



Integrated Accessibility Standards Policy

N° DG-P-2014-01

December 2013

Integrated Accessibility Standards Policy

Summary

The province of Ontario has adopted the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (the AODA) on June 13, 2005, making Ontario the first province in Canada to commit to developing comprehensive and mandatory in key areas of daily life that are accessibility standards in:

- Customer Service,
- Information and Communication,
- Employment,
- Transportation,
- and Built Environment.

These different standards are addressed in various provincial regulations under the AODA.

PURPOSE

This policy is written under the Ontario Regulation 191/11 of the AODA. This provincial regulation asks organizations to elaborate, to implement and to maintain policies governing how it reached or will reach the goal of meeting the accessibility requirements of this provincial regulation that apply to it.

The Customer Service is addressed in Policy N° DG-P-2009-01 approved by Council on December 14, 2009 and prepared under Ontario regulation 429/07.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all municipal employees, volunteers and all other person, organization that provide on behalf of the Town, goods, services or facilities to the public.

DECLARATION OF COMMITMENT

The Corporation of the Town of Hawkesbury (hereinafter “Town”) is committed to treating all people in a way that allows them to retain their dignity and independence.

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The Town believes in integration and equality of all its employees, customers, taxpayers and residents.

The Town is committed to being responsive to the needs of all people with disabilities in a timely manner, preventing and eliminating barriers while respecting the requirements specified in the Act.

The Town will promote accessibility through the development of policy, practices and procedures and by ensuring that consideration is given to persons with disabilities. To do this, policies, practices and procedures shall address dignity, equity, inclusion, independence and responsiveness.

SUMMARY

With this Policy, the Town must address the following requirements:

- 1) Accessibility Plan;
- 2) Procuring or acquiring of goods, services or facilities;
- 3) Self-service kiosks;
- 4) Training;
- 5) Information and communications;
- 6) Employment.

GENERAL PROVISIONS

1) Accessibility Plan

This plan should briefly describe the strategy of the Town, on one hand, prevent and remove barriers and, on the other hand, meet the requirements under the Ontario Regulation 191/11. The Town will consult people with disabilities and its Accessibility Advisory Committee at all stages of the development of the plan and its updates. In addition, the Town will review and update its plan every five

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years. Finally, it will be posted on the Town website and will be provided in an accessible format, upon request, as soon as is practicable.

2) Procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities

The Town, through its heads of departments, will have regard for accessibility criteria and features when procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities, except where it is not practical to do so.

3) Self-service kiosks

For this paragraph « Kiosk » means an interactive electronic terminal, including a point-of-sale device, intended for public use that allows users to access one or more services or products or both.

Should the Town wishes to establish a self-service kiosk, it shall consider accessibility when designing, procuring or acquiring this kiosk.

4) Training

The Town is committed to provide training on the requirements of accessibility standards set out in the Ontario Regulations 191/11 and the provisions of the Human Rights Code that apply to people with disabilities to its employees and volunteers, to those involved in the development of its policies and other persons who provide goods, services or facilities in behalf of the Town.

This training should be related to the functions of the staff, volunteers and others who receive it. It will be available as soon as possible following the hiring of new employees, volunteers and others. This training will be continuous in order to inform the persons concerned of the changes that can be made to the various municipal policies.

5) Information et communications

For this section:

« Communication supports » are ways to facilitate communication;

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«Communications» means the interaction between two or more persons or entities, or any combination of them, where information is provided, sent or received;

« Accessible format » is an alternative to standard printed documents;

«Information» means data, facts and knowledge that exist in any format, including text, audio, digital or images, and that conveys meaning;

«Ready to be converted» means an electronic or digital format that facilitates conversion in an accessible format.

The Town must ensure that the processes for receiving and responding to feedback are accessible to people with disabilities by providing or arranging for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports. The Town will attempt to answer the request of a person with disabilities in a timely manner and will discuss the person's accessibility needs. The cost required to obtain the document or communications supports must not exceed the regular cost charged to other persons.

In accordance with Ontario Regulation 191/11, these requirements do not apply to product or product labels, unconvertible information or communication and information that the Town does not control directly or indirectly through a contractual relationship. If the Town establishes that the information or communications are unconvertible, (it is not technically possible to convert or conversion technology is not readily available), the Town will provide the person concerned with reasons and a summary of the unconvertible information or communications.

Emergency procedures or plan or public safety information

The Town will ensure to provide the sections of its emergency procedures plan and all other information concerning its population in an accessible format or with appropriate communication supports, upon request, as soon as is practicable.

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Accessible websites and web content

The Town will ensure that its website and web content are in compliance with the Worldwide Web Consortium's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines, initially at level A and increasing to level AA in accordance with the time frames set out in the Ontario Regulation 191/1.

6) Employment

The requirements set out in the employment standards under this policy shall apply only to employees of the Town. They do not apply to volunteers or other non-paid individuals.

Recruitment

The Town will inform employees and the public about the availability of accommodation for applicants with disabilities in its recruitment processes.

It must, during the recruitment process, notify each applicant who is selected to participate in the evaluation process or selection process about the availability of accommodations upon request with respect to materials or processes to be used.

In consultation with the successful applicant who request accommodations, the Town will provide or arrange for provision of a suitable accommodation that takes into account the applicant's accessibility needs.

Successful applicants

The Town, who offers employment to a successful applicant, will notify him/her of its policies for accommodating employees with disabilities.

Supports

The Town will inform its employees of its policies used to support its employees with disabilities including those on job accommodation that take into account an employee's accessibility needs.

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It will do the same with new employees as soon as practicable after they begin their employment.

Finally, the Town is committed to providing to its employees updated information whenever there is a change to existing policies on the provision of job accommodation that takes into account the employee's accessibility needs.

Accessible formats and communication supports for employees

Upon request, the Town will consult an employee with disabilities to provide or arrange for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports needed to perform his/her work or to have access to information generally available to employees in the workplace.

Workplace emergency response information

The Town will provide individualized workplace emergency response information to employees who have a disability, if the disability is such that the individualized information is necessary and the Town has been made aware of the need for accommodation due to the employee's disability. The Town, following the request of assistance and the consent of the employee with disabilities will inform the person designated by it to assist the employee. This information will be communicated as soon as is practicable after the Town has considered the accommodation needs of an employee.

Individualized workplace emergency response information will be reviewed when an employee moved to a different location, when the employee's overall accommodation needs or plans are reviewed and when the Town reviews its general emergency response policies.

Documented individual accommodation plans

The Town will develop and have in place a written process for the development of documented individual accommodation plans for employees with disabilities.

This process shall include the following elements:

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- The manner in which an employee requesting accommodation can participate in the development of its accommodation plan.
- The means by which the employee is assessed on an individual basis.
- The manner in which the Town can request an evaluation, at its expense, by an outside medical or other expert to assist the Town in determining if accommodation can be achieved and, if so, how accommodation can be achieved.
- The manner in which the employee can request the participation of a representative from his/her bargaining agent, where the employee is represented by an union, or other representative from the workplace, where the employee is not represented by an union, in the development of the accommodation plan.
- The steps taken to protect the privacy of the employee's personal information.
- The frequency with which the individual accommodation plan will be reviewed and updated and the manner in which it will be done.
- If an individual accommodation plan is denied, the manner in which the reasons for the denial will be provided to the employee.
- The means of providing the individual accommodation plan in a format that takes into account the employee's accessibility needs due to his/her disability.

Individual accommodation plans shall:

- If requested, include any information regarding accessible formats and communications supports;
- If required, include individualized workplace emergency response; and
- Identify any other accommodation that is to be provided.

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Return to work process

The Town will develop, document and have in place a return to work process for employees who have been absent from work due to a disability and require disability-related accommodation to return to work.

Return to work process :

- Outlines the steps the Town will take to facilitate the return to work of employees who were absent because their disability required them to be away from work;
- Includes documented individual accommodation plans.

This return to work process does not replace any other return to work process created in or under any other law, nor prevail against it.

Performance management, career development and advancement, and redeployment

For this section:

«Performance management» means activities related to assessing and improving employee performance, productivity and effectiveness, with the goal of facilitating employee success;

«Career development and advancements» includes providing additional responsibilities within an employee's current position and the movement of an employee from one job to another in an organization that may be higher in pay, provide greater responsibility or be at a higher level in the organization or any combination of them and, for both additional responsibilities and employee movement, is usually based on merit or seniority, or a combination of them;

«Redeployment» means the reassignment of employees to other departments or jobs within the organization as an alternative to layoff, when a particular job or department has been eliminated by the organization;

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If the Town use performance management processes, offers career development and advancement opportunities to its employees or when considering redeployment of employees, it will take into account the employee with disabilities accessibility needs and individual accommodation plan.

Transportation standards – Accessible taxicabs and et taxicabs

For this section :

«Accessible taxicabs» has the meaning of Paragraph 1 of Regulation 629 of the Revised Regulations of Ontario, 1990 (Vehicles for the Transportation of Physically Disabled Passengers) made under the *Highway Traffic Act*.

The Town should consult the Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee, the population and people with disabilities to determine the proportion of on-demand accessible taxicabs required in the community.

It should discuss the progress to meet the need of accessible taxicabs and available on request and any steps that will be taken to meet the need, in its accessibility plan.

Furthermore, since the Town issues taxicabs license, it should ensure that owners and operators of taxicabs do not charge a higher fare or an additional fee for persons with disabilities than for persons without disabilities for the same trip and a fee for the storage of mobility aids or mobility assistive devices.

The Town will ensure that the owners and operators of taxicabs place vehicle registration and identification information on the rear bumper of the taxicab and that they also make available in an accessible format to persons with disabilities this information.

BUILT IN STANDARDS

This paragraph applies to public spaces that are newly constructed or renovated on or after 1 January, 2016, including:

- Recreational trails;

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- Accessible paths leading to a beach;
- Outdoor public and eating areas;
- Outdoor play spaces;
- Exterior paths of travel;
- Accessible parking;
- Service-related elements like service counters, fixed queuing lines and waiting areas (indoor and outdoor).

The technical specifications laid down in Regulation 191/11 will be taken into account in the new construction or redevelopment of public spaces.

BUILDINGS

The Town agrees to comply with the new provisions of the Ontario Building Code that will come into force on January 1, 2015 if it intends to construct a new building or making renovations to one of its existing buildings.

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