

# Accessible Canada Act Framework for Compliance

## Employer Information

The Accessible Canada Act seeks to create a barrier-free Canada by 2040. Identifying, removing and preventing barriers in areas under federal jurisdiction is the primary focus of this act.

This applies to:

- Employment
- The built environment (buildings and public spaces)
- Information and communication technologies
- Other communication, (ASL, QSL, Indigenous Sign Language)
- The procurement of goods, services and facilities
- The design and delivery of programs and services

In terms of Employment, the Accessible Canada Act applies to organizations under federal responsibility, including:

- The Government of Canada, including departments, agencies and Crown corporations
- Parliamentary entities
- The Canadian Forces and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police
- Parts of the private sector that the Government of Canada regulates, such as:
  - The broadcasting and telecommunications sectors
  - Banks
  - The federal transportation network, including:
    - Airlines
    - Rail, road and marine transportation providers that cross provincial or international borders
    - Pipelines



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### Employer Obligations Under the Accessible Canada Act:

If the Accessible Canada Act applies to your company, the obligations and processes are quite clear. The Act requires that organizations,

- **Prepare and publish accessibility plans** to identify, remove and prevent barriers in their:

- Policies
- Programs
- Practices
- Services

- Update their plans every 3 years or as specified in regulations, and
- Consult people with disabilities when creating and updating their plans

- **Set up a feedback process:** to receive and hear feedback about accessibility

- **Prepare and publish progress reports:**

- Make regular progress report that describes the actions the organization has taken to implement their accessibility plans
- Include information in their reports on feedback received and how the organization took the feedback into consideration,
- Consult people with disabilities when preparing their reports

### Why Should Accessibility Matter to Your Company?

Minimally 22% of Canadians identify as having some type of permanent disability. If we add 'episodic disability (such as recurring health or mental health issues), this number increase to 50%. As our workforces ages – and ages out – Canada is left with a workforce deficit of 25%. The only way to replace such a large group of workers is through immigration. We are also seeing an increase in younger workers with Millennials and Gen Z projected to comprise 70% of our workforce by 2025.\*

In an increasing 'job-seekers' market with a workforce that is becoming younger and more diverse, workplace equity, diversity and inclusion are all factors in attracting and retaining talent. Accessibility and accommodation are core factors in equity. Accessibility often benefits workers without disabilities as well and improves workplace productivity, ergonomics and communication.



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### Where to Start:

Informing your company regarding the Accessible Canada Act and compliance factors is critical. The federal government has an abundance of online resources that can assist organizations in formulating a plan and framework in order to meet the obligations outlined in this act and develop a more accessible, inclusive workplace. It's important to note that there are no expectations of 'total accessibility' – just an expectation that employers will learn about accessibility from the experts (people with disabilities) and create a framework for identifying, removing and preventing barriers at work.

### Policy Framework:

- **Develop an inclusive workplace policy and protocols.** - Why does your company value diversity? How does this strengthen your organization? What will you commit to in order to ensure representation of diverse perspectives, lived experiences – as well as authentic inclusion of all employees?

- **Workplace Accommodation Policy** – Reasonable accommodation for equal participation in work activities and equal access to workplace benefits is a legal obligation under employment legislation and provincial and federal Human Rights Commissions. There are multiple 'protected grounds from discrimination' (including disability). A clear and comprehensive Workplace Accommodation Policy speaks to workplace accessibility and is a core policy regarding Accessible Canada Act compliance.

### Example Accessibility and Inclusion Policy:

In accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, we will pursue and support the following principles with regard to employees with disabilities

- Non-discrimination
- Full and effective participation and inclusion in work and work-related activities
- Respect and acceptance of persons with disabilities as part of diversity and humanity
- Equality of opportunity
- Accessibility and reasonable accommodation



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In accordance with the Accessible Canada Act, our company will develop Accessibility Plans, Create Mechanisms for Receiving and responding to feedback and generate Accessibility Progress Reports.

### Accessibility Plans

- Prepare and publish accessibility plans showing how we identify, remove, and prevent barriers
- Update and publish our accessibility plan every 3 years
- Consult persons with disabilities in preparing and updating these accessibility plans
- Provide alternate formats of accessibility plan to people who request it

### Receiving Feedback

- Create and communicate mechanisms to collect feedback about our accessibility plans and the barriers that people who deal with our company (staff, customers, vendors) face
- We will describe on our website ([www.gatewaytodiversity.ca](http://www.gatewaytodiversity.ca)) how we receive that feedback

### Progress Reports

- Prepare and publish progress reports to show how we are carrying out our accessibility plan
- Show in these progress reports how the feedback we received was considered
- Consult persons with disabilities in preparing progress reports
- Describe how persons with disabilities were consulted in preparing progress reports



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### **Protocols:**

1. This policy will be shared and communicated to all departments, committees and...
2. An 'Accessibility and Inclusion Advisory Committee' will be assembled to identify, assess and make recommendations around barriers and accessibility as well as the inclusion and positive promotion of staff members with disabilities. The Accessibility and Inclusion Advisory Committee will include representation from key departments and at least two members with disabilities. Terms of Reference will be developed for this committee and shared on our website.
3. Our company will contract an Accessibility Consultant (with lived experience with disability) to assist with assessment of accessibility and developing recommendations and goals that meet our staff needs as well as obligations under the Accessible Canada Act. This will be done at minimum once every three years (to coincide with our Accessible Canada Act planning and reporting obligations).
3. All programs, departments and physical infrastructure development will make accessibility and inclusion a priority and will utilize the 'Accessibility and Inclusion Committee' for information, resources and consultation.

**For a direct link to the Accessible Canada Act Summary (including planning and reporting requirements), please visit:**

**[Accessible Canada Act Summary](#)**