

# Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)

## Overarching Policy

### Policy

The Society is committed to ensuring a proactive approach with respect to accessibility by developing and implementing accessibility standards.

### Guiding Principles

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) is a law passed by the Ontario Government with the goal of developing a fully accessible province for persons with disabilities by 2025.

The first standard to become law was the Customer Service Standard. This standard sets out obligations for the Society to provide services in a way that is accessible to persons with disabilities.

In conjunction with this regulation, the Society recognizes the diversity of the community it serves and is committed to ensuring that all members of the community have access to and the ability to participate effectively in and with the Society's services.

The Society provides services to persons who may have characteristics or needs resulting from a disability that may pose a barrier to the person's ability to access or participate in services as generally delivered by the Society. These needs or barriers may raise issues of accommodation and/or accessibility. The Society has an obligation and is committed to resolving, where possible, any barriers that limit, impede or frustrate any person's ability to access or participate effectively in the Society's services and processes.

The Society will use reasonable efforts to ensure that its policies, practices and procedures are consistent with the following principles:

1. That service is provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.
2. The provision of services to persons with disabilities is provided in a manner that allows the person with a disability to benefit from the same services, in the same place, and in the same or similar way as others, unless an alternate measure is necessary, to enable a person with a disability to access services.
3. Persons with disabilities will be given an opportunity equal to that given to others to obtain, use and benefit from the services.

The second was the Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulation which includes three standards: **Information and Communications Standard**, **Employment Standard** and

the **Transportation Standard**. These are in various stages of development and the requirements are being phased in between 2011 and 2025.

This Policy and Procedure and related AODA policies and procedures apply to the following, unless otherwise stated:

- all employees that may include but is not limited to full-time, part-time, contract ,seasonal, bargaining unit and excluded;
- individuals completing a practicum, co-op or placement as part of an academic program;
- all other persons who provide services on behalf of the Society;
- all volunteers, including Board Members; and,
- all persons who participate in developing the Society's policies.

The Build Environment section of the standards outlines expectations when constructing new or redeveloping existing build environment structures and includes the areas of:

- outdoor play spaces;
- exterior paths of travel including ramps, landings, stairs, curb ramps, and depressed curbs;
- accessible Parking, and access aisles and signage;
- service counters;
- waiting areas; and
- maintenance of the build environment.

Requirements as per AODA may be found as stand-alone policies and procedures and/or integrated into the Society governance and operational policies.

## **Overall Procedures**

- The procedures set out in this policy and AODA related policy requirements are not a replacement or a substitution for the requirements established under the Human Rights Code, nor does any Policy limit any obligations owed to persons with disabilities under any other legislation.
- The Society will make accessibility information available and provide upon request by any person, documents describing its AODA policies and procedures. The Society will provide the requested documents or the information contained in the document in a format that takes into account the person's disability. The Society and the person with a disability may agree upon the format to be used for the document or information.
- Accessibility reports will be filed as required by AODA.
- No changes will be made to AODA and related policy and procedure requirements before considering the impact on people with disabilities and relevant legislation.

- In addition to the four year review cycle determined by the Society, the AODA and related policy and procedure requirements will be reviewed and amended, as required, when additional accessibility related regulations are enacted and when changes are made to the legislative framework governing accessibility.
- In the development and revision of Society policies, the AODA legislation and intent will be considered and included as required.
- The AODA and related policy and procedure requirements apply to all premises owned and operated by the Society and must be considered when service is provided outside the premises.
- Each appropriate Society service area, through the development of specific procedures and processes as per the requirements of AODA, will facilitate the identification, removal, and prevention of barriers to people with disabilities.
- Questions, issues or feedback concerning AODA and/or Society related policies, procedures and practice should be referred to the Manager of Communications and Community Relations.
- Failure to comply with the requirements could result in penalties as prescribed in AODA.

## DEFINITIONS:

The terms identified and defined below are intended to provide assistance in understanding and implementing the requirements outlined in the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act. For the purposes of the Customer Service Standard and the Integrated Accessibility Standard and consequent developed applicable Policies, and Procedures, only, the following definitions will apply:

Accessibility equipment is intended to remove barriers for people with disabilities.

Accessibility equipment includes lifting devices, power ramps, mobility aids, etc.

Accessibility features are intended to remove barriers for people with disabilities. This can include signage, accessible washrooms and automated communications systems, as well as technical features (e.g. software) and structural features (e.g. physical design, including hardware or product specifications).

Accessibility Plan describes the actions an organization will take to prevent and remove barriers and when it will do so.

Accessible formats may include, but are not limited to, large print, recorded audio and electronic formats, Braille and other formats usable by person with disabilities.

Accommodation means the special arrangement made or assistance provided so that person with disabilities can participate in the experiences available to persons without disabilities. Accommodation will vary depending on person's unique needs.

Amenities means items that provide conveniences or services for use by the public, examples of which include drinking fountains, benches and garbage receptacles .

Barriers to Accessibility is defined as anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of services. This includes but is not limited to, a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, information or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier or a technological barrier.

Bevel means a small slope that helps an individual negotiate an elevation change.

Career development and advancement includes providing additional responsibilities within an employee's current position and the movement of an employee from one job to another that may be higher in pay, provide greater responsibility or be at a higher level.

Communication Supports may include, but are not limited to, captioning, alternative and augmentative communication supports, plain language, sign language and other supports that facilitate effective communications.

Communications as it used in the Information and Communications Standard refers to the interaction between two or more people or entities when information is provided, sent or received.

Conversion-ready formats refer to any electronic or digital format that facilitates conversion into accessible formats, such as Braille, large print, audio cassettes, CDs, DVDs, etc.

Cross slope means the slope of a surface that is perpendicular to the direction of travel.  
Curb ramp means a ramp that is cut through a curb or that is built up to a curb.

Depressed curb means a seamless gradual slope at transitions between sidewalks and walkways and highways, and is usually found at intersections.

Disability – is defined, per Section 2 of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, S.O. 2005, c. 11 and the Human Rights Code, R.S.O. 1990, c. H.19, as follows:

- a) “any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical co-ordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device,
- b) a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability,
- c) a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,
- d) a mental disorder, or
- e) an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997.”

Documented individual accommodation plan is a plan developed by an employer, in consultation with an employee with a disability that documents the accommodations that will be provided so the employee can do his/her job. These plans are living documents. They are to be reviewed regularly.

Environmental mitigation means activities that are intended to reduce, mitigate, prevent or compensate for adverse effects of human activities or items, including paths, play spaces, trails and parking, upon fish, wildlife, plants, invertebrates, species at risk, ecological integrity or natural heritage values.

Extranet website means an extension of an organization’s intranet website or internal network. The extranet website allows outside users with internet connections controlled access to an organization’s internal network usually for specific business or educational purposes.

Individualized workplace emergency response information refers to the information prepared by employers, in consultation with employees who have disabilities, to help them prepare for emergencies such as fire, building evacuation, and power outages.

Information as it is used in the Information and Communications Standard refers to knowledge, data and facts that convey meaning and that exist in any format such as text, audio, digital or images and that conveys meaning.

In-line ramp means a ramp that does not change directions.

Internet website means a collection of related web pages, images, videos or other digital assets that are addressed relative to a common Uniform Resource Identifier (URI) and is accessible to the public.

Intranet website means an organization's internal website that is used to privately and securely share any part of the organization's information or operational systems within the organization and includes extranet websites.

Large organization refers to a private or not-for-profit organization that provides goods, services or facilities to the public, or to other organizations, and has 50 or more employees in Ontario.

Maintenance means activities that are intended to keep existing public spaces and elements in existing public spaces in good working order or to restore the spaces or elements to their original condition, examples of which include painting and minor repairs.

mm means millimeters.

New internet website means either a website with a new domain name or a website with an existing domain name undergoing a significant refresh.

New intranet website means either an intranet website with a new domain name or an intranet website with an existing domain name undergoing a significant refresh.

Obligated organization refers to the Government of Ontario, Legislative Assembly and designated public sector organizations as well as the large and small organizations to which the standards of the AODA apply.

Off-street parking facilities includes open area parking lots and structures intended for the temporary parking of vehicles by the public, whether or not the payment of a fee is charged and includes visitor parking spaces in parking facilities.

Outdoor play areas consist of an area that includes play equipment, such as swings, or features such as logs, rocks, sand or water, where the equipment or features are designed and placed to provide play opportunities and experiences for children and caregivers.

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

Personal information refers to personal information within the meaning of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

Persons with Disabilities Individuals who are afflicted with a disability as defined under the Ontario Human Rights Code.

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.

Redeveloped means planned significant alterations to public spaces, but does not include maintenance activities, environmental mitigation or environmental restoration.

Running slope means the slope of a surface that is parallel to the direction of travel.

Support Person means, in relation to a person with a disability, another person who accompanies the person with a disability in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs or with access to goods, services or facilities.

Third Party Contractor is defined as any person acting on behalf of or as an agent of the Society.

Unconvertible material refers to any information that cannot be converted into accessible formats. For example, limited to technology that allows conversion of some material into accessible formats.

Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 is an international standard for making websites and web content accessible to a broader range of users with disabilities. WCAG 2.0 Level A and Level AA refer to a series of technical checkpoints that make websites and their content increasingly accessible to a broader range of users with disabilities. To meet conformance Level A all Level A success criteria need to be met; to meet conformance Level AA all Level A and AA success criteria need to be met.

Web page – means a non-embedded resource obtained from a single Uniform Resource Identifier (URI) using Hypertext Transfer Protocol (HTTP) and any other resources that are used in the rendering or intended to be rendered together with it by a user agent.

**Revised Policy**  
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