

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) 2005

The purpose of the AODA is to develop, implement, and enforce accessibility standards or rules so that all Ontarians will benefit from accessible services, programs, spaces, and employment.

The standards help organizations to prevent or remove barriers that limit the things people with disabilities can do, the places they can go, and the attitudes of service providers toward them.



Accessibility - AODA

ADOA: The Terms....*American Psychological Association www.apa.org*

What does **disability** mean?

A disability is a condition or quality linked to a particular person. A disability is present when activities are in some way restricted.

- Blindness or visual impairment
- Deafness or hearing impairment
- Speech impairment
- Physical impairment such as: Paralysis, Amputation
- Difficulty with balance or coordination
- Brain injury, Epilepsy, Intellectual, Learning or Mental Health
- Reliance on a service animal or mobility device, such as a wheelchair, walker, or cane

What does **handicap** mean?

An obstacle imposed on people by some constraint in the environment.

Older buildings that lack ramps for wheelchair access, for example, present a handicap for people who use wheelchairs.

In this case, a wheelchair user is **handicapped** — her mobility through use of her wheelchair is disrupted — by the missing ramp.

However, she actually is not handicapped herself; rather, the handicapping element is in the environment, not within her.

OVERVIEW OF THE AODA

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) became law in 2005.

Its goal is to create an accessible Ontario by 2025 by removing barriers in a number of areas.

Under the AODA, mandatory accessibility standards are being developed for all organizations and businesses that provide goods or services to the public or to third parties.

Accessibility Standards are the rules that all businesses and organizations, including Nonprofit organizations, agencies and other charities in Ontario will have to follow in order to identify, remove and prevent barriers to accessibility.

The AODA is developing Accessibility Standards in five areas:

- Customer Service: policies for hearing, vision, mobility, reliance disabilities
- Integrated Standards: Staff, Board, volunteers etc all know and follow the standards
- Transportation: when your organization also transports its staff and customers
- Information and Communications: print and online materials
- Employment: equal-opportunity employment practices
- Built Environment: building entry, exit, emergency/safety, waiting area & comfort facility

FOUR CORE PRINCIPLES OF THE AODA

DIGNITY: What does the principle of dignity mean?

- Policies, procedures and practices that respect the dignity of a person with a disability are those that treat them as customers and clients who are as valued and as deserving of effective and full service as any other customer.

INDEPENDENCE: What does the principle of independence mean?

- In some instances, independence means freedom from control or influence of others – freedom to make your own choices. In other situations, it may mean the freedom to do things in your own way. People who may move or speak more slowly should not be denied an opportunity to participate in a program or service because of this factor.

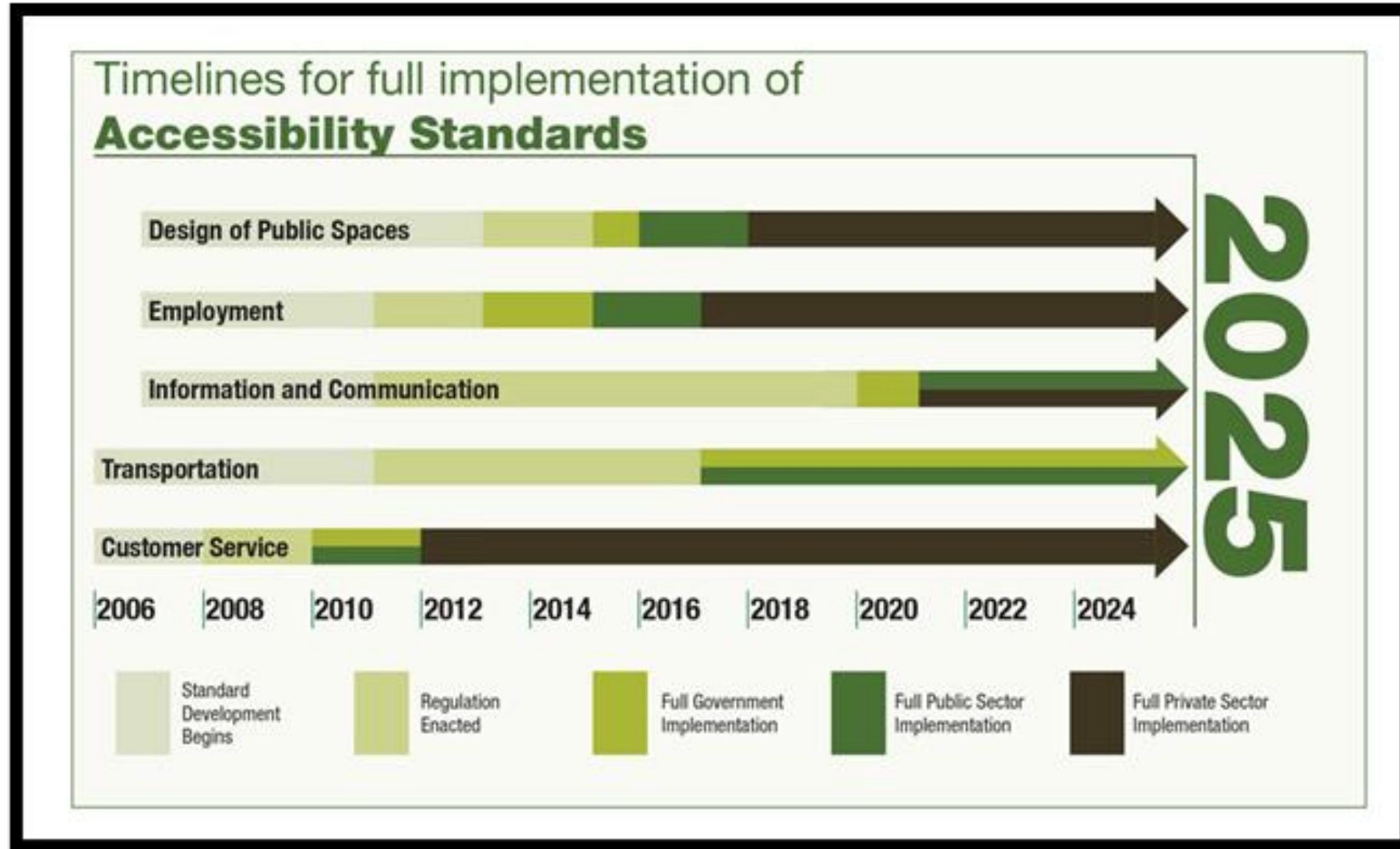
INTEGRATION: What does the principle of integration mean?

- Integration means that policies, practices and procedures are designed to be accessible and implemented to everyone including people with disabilities. If you are unable to remove a barrier to accessibility, you need to consider what else can be done to provide services to people with disabilities.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY: What does the principle of equal opportunity mean?

- In the case of services it means that people with disabilities have the same opportunity to benefit from the way you provide goods or services as others. They should not have to make significantly more effort to access or obtain service. They should also not have to accept lesser quality or more inconvenience.

Phased Implementation



2012

- Develop an accessibility plan & post publicly. This plan a statement of how you provide accessible resources (assistive devices, signage, service animals, lines of responsibility...)
- Develop a Fire & Emergency Safety plan and post publicly; identify and correct all barriers and infractions; ensure local fire department has a copy of your plan.
- Train all staff, volunteers & Board members on the fundamentals of the above plans
- *Helpful Hints: Your local Fire Department & Health Unit have a wealth of resources for the components and signage necessary for fire safety, emergency exit, safe food preparation, etc. You may also identify larger capital needs such as emergency lights, fire doors, egress windows, etc.*



The poster features a large blue exclamation mark icon at the top center. Below it is a blue horizontal bar with the text "Fire action" in white. The poster is organized into several rows, each with an icon on the left and text on the right. The first three rows have blue bars with white text and icons. The last two rows have red bars with white text and icons.

-  **Sound the alarm** 
-  **Leave building by nearest available exit** 
-  **Report to assembly point** 
-  **Do not return to the building until authorised to do so**
-  **Do not use the lifts**

2015

- Ensure all print-based information and training materials are barrier free: large print, decals instead of words, multilingual if applicable, microphone & speaker systems
- Train all educators, staff, volunteers & Board members on the use of above resources
- *Helpful Hints: May identify capital needs such as*
- *large-print books or print alternatives projector or sound system*



2017

- Ensure all online resources are barrier free: large print, image-based, read-along
- Ensure all employee and volunteer positions can be accomplished in a manner that is barrier-free and allows equal access to opportunity in the workplace.
- *Helpful Hints: invite someone from your town/District accessibility committee to visit your church to consult; it helps to have a fresh perspective and they will have access to strategies and resources to assist with the changes you need to make.*

**Web Accessibility
Checklist
for
Content Creators**



To be completed by 2025

- Recreational trails and access routes
- Off-street parking lots must be accessible
- Service counters, waiting and queuing areas must be accessible
- Train staff, volunteers and Board members on how to modify services so they can be provided in the accessible area (ie. Create a main floor meeting space)
- *Helpful Hints: a person with a disability should be able to park, enter, remain with comfort and access essential resources in an area your church (not every area). Accessible parking spot? Ramp? Automatic Door? Barrier-free washroom? Provide alternatives for inaccessible areas: basement is not accessible, so what programs can we move to the main floor?*



Annual Practices

- Ensure annual opportunity to review the safety, emergency and accessibility plans and procedures (perhaps at Vestry)
- Ensure annual check of fire extinguishers & alarms
- Solicit feedback from staff and volunteers in the hope of improving the plan (perhaps in combination with annual training or evaluation pursuant to Screening in Faith)



Now What?

- Take inventory of what your church has accomplished to date. Perhaps some work you have already started needs an update.
- Once you know what you have YET TO DO, start surfing!!!!
- www.aoda.ca 'Customer Service Standard' outlines the components of an accessibility plan that you can tailor to suit your church. This website also provides helpful explanations and resources.
- www.accessforward.ca Provides training and information sessions that can be done online or printed.
- www.volunteer.ca Provides information on staff and volunteer training, screening and accessibility standards.
- www.simcoemuskokahealth.org our health unit has great information about health and safety standards in 'workplaces' and food preparation.
- Your local fire department and municipality!
- Contact your Deanery Officials 😊