

# The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act

Accessibility Directorate of Ontario  
Ministry of Community and Social Services

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# Purpose of the AODA

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Achieve  
accessibility for  
Ontarians with  
disabilities

Develop, implement and enforce  
accessibility standards for:

- goods, services and facilities
- accommodation
- employment
- buildings, structures and premises

Inclusive approach to developing  
proposed standards by involving:

- people with disabilities
- representatives of industries and  
economic sectors
- Ontario government ministries



# Profile of disability in Ontario



## The numbers

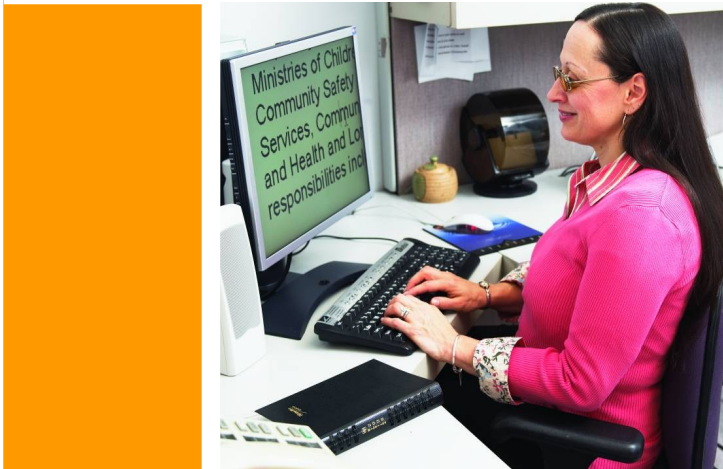
- About one in seven (1.85 million) Ontarians has a disability
- As population ages, the number will increase
- In 2025, one in five Ontarians will be 65 or older – nearly 6.7 million people

## The case for employment

- Untapped labour market potential
- Unemployment rate five times as high

## The case for accessible businesses

- Spending power of \$21-25 billion a year
- People with disabilities like to eat out, travel, work and participate in everyday activities





# Paving the way to more inclusion

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The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) is a multi-year journey

- A framework for comprehensive change, leading to full participation of people with disabilities in society
- First Canadian jurisdiction to regulate accessibility standards
- Standards will apply to public, broader public, private sectors
- Standards will address areas that pose major barriers for people with disabilities. A barrier could be:
  - a physical barrier
  - an architectural barrier
  - an information or communications barrier
  - an attitudinal barrier
  - a technological barrier
  - a policy or a practice



# AODA and ODA: the relationship to each other

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**ODA** is about  
planning

**AODA** is about  
accessibility  
standards

## **Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA)**

- Accessibility planning for government and broader public sector still applies.
- No standards. Limited enforcement.
- ODA expected to be repealed when standards under AODA are in place.

## **Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)**

- Provides for standards with timelines for compliance, in accessing goods, services, buildings and employment.
- Standards will foster integrating accessibility into regular business and capital planning.



# Implementation

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## Progressive approach:

- Awareness
  - Standards Development
  - Education
  - Compliance Assurance
- Raise public awareness of barriers to access and universal benefits of accessibility.
  - Consensus-based standards development process.
  - Education to help public/private organizations prepare for implementation of standards.
  - Phased-in compliance and continued education to assist and support compliance.



# Two types of standards to be developed

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**Common standards** apply broadly to all persons and organizations in Ontario:

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



**Standards that apply to a single sector**

- To address accessibility in a particular sector – e.g., transportation



# Standards Development Committees

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Standards Development Committees (SDCs) will develop meaningful, realistic proposed standards

SDCs set implementation targets and requirements to be phased in:

- first five years
- subsequent five-year periods

SDC membership includes:

- persons with disabilities or their representatives;
- representatives of industries, organizations and sectors affected by the standard; and
- Ontario government ministries.



# Developing accessibility standards

## Committee's ongoing responsibilities...

Review practices, sample standards

Build consensus within committee

Get input from respective communities

Committees start with an initial neutral document to give them a starting point from which to develop a proposed standard.

Members then proceed to:

- Set out objectives for 2025
- Set implementation schedule of standard's requirements
- Review readiness and cost feasibility assessment

Proposed standard submitted: launch of public review – about 45 days

Post-public review: SDC finalizes proposed standard

Government Decision

Regulation



# Where we are now

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## **Accessible Customer Service**

- Standards Development Committee (SDC) established in February 2006
- The Customer Service regulation came into force on January 1, 2008
- Regulation 429/07 applies to all organizations and businesses in Ontario with at least one employee

## **Accessible Transportation**

- SDC established in February 2006
- Public review of initial proposed standard completed September 2007
- SDC reconvened in March 2008 with a review of public comments

## **Accessible Information & Communications**

- SDC established in April 2007; standards development underway

## **Employment Accessibility**

- SDC established in September 2007; standards development underway

## **Accessible Built Environment**

- SDC established in October 2007; standards development underway
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# Compliance and enforcement

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- Individuals or organizations must comply with accessibility standards within the time frames set out in the regulations.
- Organizations will file accessibility reports.
- Incentives may be developed to encourage compliance – e.g., less frequent reporting.
- Inspectors may be appointed to verify compliance.
- Directors may issue orders and/or administrative penalties to encourage compliance.
- Orders may be appealed to a designated tribunal.



# Compliance Assurance Framework – Four components

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**Transparent Access to Information for Informed Citizen Engagement**

**1. PUBLIC EDUCATION & OUTREACH**

**OBLIGATED  
ORGANIZATIONS**

**2. COMPLIANCE  
ASSISTANCE**

**3. SELF-CERTIFICATION  
ACCESSIBILITY REPORTING**

**4. INSPECTION &  
ENFORCEMENT**





# Accessibility Standards for the Customer Service Regulation

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- Regulation came into force January 1, 2008
- Applies to all organizations as identified in the regulation that provide goods and services to customers in Ontario:
  - provincial and municipal governments, including Legislative Assembly of Ontario
  - universities, colleges, hospitals, school boards and public transit organizations
  - private businesses
  - non-profit organizations
- Purpose is to make an organization's customer service operations accessible to people with disabilities by identifying and removing barriers to customer service in such areas as operational practices, policies and procedures, communications and staff training.
- Timetable for compliance and reporting:
  - provincial ministries and other designated public sector organizations must comply by January 1, 2010, and report in 2010
  - persons or organizations in the private sector, including non-profit, with 20 or more employees must comply by January 1, 2012, and report in 2012
  - persons or organizations in the private sector, including non-profit, with one to 19 employees must comply by January 1, 2012, but are not required to submit compliance reports



# Some Highlights of the Customer Service Regulation

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Requirements include:

- Establish customer service **policies, practices and procedures** that address the provision of goods or services to persons with disabilities.
- Make reasonable efforts to ensure provision of goods or services to persons with disabilities and others are **integrated** unless an alternate measure is necessary.
- **Communicate** with customers with disabilities in a manner that takes into account the customer's disability (for example, providing a publication in an alternate format, such as audio or Braille).
- **Train** customer service staff in the provision of accessible customer service.
- Permit customers with disabilities who have **support persons or service animals** to use them while accessing goods or services in premises open to the public.
- Establish a process for customers to provide **feedback** respecting the provision of customer services to persons with disabilities and for the organization to take action on complaints.

For complete text of the regulation and answers to frequently asked questions visit the Ministry's website: [www.mcass.gov.on.ca](http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca)

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# Welcoming your participation

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## Opportunities for building accessibility in our communities

- Stay in touch with organizations you're affiliated with who sit on an SDC.
- Give feedback on proposed standards during public review.
- Support awareness about accessibility in your community.
- Nurture a culture of accessibility at work and in the community.
- Volunteer to serve on a municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee.
- Visit [www.AccessON.ca](http://www.AccessON.ca) to keep up with the latest information and progress.



# Accessibility Directorate of Ontario

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## Directorate's Role:

- Educate/Inform
  - Support
  - Assist
  - Consult/Partner
  - Enforce
- Public education and awareness
  - Provide compliance assistance support to obligated sectors
  - Establish Standards Development Committees to develop accessibility standards
  - Assist Accessibility Standards Advisory Council in fulfilling its mandate
  - Consult and partner with organizations to support compliance assistance
  - Enforcement of the AODA and its standards through compliance assurance framework

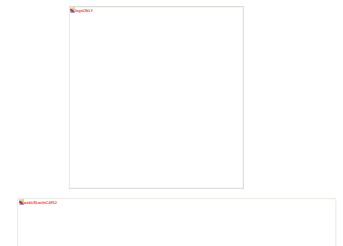


# Supporting Obligated Organizations

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The Directorate has initiatives underway to help businesses and organizations understand and meet their responsibilities under the customer service regulation:

- Contact centre dedicated to answering calls regarding the AODA and the regulations (Toll-free: 1-866-515-2025 / TTY: 416-325-3408/1-800-268-7095)
- [www.AccessON.ca/compliance](http://www.AccessON.ca/compliance) - A one-stop shop for AODA information and resources to assist organizations in complying with accessibility standard regulations, including:
  - a guide to the accessible customer service standard
  - tools, tip sheets and “how to” primers
  - resources in various media formats (video, animation)
- Strategic public and private sector partnerships





# Links and resources

The screenshot shows the Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services website. At the top left is the Ontario logo. To its right is the text "MINISTRY OF COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL SERVICES". Below this is a navigation bar with links: "ABOUT THIS MINISTRY", "FORMS", "PUBLICATIONS", "NEWSROOM", and "TEXT-ONLY VERSION". The main header features a banner image of two people shaking hands, with the text "ACCESSIBILITY FOR ONTARIANS WITH DISABILITIES". Below the banner is a breadcrumb trail: "MCSS PROGRAMS AND SERVICES > ACCESSIBILITY FOR ONTARIANS WITH DISABILITIES". The page content is organized into several sections:

- ACCESSIBILITY AND YOUR BUSINESS:** Includes links for financial assistance, welcoming customers with disabilities, and why accessibility is good for business.
- ACCESSIBILITY PLANNING:** Includes links for the Ontario Disabilities Act, 2001, public sector planning, and accessibility resources.
- INFORMATION:** Includes links for frequently asked questions and helpful links.
- OUR GOAL: MAKING ONTARIO FULLY ACCESSIBLE BY 2025:** States the goal to achieve accessibility for Ontarians with disabilities by 2025.
- WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW:** Lists the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA), the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario, the Accessibility Standards Advisory Council of Ontario, and Accessibility Standards Development Committees (SDC).
- HOW TO SECTION:** Lists actions such as making buildings and spaces accessible, making information accessible, making workplaces accessible, ordering alternate format publications, planning accessible meetings, and talking about disabilities.
- CONTACTS:** A section for contact information.

## Websites:

Accessibility Ontario

[www.mcass.gov.on.ca](http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca) click on "Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities"

AccessON

[www.AccessON.ca](http://www.AccessON.ca)

Directory for Accessibility

[www.accessibilitydirectory.ca](http://www.accessibilitydirectory.ca)

**Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) Contact Centre (*ServiceOntario*)**

Toll-free: 1-866-515-2025

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

Fax: 416-325-3407