



Bulletin No. 1

Introduction

The Wasaga Beach Accessibility Advisory Committee was created in April 2003, under the then Ontarians with Disabilities Act (ODA). The role of the Committee is to advise Council on accessibility issues regarding municipally owned property, develop a plan to address accessibility issues and to review site plans to ensure that accessible public access is maintained.

In 2005 a new act was proclaimed by the Provincial Government, The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA). This law is designed to make Ontario fully accessible within the next 20 years. Standards are being developed for both the public and private sectors and will address the full range of disabilities. The standards will have mandatory changes, deadlines and a means of Enforcement. This bulletin is intended to educate you on the requirements on the new Act.

Are you missing out on Business?

People with disabilities spend over **\$25 billion** a year in Canada and influence the spending decisions of 12-15 million people. Population projections estimate that by 2021, Canadians aged 65 and older will number close to 6.7 million, or about one-fifth of the total population. Statistics indicate that there are some 1.9 million people in Ontario with disabilities.

Providing good access to your business will benefit many people including:

- People who are blind or have a vision loss;
- People who are deaf or hard of hearing;
- People with learning, developmental or intellectual disabilities;
- and
- People with a loss of mobility who may use a wheelchair, cane or walker

Accessibility also benefits:

- Parents or caregivers of young children;
- People of an older age; and
- Every customer - especially when it's busy

Types of Barriers**Architectural**

May result from the design of the building, shape of rooms, size of doorways, or width of hallways, for example.

Physical

Refer to objects added to the environment, such as doors, windows, elevators, furniture, bathroom hardware, etc

Information or communication

Make it difficult for people to receive or send information. For example, a person with a visual disability may not be able to read printed materials, read signs, locate landmarks, or see a hazard. A person with an intellectual disability may not understand information that is not expressed in plain language.

Attitudinal

Refer to persons who do not know how to communicate with people with disabilities, or persons who display discriminatory behaviors.

Technology

Refer to devices such as computers, telephones, inadequate or inappropriate assistive technologies.

Systemic

Can result from an organization's policies, practices and protocols if they restrict persons with disabilities.

It's the law!

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) provides legal guidelines for Ontario to become completely barrier-free by 2025. The AODA includes the development of mandatory standards to address the full range of disabilities and barriers and the introduction of timelines to ensure that the standards are implemented. Businesses and organizations that provide goods and services in Ontario will have to meet certain accessibility standards in five important areas.

- Customer Service Standards *
- Transportation Standards
- Information & Communication Standards
- Built Environment Standards

- Employment Standards

*The Standards for Customer Service came into force January 1, 2008.

This means that public sector organizations must meet the Customer Service standards by January 1, 2010.

Businesses, non-profit organizations, or any other service providers must comply by January 1, 2012.

Having your business assessed for accessibility is a great step towards an accessible community but it is important to be informed about everything that is required to meet the new standards.

For a summary of requirements to comply with the Accessibility standards for customer service.

Visit

<http://www.mcsc.gov.on.ca/mcss/english/pillars/accessibilityOntario/assessment/compliance/>