverage gardens and parking lots. Patrons with a disability will also have reserved seating areas that ensure visibility and access throughout the amphitheatre.

Planned Action(s): Engineers will redesign the slope and pathways of the amphitheatre. Construction will occur in the fall of 2007, spring through fall of 2008 and will be completed in 2009.

Implementation Timeframe: September 2007 – March 2010

Results Achieved: August 2007 and August 2008, Fort William Historical Park modified the grounds and pathways of its amphitheatre, over 50,000 sq. meters plus parking lots, to become accessible when they previously were not. Engineered designs include gentle slopes to all areas including the festival bowl and the parking lots, smooth hard surfaced pathways and turf lawns, pathway lighting, reserved seating zones at the front edge of all three paved aisles, servicing for jumbo video and sound delay towers to encourage crowd dispersal evenly across the festival bowl and a designated public transportation depot capable of handling 20 buses at one time. Other amphitheatre operational features that assist Ontarians with a disability include: accessible washrooms, the allowance of temporary shelters for shade around the perimeter of the festival bowl, free admission for attendants, designated space for security services and vendor selection criteria that encourages accessible services. Yet to be completed in 2008 and 2009 includes parking lot surfacing.

Focus Area: Built Environment

Impact: Program Service

Commitment: New

Huronia Historic Parks will construct a new school lunch room complete with sloped walkways at 20.1:1, power assisted doors, hands free taps, hands free hand dryers, and automatic light sensors in order to increase accessibility for the education program students.

Planned Action(s): Huronia Historic Parks will construct a new school lunch room complete with sloped walkways at 20.1:1, power assisted doors, automatic taps, automatic hand dryers, and automatic light sensors.

Implementation Timeframe: September 2007 – November 2008 (Completed May, 2008)

Results Achieved: Huronia Historic Parks constructed a new school lunch room complete with sloped walkways at 20.1:1, power assisted doors, automatic taps, automatic hand dryers, and automatic light sensors in order to increase accessibility for the education program students.

Focus Area: Built Environment Employment

Impact: Service

Commitment: New Completed

Huronia Historic Parks removed four existing walkways that were dirt or wood, or had sloped terrain, and were therefore inaccessible. Huronia Historic Parks replace these pathways with four interlocking walkways in order to increase accessibility for the staff and public.

Planned Action(s): Historic Parks removed four existing walkways and replaced them with accessible interlocking walkways.

Implementation Timeframe: September 2007 – November 2008

Results Achieved: Huronia Historic Parks has completed work to replace four inaccessible walkways with interlock. The completed work on the four walkways includes:

1. Huronia Historic Parks completed the removal of the dirt walkway and replaced it with an interlocking staff walkway in order to increase accessibility for staff. (Completed September, 2007).
2. Huronia Historic Parks completed the removal of the dirt walkway from the historic site to the restaurant and patio and replaced it with an interlocking walkway in order to increase accessibility for the public. (Completed October, 2007).
3. Huronia Historic Parks removed an existing wooden walkway from the historic site to the Foyer exit and replaced it with an interlocking sloped walkway at 20.1:1 in order to increase accessibility for the public. (Completed November, 2007).
4. Huronia Historic Parks removed an existing walkway and replaced it with an interlocking walkway in order to increase accessibility for the public to “Officers’ Quarters”, an original building (circa 1860) on the historic site. (Completed June, 2008).

Focus Area: Employment

Impact: Service

Commitment: Ongoing

Through the Human Resources Branch: ensure all managers are aware of the ministry's plan, programs and services; ensure all new employees receive information regarding programs and services that are available to them to assist with accessibility; and, insert a clause into offers of employment which request information on an individual's accessibility needs.

Planned Action(s): The Human Resources Branch will continue to promote the new Employment Accommodation and Return to Work Operating Policy by encouraging managers to review the policy and support materials. A standard clause asking employees to notify their managers if they have accessibility needs was inserted into offer of employment letters.

Implementation Timeframe: September 2007 –March 2010

Results Achieved: Results Achieved: Managers were given additional resources to address accommodation issues.

Focus Area: Info&Comm

Impact: Service

Commitment: Ongoing

Work with ServiceOntario Publications to provide ministry publications in alternative formats as requested.

Planned Action(s): Address requests for publications and ministry materials in alternative formats in an efficient and timely manner.

Implementation Timeframe: September 2007 –March 2010

Results Achieved: The Ministry of Tourism's Communications Branch addressed all requests for publications and ministry materials in alternative formats in an efficient and timely manner.

Focus Area: Info&Comm

Impact: Act Regulation

Commitment: Ongoing

To ensure tourism industry interests are represented in the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario's process of developing standards under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act.

Planned Action(s): Tourism Policy and Research Branch monitors the standard development meetings of the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario in order to represent the interests of tourism industry stakeholders.

Implementation Timeframe: September 2007 –March 2010

Results Achieved: Input into the standard development process for Information and Communication and Built Environment to make it easier for tourism businesses to comply with the requirements.

Focus Area: Info&Comm

Impact: Service

Commitment: Ongoing

To provide signer or interpreter services as required at all ministry-planned events and ensure that these events are held in accessible locations.

Planned Action(s): The Ministry of Tourism's Communications Branch maintains a list of registered sign language interpreter service providers, and accessibility is taken into consideration for all meetings and events convened by the ministry.

Implementation Timeframe: September 2007 –March 2010

Results Achieved: The Ministry of Tourism's Communications Branch maintained its list of registered sign language interpreter service providers and is used as needed.

Focus Area: Info&Comm

Impact: Service

Commitment: Ongoing

To ensure that the Ministry of Tourism's website is accessible.

Planned Action(s): The Ministry of Tourism's Communications Branch continues to ensure that its website content is available in accessible formats.

Implementation Timeframe: September 2007 – March 2010

Results Achieved: The Ministry of Tourism's website content is available in accessible formats.

Focus Area: Info&Comm

Impact: Service

Commitment: Ongoing

Maintain an accessibility portal on the intranet site to give staff easy access to the ministry's Accessibility Plan and information.

Planned Action(s): The Ministry maintains an accessibility portal on its intranet site. The site included a link to the ministry's Accessibility Plan, as well as to other information about accessibility.

Implementation Timeframe: September 2007 – March 2010

Results Achieved: The ministry continues to maintain an accessibility portal on its intranet site. The site includes a link to the ministry's Accessibility Plan, as well as to other information about accessibility.

Focus Area: Info&Comm

Impact: Service

Commitment: Completed

Encourage staff to continue to provide input on the identification, prevention and removal of barriers for people with disabilities.

Planned Action(s): Have a staff feedback mechanism on the Ministry's intranet.

Implementation Timeframe: September 2007 – March 2010

Results Achieved: Intranet page on Accessibility Planning encourages staff to raise concerns about accessibility in the workplace with either their manager or the Chair of the MTour Accessibility Planning Committee.

Focus Area: Info&Comm

Impact: Service

Commitment: Completed

Produce a report from the Travel Activities and Motivations survey (TAMS) relating to a profile of visitors for whom accessible travel is important, and disseminate the report to stakeholders.

Planned Action(s): Report will be updated in the future as new data becomes available.

Implementation Timeframe: September 2007 – November 2008

Results Achieved: The report "A Profile of Travellers Looking for Accessible Destinations", an overview of North American travellers based on the 2006 Travel Activities and Motivations Survey (TAMS) was prepared by the Research Unit in July 2007. The report is posted on the Ministry of Tourism website and distributed to a mailing list of over 700. In addition, a presentation was made to ministry staff at the June 2007 all-staff day. The report developed a profile of those travellers, both from Canada and the U.S., who stated that a destination being friendly for persons with a disability was highly important to them choosing a destination for a trip. By focusing on this group exclusively, the report provides a more specific and actionable profile for this travel segment.

Focus Area: Transportation

Impact: Policy Program Service

Commitment: Ongoing

Ensure third party vendor responsible for Tourism Oriented Directional Signing (TODS) has accessible portal of communication with the public. This includes their website; TTY; and, where necessary, printed material.

Planned Action(s): Develop contract with accessibility considerations in mind.

Implementation Timeframe: September 2007 –March 2010

Results Achieved: Pending.

Focus Area: Other

Impact: Act Regulation Policy

Commitment: Completed

Review existing acts or regulations to identify and remove barriers.

Planned Action(s): Completed review of existing acts and regulations including *Ministry of Tourism Act*.

Implementation Timeframe: September 2007 – November 2008

Results Achieved: Review undertaken and no barriers were identified.

Focus Area: Other

Impact: Act Regulation Policy

Commitment: Ongoing

The identification of barriers and accessibility-related issues will be included in the development and drafting of new statutes, regulations and amendments.

Planned Action(s): Identify barriers and accessibility-related issues in the development and drafting of new statutes, regulations and amendments.

Implementation Timeframe: September 2007 – March 2010

Results Achieved: Pending.

Focus Area: Other

Impact: Act Regulation Policy

Commitment: Ongoing

The identification of barriers and accessibility-related issues will be included in the final report of the tourism competitiveness study, currently under development with a final report expected in early 2009.

Planned Action(s): Identify barriers and accessibility-related issues in the development and drafting of new actions and initiatives by government and the tourism industry.

Implementation Timeframe: September 2007 – March 2010

Results Achieved: Pending.

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

Queen's Printer for Ontario

ISSN (Please insert your ISSN number)

Ce document est disponible en français.