

# Accessibility compliance for industry

## Contents

Accessibility compliance for industry .....	2
About this guide .....	2
Who needs to comply .....	2
About Ontario's accessibility laws .....	2
Accessibility requirements you need to meet .....	3
File an Accessibility Compliance Report .....	4
Resources to help you .....	4
Have accessible employment practices .....	4
Resources to help you .....	5
Provide accessible customer service .....	5
Resources to help you .....	6
Train your employees about accessibility .....	6
Unionized construction employees .....	6
Volunteers and outside contractors .....	7
Resources to help you .....	7
Create accessibility policies and plans .....	7
Accessibility policies .....	7
Multi-year accessibility plans .....	7
Resources to help you .....	8
Accessibility requirements for public spaces .....	8
Resources to help you .....	9
More about Ontario's accessibility laws .....	9
How the AODA and the Building Code work together .....	9
How the AODA and the Ontario Human Rights Code work together .....	10
Social media and contact information .....	10
Disclaimer .....	10

# Accessibility compliance for industry

## About this guide

If your business or organization does not provide goods, services or facilities directly to the public, then this guide is for you. If you're part of:

- the construction industry
- the manufacturing and wholesale trade sector
- the mining and extraction sector
- other sectors that don't service the public directly

this guide will help you understand how Ontario's accessibility laws apply to your organization and what you need to do to comply with accessibility-related laws.

## Who needs to comply

You must comply with Ontario's accessibility laws and standards if you:

- have at least one employee in Ontario
- provide goods, services or facilities to the public **or other organizations**.

Even if your organization does not provide services, goods or facilities directly to the public on-site, you must comply with accessibility laws.

## About Ontario's accessibility laws

Ontario has laws that work together to create an Ontario that is more accessible for everyone:

- The [Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation](#) (IASR) under the [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005](#) (AODA) sets **accessibility standards** to help businesses and organizations identify, prevent and remove barriers to accessibility in five areas:
  - customer service
  - access to information
  - public transportation

- employment
- public spaces

These [accessibility standards](#) are laws that government, businesses, non-profits and public sector organizations must follow to become more accessible.

- The [2012 Building Code](#) covers most requirements for making [buildings accessible](#). These include requirements for ramps, washrooms, power door operators and signs.
- The [Ontario Human Rights Code](#) ( addresses discrimination and requires organizations to accommodate people with disabilities.

## Accessibility requirements you need to meet

Here is information to help you understand which accessibility requirements apply to you and how to comply with them.

Count your employees. Some **specific requirements** only apply if you have a certain number of employees.

Your number of employees is determined by your organization's peak employee count at any one time during the previous twelve months.

When determining this number, count:

- all full-time and part-time employees
- seasonal employees
- contract workers

Don't count employees outside of Ontario or outside contractors.  
Consider whether you:

- pay the employee (wages or a salary)
- have control over the work assigned to them
- have a right to control the details of the work.

If you are not sure whether to count someone as an employee or a contractor, you may seek legal advice.

## File an Accessibility Compliance Report

If you have **20 or more employees**, you must file an Accessibility Compliance Report with the Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility every three years.

The next compliance reporting deadline is **December 31, 2023**. Learn more about this requirement and how to complete the report at [ontario.ca/accessibilityreport](https://ontario.ca/accessibilityreport)

Organizations with fewer than 20 employees do not have to file a compliance report, but they must comply with all applicable [accessibility requirements](#).

Resources to help you

- Learn how to complete your accessibility compliance report.

[Watch a video](#) | [Watch described video](#) | [Read the PDF](#)

## Have accessible employment practices

You are required to accommodate employees with disabilities throughout their employment under both the [AODA employment standards](#) and the [Ontario Human Rights Code](#). There is more information about these at the end of this guide.

Your requirements include:

- making your recruitment process accessible. For instance, someone with a disability may require alternate formats for written materials or physical adjustments to a computer set-up.
- informing your employees of supports available
- offering accessible formats and communication supports for employees
- providing individualized accessible [workplace emergency response information](#)
- documenting [individual accommodation plans](#)
- adjusting the employee's duties, so that they can still provide necessary services while avoiding certain tasks
- creating a [return to work process and plan](#) for employees who have been absent from work due to a disability
- adjusting an employee's schedule to work around medical appointments, treatments or medications.

You have a duty as an employer under the [Ontario Human Rights Code](#) to accommodate people with disabilities unless it causes the employer [undue hardship](#).

"Undue hardship" is when making an accommodation is:

- so costly that your business could cease to be viable or would need to change its essential nature
- would create significant health or safety risks.

You must have proof to claim undue hardship. Factors such as inconvenience to your business, employee morale, and customer and third-party preferences are not valid considerations in assessing whether an accommodation would cause undue hardship.

The term "disability" covers a broad range and degree of conditions. Common types of disabilities include:

- physical
- intellectual
- mental
- developmental.

Many disabilities, such as dyslexia or depression, can often be invisible.

Resources to help you

- Use the [accessible recruitment tool](#) to help make your hiring process more accessible.
- Learn how to [make your workplace accessible](#).
- Get [tips for accommodating employees with disabilities](#).
- Learn about different types of disability through the [Ontario Human Rights Code](#).

## Provide accessible customer service

You must comply with the customer service standard even if your organization:

- operates as 'Business to Business' or
- only provides goods, services or facilities to organizations who meet your eligibility criteria, such as manufacturers, wholesalers and professional services.

The Customer Service Standard requires you to:

- have accessible ways for people to provide you with feedback about your organization

- **train your employees** on Ontario's accessibility laws.
- provide customers, clients, members, and consumers with the right customer service so they can access:
  - goods
  - services
  - facilities (for example, rooms or spaces used to provide a service, such as a stadium or banquet hall).

Resources to help you

Learn more about [how to provide accessible customer service](#).

## Train your employees about accessibility

If you have one or more employees, you must provide training to:

- all employees (paid and unpaid, full-time, part-time and contract positions)
- anyone involved in developing your organization's policies (including managers, senior leaders, directors, board members and owners)

You are required to train all your employees on:

- the [Ontario Human Rights Code](#)
- accessible customer service
- any other [accessibility requirements](#) that apply to their job duties and your organization

You don't need to train employees based outside of Ontario.

If you have **50 or more employees**, you must also keep training records that include the:

- number of people who were trained
- dates that the training was provided.

### Unionized construction employees

Responsibility for training requirements in the construction sector depends on whether the employer is a construction company or union.

**If an employee is employed by the union and not with the construction company,** then the union as their employer may be responsible for accessibility training.

**If an employee is represented by a union but working for the construction company on a contract,** even for one day, that individual may be considered a contract employee and the construction company may be responsible for accessibility training.

## Volunteers and outside contractors

If a volunteer or outside contractor is providing goods, services or facilities in Ontario on behalf of your organization, you are responsible to ensure that they meet your legal obligations under Ontario's accessibility laws. You may need to ensure these individuals are trained to meet the requirements.

The Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility cannot provide advice on specific situations. You may wish to seek independent legal advice.

## Resources to help you

- Learn more about [training your staff on accessibility](#).
- Use the [Accessibility Training Requirements Checklist](#) to learn what training you need to provide.

# Create accessibility policies and plans

## Accessibility policies

You are required to create and maintain accessibility policies. They set out the rules your organization will put in place to become more accessible. These policies must include a statement that summarizes your organization's commitment to meeting the accessibility needs of people with disabilities.

If you have **fewer than 50 employees**, you are not required to document these policies, but it's a good idea to do so. Documenting helps you:

- consider accessibility as part of your overall planning
- be ready to meet documentation requirements should your organization expand

If you have **50 or more employees**, you must document these policies.

## Multi-year accessibility plans

If you have **50 or more employees**, you must develop a written multi-year accessibility plan, update it at least once every five years and post it on your website (if you have one)

A **multi-year accessibility plan** outlines what steps your organization will take to prevent and remove barriers to accessibility and meet its accessibility regulatory requirements. It should also outline when the steps will be taken.

Requirements for a multi-year accessibility plan include:

- posting the plan on your website, if you have one
- providing the plan in an accessible format, upon request
- reviewing and updating the plan at least once every five years.

It is up to you to decide how much detail to include in your plan.

### Resources to help you

- [Learn about creating and documenting accessibility policies.](#)
- Use this [sample accessibility policy](#) to help you develop accessibility policies that are right for your organization.
- Use this [sample multi-year plan template](#) to get information for business and non-profit organizations with 50 or more employees.
- See examples of common [accessibility barriers and solutions](#).

## Accessibility requirements for public spaces

The requirements below only apply to **new construction** and **planned redevelopment of existing public spaces**.

Accessible public spaces have specific features that make it easier for people with disabilities to move through and use the environment. These features can include:

- parking spaces along streets or in parking lots
- sidewalks or access aisles (between parking spaces)

Unplanned changes, such as emergency repairs or regular maintenance, are exempt.



## Resources to help you

- Learn about [how to make public spaces accessible](#).
- Read the [Illustrated Technical Guide to the Accessibility Standard for the Design of Public Spaces](#) for detailed information about the standards and how to comply.
- Learn about [accessibility rules under the Building Code](#) for newly constructed buildings.
- Discover practical and easy tips to help [make your building and spaces more accessible](#).
- Use the [Accessibility Standards Checklist](#) to:
  - identify other applicable accessibility requirements
  - help you assess your compliance.

This interactive self-assessment tool provides information as well as direct links to tools and resources.

## More about Ontario's accessibility laws

### How the AODA and the Building Code work together

Ontario's Building Code sets technical requirements when:

- buildings are being constructed
- existing buildings are undergoing major renovations.

Ontario's Building Code and the [Design of Public Spaces Standards](#) under the AODA work together to promote an accessible built environment.

The AODA and the Design of Public Spaces standards **do not** apply to the construction of buildings. Accessibility in buildings at the time of construction or major renovation (which could involve ramps, accessible washrooms, elevators and entrances) is governed by Ontario's Building Code, which is administered by the [Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing](#).

Ontario's Building Code does not:

- set standards for retrofit or maintenance.
- deal with operational building maintenance related matters.

## How the AODA and the Ontario Human Rights Code work together

The AODA sets standards for how organizations and people must make themselves accessible to people with disabilities; it is not designed to address complaints from individuals who feel that they have been discriminated against because of a disability.

The Ontario Human Rights Code addresses discrimination and prohibits actions that discriminate against people, including those with a disability. It requires organizations to accommodate people with disabilities and applies to both organizations and individuals in the public and private sectors.

Find more information and updates at [ontario.ca/accessibility](https://ontario.ca/accessibility).

Learn more about [accessibility rules for business](#).

## Social media and contact information

Follow us for news and updates:

- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ONAccessibility>
- X: <https://twitter.com/ONAccessibility>
- LinkedIn: [Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility](#)

If you still need assistance with meeting AODA requirements or have more questions, please contact us by:

- Phone: 1-844-519-8515 or 416-850-0546
- Toll-free TTY: [1-800-268-7095](tel:1-800-268-7095)
- Email: [accessibility@ontario.ca](mailto:accessibility@ontario.ca)

## Disclaimer

The aim and purpose of this guide is to help individuals and businesses with information related to the [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005](#) and its associated regulation [O.Reg 191/11](#). This guidance is not intended to, nor does it, provide legal advice and should not be relied upon or treated as legal advice. Those seeking legal advice should consult with a qualified legal professional.

In case of a discrepancy between website content and relevant Ontario legislation and regulations, the official version of [Ontario Acts and Regulations](#) as published by the King's Printer for Ontario will prevail.