

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (Bill 118) and Accessibility Standards

Appendix V
2008 Accessibility Plan

On June 13, 2005, the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)* received Royal Assent. This legislation requires businesses and organizations that provide goods and services to people in Ontario to meet accessibility standards in five areas:

- Customer Service
- Transportation
- Information and Communications
- Built Environment
- Employment

The Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Regulation, O. Reg. 429/07, became law on January 1, 2008 and apply to designated public sector organizations on and after January 1, 2010 and to other providers of goods and services on and after January 1, 2012.

What is an Accessibility Standard?

An accessibility standard is a rule that persons and organizations have to follow to identify, remove and prevent barriers. By definition, a standard is an agreed way of doing something. It may be voluntary or regulated by law, and it can be local or international in scope.

Accessibility standards could cover such areas as: accessible buses, safe pedestrian routes into buildings, automatic doors at entrances, lower counter heights at cash registers, large-print menus, signage, accessible washroom facilities, staff training in serving customers with learning disabilities and adaptive technology in the workplace.

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Standards Development Committees (SDCs)

Under the Act, standards set out the rules that will help make Ontario more accessible. Proposed accessibility standards will be developed and recommended to the Minister of Community and Social Services by Standards Development Committees (SDCs). These SDCs will be made up of members of the community, business, broader public sector, affected provincial ministries, people with disabilities and their representatives.

The public will be given an opportunity to review and make comments on the proposed standards developed by SDCs. Following the public comment period, the Minister will decide what proposed standards will be recommended to become a regulation. Once a standard has been adopted as a regulation, all affected persons and organizations, including municipalities, will be required to comply with the standard within the time frames provided in the regulations. To ensure compliance, the Director can order the affected person or organization to pay a fine, file a report or comply with the Director's recommendations. Penalties shall apply to those who are convicted of an offence under the Act.

** Above information was obtained from the Ministry of Community and Social Services website.