

Making Your Space Accessible

The checklist items will help you develop a plan to make your premises more accessible:

Entrances

- entrances are accessible to persons using wheelchairs or scooters;
- canopies or other sheltering devices have adequate headroom;
- revolving door openings move slowly and safely to accommodate people using mobility aids if there is no accessible revolving door, an adjacent accessible door opens automatically, has power assisted door operators or can be easily opened with one hand;
- mats are level with the floor and door thresholds are bevelled so they do not create a tripping hazard; and
- people can easily find information, a reception counter, an accessible call bell or information phone for persons requiring assistance.

Exteriors

- accessible pedestrian route(s) or path(s) are wide enough to accommodate wheelchairs, scooters, or other mobility devices;
- curb cuts or ramps are wide enough for wheelchairs and scooters, have a non-slip finish and are kept clear of snow and ice in winter weather;
- routes are not obstructed by poles, plants, bicycle racks, etc.;
- accessible entrances are clearly marked with the International Symbol of Accessibility;
- building and route signage is provided in large, high contrast lettering;
- accessible passenger loading zone accommodates taxis, buses, or accessible vehicles;
- awnings or canopies extending over exterior walkways have clear headroom;
- on exterior steps, forward edges are highly colour contrasted for easy visibility; and
- on both sides of ramps or exterior stairs, continuous handrails are a bright contrasting colour and have horizontal or vertical rails to prevent people from slipping through.

Fire and Life Safety

- a fire policy and fire safety plan are in place for the evacuation of people with disabilities;
- main exit routes and exit doors are easily accessed and used by people using mobility aids;
- exit instructions are printed in large text, and mounted in an accessible, highly visible location; and
- fire alarms have both visual and audible signals.

General Layout and Services

- queuing areas and serving aisles are wide enough for people using mobility aids including electric wheelchairs and scooters;
- cashier desks, service counters or counters are accessible to and useable by patrons using wheelchairs or scooters;
- public telephones, coat racks or display shelves are accessible to and useable by patrons with various disabilities e.g. wheelchair users, persons with low vision or hearing loss; and
- appropriate lighting is installed to ensure that people with visual disabilities may clearly identify colours, patterns and signage.

Interiors

- floor finishes have non-slip surfaces under wet and dry conditions;
- open-concept, accessible routes are marked by bright colour or textural changes at floor level, to provide directional cues for persons with visual limitations;
- there are no protruding objects or tripping hazards in accessible routes, and if so, they are clearly marked with a bright colour, a cane-detectable floor finish, or a guard;

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- where floors are carpeted, the carpet is of firm, dense construction and easy for a wheelchair user to roll over without difficulty; and
- thresholds are bevelled to accommodate different floor materials.

Parking Areas

- accessible parking spaces are clearly marked with the International Symbol of Accessibility;
- there is a safe, clearly marked, accessible pedestrian route from the designated parking area to an accessible building entrance or elevator lobby; and
- accessible pedestrian route is made of firm, level material.

Public Washrooms

- an accessible stall is provided for each sex when integrated into regular washrooms or an accessible stand-alone unisex washroom is located nearby; and
- the following washroom features are accessible to people with a wide range of disabilities:

- o grab bars
- o coat hooks
- o flush controls
- o wash basins
- o toilet paper dispenser
- o call button for emergencies
- o mounted automatic hand-dryers or paper towel holders
- o lever-handled faucets or automatic faucet

Signage and Information Systems

- show the International Symbol of Accessibility;
- display universal hearing disability symbols where equipment is available, e.g. TTY;
- include Braille information;
- include appropriate pictograms, wherever possible (e.g. on washroom doors);
- include large high contrast text, clear, light-coloured lettering or symbols on a dark background, or dark characters on a light background; and
- be mounted at a convenient height for both wheelchair users and people with visual disabilities.

Wall Finishes

- walls in busy areas, corridors, ramps or staircases are finished in smooth, non-glossy, non-abrasive finishes;
- colour of doors or door frames in hallways contrast with surrounding wall colours;
- fire exit doors are consistently coloured throughout the building, so that they are easily distinguishable from other doors fire hose cabinets and fire extinguishers are in a highly contrasting colour;
- wall mirrors are limited in size, to prevent visual confusion; and
- mirrors that cover a wall (e.g. in a restaurant) are clearly marked for people with low vision.
- Remember to make your premises accessible to people with a wide range of disabilities, including physical, sensory, learning, developmental and mental health. This means paying attention to more than just ramps and accessible washrooms. It also means:
 - o lighting
 - o audible alarm systems
 - o signage with high contrast lettering
 - o easy-to-find directories
 - o accessible parking

THE BUSINESS ACCESSIBILITY TEST

Is your business welcoming to customers and employees with disabilities? A successful business is one that includes all members of society in its planning, hiring, marketing and delivery of products and services. How accessible is your business?

Take the accessibility test to find out.

CUSTOMER SERVICE	YES	NO
Our customer service policy makes sure that customers with disabilities receive the same service as all our other customers.		
Our employees are comfortable serving customers with disabilities.		
We can provide our services in different ways-we ask customers how we may help them.		
ACCESS TO YOUR PREMISES FOR CUSTOMERS AND EMPLOYEES		
Our premises have automatic doors and level access to the entrance.		
Our parking lot has spaces reserved for people with disabilities.		
Hallways and aisles are clutter-free and washrooms are accessible.		
COMMUNICATION		
Our signs are easy-to-read in large type.		
Our reports, advertisements and other written materials use respectful language.		
MARKETING AND PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT		
Our advertising represents the whole community without negative stereotypes.		
Our marketing strategy reaches potential customers with disabilities.		
Our new products and services are designed to be accessible by all our customers, including those with sensory or mobility disabilities.		
EMPLOYMENT		
Our staff is comfortable serving customers with disabilities.		
We're prepared to interview a job applicant who may need accommodation.		
Our job training can be delivered in alternate formats.		
POLICIES, PRACTICES AND PLANNING		
Managers demonstrate a commitment to serving customers with disabilities.		
We have a job accommodation policy.		
We have anti-discrimination and anti-harassment policies that protect employees with disabilities.		
When planning new initiatives, we consider the needs of people with disabilities.		

Count up the number of times you checked "yes".

- 1 – 8 need work
- 9 – 12 you're trying
- 13 – 16 good work
- 17 – 20 EXCELLENT!

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*Taken from the Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS) website:

<http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/mcass/english/pillars/accessibilityOntario/>

Resources for Barrier-free Design

Name of Organization	Resource Available	Web Site Address
Ontario Human Rights Commission	Ontario <i>Human Rights Code</i> and the Ontario Human Rights Commission's <i>Policy and Guidelines on Disability and the Duty to Accommodate</i>	www.ohrc.on.ca/english/code/index.shtml
Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing	Ontario <i>Building Code</i>	www.obc.mah.gov.on.ca
Canadian Standards Association	CSA Standard B651-M95 "Barrier Free Design", and CSA Standard B480-02 "Customer Service for People with Disabilities"	www.csa.ca
Standards Council of Canada		www.scc.ca
Ontario March of Dimes	Ontario-based consulting services list providing assistance for employers and service providers on increasing accessibility	www.accessibilitydirectory.ca
Ontario Restaurant Hotel & Motel Association	Disability Sensitivity Awareness Training	www.orhma.com/training/course_outlines.asp
Betty Dion Enterprises Ltd publishes Universal Design	<i>Accessibility Audit of Select Restaurant Chains in Ontario</i> - Prepared for the Ontario Human Rights Commission. <i>International Best Practices Guide</i> .	www.bdel.ca/UDBPGuide.htm