



Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act

Developing accessibility policies

Private and non-profit organizations
with less than 50 employees



Creating accessibility policies can help you and your staff understand how to make your organization more accessible to people with disabilities.

Under Ontario's Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), small organizations need to create accessibility policies that show how they are becoming more accessible. This guide will help you get started.

What you need to do

Beginning January 1, 2015:

- Create one or more accessibility policies that demonstrate your organization's commitment to becoming more accessible.

What are accessibility policies?

Policies are organizational rules, practices, or procedures that guide your day-to-day business practices. Accessibility policies set out the rules that your organization will put in place to become more accessible.

For example, all servers at Linda's bakery need to let her or the assistant manager know when a person with a disability requests information in an accessible way. Linda makes this a policy to make sure requests are handled in a consistent way.

Steps to consider

The law is flexible, so do what works best for your organization. Here are some steps to help you get started.

1. Determine what you have to do

Ontario's accessibility laws are being phased in over the next several years to give you time to plan. But you need to know what you have to do up front so you can develop your policies.

To learn what your organization will specifically have to do to improve accessibility use the Wizard available at Ontario.ca/AccessON. Simply put in your organization's information to produce a customized list outlining what you have to do and when.

2. Create your accessibility policies

You have the flexibility to develop accessibility policies that best suit your organization's needs. You just need to put in place one or more policies that show how you are making your organization, its employment practices and the information you provide more accessible.

Think about the areas in your business that are not accessible and the improvements you will phase in over the next several years. Decide if creating a policy could help.

For example, starting in 2016 small organizations must provide accessibility training as soon as possible. If your organization trains new staff on an ad hoc basis, you may decide to make it policy that they receive accessibility training within the first week of starting their job.

You can create new accessibility policies, or integrate them into existing ones. The law is flexible so do what works best for your organization.



The Sample Policy Template at the end of this guide can help you get started. Modify the template to best suit your business needs and your specific requirements.

3. Let staff know about your policies

As a small organization, you don't need to put your policies in writing. Just let your staff know about the policies to make sure they're put in practice. You can talk to your staff, share the policies in writing or communicate them in another way.

Keep your policies current – if you make changes to your policies tell your staff about them.

Questions?

For more detailed information on the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation, or for other free tools and resources, visit [Ontario.ca/AccessON](https://ontario.ca/AccessON).

Or contact:

Toll-free: 1-866-515-2025

TTY: 416-325-3408 / Toll-free: 1-800-268-7095

Email: accessibility@ontario.ca

please note: This guide is not legal advice. If you require assistance in interpreting the legislation or the regulation, please contact your legal adviser. This guide has been created to help you understand the legislation and/or regulation and does not replace the official version of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation, Ontario Regulation 191/11 and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA). If there is any conflict between this guide and the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation or the AODA, the regulation and the AODA are the final authorities.

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Sample Policy Template:

Accessibility Policies for _____

is committed to improving accessibility. We will put the following policies into practice as required by the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act.

General

is committed to training staff on Ontario's accessibility laws and on accessibility aspects of the Human Rights Code that apply to persons with disabilities. Training will be provided in a way that best suits the duties of employees, volunteers and other staff members.

Information and communications

is committed to meeting the communication needs of people with disabilities. When asked, we will provide information and communications materials in accessible formats or with communication supports. This includes publicly available information about our goods, services and facilities, as well as publicly available emergency information.

will consult with people with disabilities to determine their information and communication needs.

Employment

will notify the public and staff that, when requested, we will accommodate disabilities during recruitment and assessment processes and when people are hired. If needed, we will provide customized workplace emergency information to employees who have a disability. If using performance management, career development and redeployment processes, we will take into account the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities.

Design of Public Spaces

will meet the Accessibility Standards for the Design of Public Spaces when building or making major modifications to public spaces. Public spaces include:

- Recreational trails/beach access routes
- Accessible off street parking
- Service-related elements like service counters, fixed queuing lines and waiting areas

Modifications to this or other policies

Any of our policies that do not respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities will be modified or removed.