

# Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities – Provision of Services, Information, Communications, Employment and Built Environment

## Purpose and Scope

The Law Society of Ontario (“Law Society”) is committed to creating and maintaining an accessible environment for all employees, licensees, and the public and to fulfilling the requirements outlined in the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (the “Act”).

Under the AODA, O. Reg. 191/11: Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (the “Regulation”) establishes standards to address barriers that people with disabilities face in the areas of information and communications, employment, the design of public spaces, and customer service.

The requirements under the AODA work in conjunction with the Ontario Human Rights Code. The purpose of this policy is to outline the practices and procedures in place at the Law Society to help identify and remove barriers for people with disabilities.

## Application

The policy applies to all employees, including:

- All permanent employees (full-time and part-time)
- Contract staff, casual workers, probationary, and temporary staff
- Articling students, Law Practice Program students, work placement students, summer students, law students, and volunteers

The policy also applies to all members of the public visiting the Law Society.

## Statement of Organizational Commitment

The Law Society of Ontario is committed to ensuring equal access for people with disabilities and treating people with disabilities in a way that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence and embodies the principles of integration and equal opportunity.

The Law Society is committed to being a barrier-free environment for persons with disabilities in employment, in its communications and information, in the delivery of goods and services and in its built environment. We will do so by removing and preventing barriers to accessibility and meeting our accessibility requirements under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act and Ontario’s accessibility laws in a timely manner.

The Law Society is committed to ensuring that all its employees are aware of their responsibilities to foster an accessible and inclusive environment with and for persons with disabilities.

## Roles and Responsibilities

### Law Society of Ontario

It is the responsibility of the employer to:

- Develop and implement an Accessibility Policy and Multi-Year Accessibility Plan
- Comply with the AODA and Ontario’s accessibility laws
- Provide notice of service interruption

## Human Resources

It is the responsibility of Human Resources to:

- Raise awareness and facilitate awareness of the policy
- Develop and ensure completion of accessibility training
- Maintain records of the completion of mandatory training
- Facilitate workplace accommodations

## Facilities

It is the responsibility of Facilities to:

- Construct and redevelop areas of the Law Society accessible to the public to accommodate the needs of persons with disabilities
- Maintain areas of the Law Society accessible to the public to ensure they remain accessible to persons with disabilities

## Supervisors

It is the responsibility of supervisors to:

- Support and promote the policy in their area and throughout the organization
- Facilitate understanding of the policy
- Participate and cooperate with Human Resources and employees to facilitate workplace accommodation

## Employees

It is the responsibility of employees to:

- Participate and cooperate to facilitate accommodations in the workplace

## Definitions

**Accessible formats** – As defined by the Regulation, “accessible formats” may include, but are not limited to, large print, recorded audio and electronic formats, braille and other formats usable by persons with disabilities.

**Barrier** – As defined by the Act, a “barrier” means anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of their disability, including a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, an information or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy or practice.

**Communication supports** – As defined by the Regulation, “communication supports” may include, but are not limited to, captioning, alternative and augmentative communication supports, plain language, sign language and other supports that facilitate effective communications.

**Disability** – As defined in the Act,

- any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical coordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device;
- a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability;

- a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language;
- a mental disorder, or
- an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997*.

**Guide dog** – As defined by the Regulation, a “guide dog” means a guide dog as defined in section 1 of the *Blind Persons’ Rights Act*;

**Service Animal** – As defined by the Regulation, an animal is a service animal for a person with a disability if:

- The animal can be readily identified as one that is being used by the person for reasons relating to the person’s disability, as a result of visual indicators such as the vest or harness work by the animal; or
- The person provides documentation from a regulated health professional confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability.

**Support Person** – As defined by the Regulation, “support person” means, in relation to a person with a disability, another person who accompanies them in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs or with access to goods, services or facilities.

## Policy

### Customer Service

The Law Society is committed to maintaining an accessible environment for persons with disabilities in the delivery of its goods and services.

**Communication** – The Law Society will communicate in ways that take into account the needs of the persons with disabilities and notify the public of the availability of accessible formats and communication supports. Upon request, the Law Society will provide or arrange for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports for persons with disabilities that take into account the persons needs and at no more than the regular cost charged to other persons.

**Assistive devices** – The Law Society is committed to serving persons with disabilities who use assistive devices to obtain, use or benefit from our services.

**Use of service animals and support persons** – A person with disabilities who is accompanied by a guide dog or service animal will be permitted to enter the premises with the animal and to keep the animal with them.

At no time will a person with disabilities who is accompanied by a support person be prevented from having access to their support person while on the Law Society premises.

The Law Society may require a person with disabilities to be accompanied by a support person, but only if, after consulting with the person with a disability, the Law Society determines the support person is necessary to protect the health or safety of the person with a disability or the health or safety of others on the premises.

**Notice of temporary disruption** – The Law Society provides notification in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in the facilities or services usually used by persons with disabilities. This notice

includes information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available.

The notices are posted at all public entrances and service counters of the Law Society or communicated by such method as is reasonable in the circumstances (e.g. on the website).

**Emergency procedure, plans and public safety** – Where emergency procedures, plans or public safety information is available to the public, the Law Society will provide the information in an accessible format or with appropriate communication supports upon request.

### **Information and Communications**

**Accessible Formats and Communication Supports** – Upon request and in consultation with the person making the request, the Law Society will arrange for the provision of documents in an accessible format or with communication support to persons with a disability in a timely manner and at a cost that is no more than the regular cost charged to other persons.

**Accessible Websites and Web Content** – The Law Society’s public websites and web content conforms with WCAG 2.0 Level A.

If resources cannot be made accessible, the Law Society will arrange for the provision of the information or service in an accessible format or with communication supports upon request.

### **Employment**

**Recruitment, assessment or selection process** – The Law Society notifies its employees and the public about the availability of accommodation for applicants with disabilities in its recruitment processes.

During the recruitment process, the Law Society notifies job applicants selected to participate in the assessment or selection process that accommodations are available upon request in relation to the materials or processes to be used. If a selected applicant requests an accommodation, the Law Society consults with the applicant and arranges for the provision of a suitable accommodation that takes into account the applicant’s accessibility needs due to disability.

**Notice to successful applicants** – When making offers of employment, the Law Society notifies the successful applicant of its policies for accommodating employees with disabilities.

**Informing employees of supports** – The Law Society informs its employees of its policies that support employees with disabilities, including, but not limited to, policies on the provision of job accommodations that take into account an employee’s accessibility needs due to disability.

**Workplace emergency response information** – The Law Society provides individualized workplace emergency response information to employees who have a disability, if the disability is such that the individualized information is necessary and the Law Society is aware of the need for accommodation due to the employee’s disability. With the employee’s consent, the workplace emergency response information will be provided to the person designated to provide assistance to the employee. The individualized workplace emergency response information is reviewed and updated as necessary.

**Documented individual accommodation plans**- The Law Society accommodates the needs of its employees with disabilities as required by the Ontario accessibility laws and Ontario Human Rights Code. The Law Society develops individualized accommodation plans for its employees with disabilities as the

Law Society is made aware.

The process for the development of and contents in an individual accommodation plan is documented in the Law Society's *Accommodation of Employees Policy and FAQs*.

**Return to work process** – The Law Society maintains a documented return to work process for employees who have been absent from work due to a disability and who require disability-related accommodations and support in order to return to work.

**Performance management, career development and redeployment** – The Law Society continues to consider the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities as well as their individual accommodation plans when conducting performance management reviews, providing career development and advancement to employees, and when redeploying employees.

### **Feedback Process**

The Law Society is committed to meeting accessibility requirements and continuously taking steps to improve its services and website to comply with the AODA and its regulations. The Law Society welcomes feedback regarding the manner in which it provides goods, services or facilities to persons with disabilities. Feedback can be provided to the Executive Director, Client & People Services:

- in person at the Law Society of Ontario, Osgoode Hall, 130 Queen Street West, Toronto, Ontario, M5H 2N6
- by telephone, 416-947-7622 or 1-800-668-7380 ext. 7622
- in writing to the Executive Director, Client & People Services or the CEO, or
- by email to [aoda@lso.ca](mailto:aoda@lso.ca).

The Executive Director, Client & People Services will review and assess every complaint received. Where possible, the Executive Director or CEO will ensure the issues are addressed. If a complaint cannot be addressed, the Executive Director, Client & People Services will advise the complainant.

### **Training for Employees**

The Law Society is committed to training its employees and other individuals who provide services to the public on the Law Society's behalf on accessible customer service and communications. Training occurs within 6 months of employees' commencement of their duties

The Law Society provides training on an ongoing basis when changes are made to the Law Society's policies, practices and procedures.

The Law Society keeps a record of the training provided under the policy, including employee names and dates of completion.

### **Planned Strategies and Actions**

#### **Information and Communications**

The Law Society ensures that all its public websites and web content will conform to WCAG 2.0 Level AA by January 1, 2021, except where this is not practical or there is an exception by law.

#### **Design of Public Spaces**

When constructing new service counters, fixed queuing guides, or waiting areas, the Law Society is committed to meeting the requirements under accessibility laws. The Law Society also ensures accessibility considerations will be incorporated when setting up temporary event spaces and/or

modifying existing interior and exterior public spaces.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Diana Miles". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and "M".

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Signature – Diana Miles, CEO

December 17, 2020

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Date