



**Metrolinx Accessibility Policy
for Implementation of the Accessibility for
Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)**

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Metrolinx Accessibility Policy

1. Background

Consistent with its focus on customer service, Metrolinx supports the full inclusion of people with disabilities in its activities and services. In delivering on its organization-wide commitment to provide accessible goods and services to people with disabilities Metrolinx operates in a framework of accessibility provided by the **Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms**, the **Ontario Human Rights Code**, the **Ontarians with Disabilities Act (ODA), 2001** and the **Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), 2005**.

The **Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2005 (AODA)** is provincial legislation written for the purpose of developing, implementing and enforcing accessibility standards in order to achieve accessibility for persons with disabilities with respect to goods, services, facilities, accommodation, employment, buildings, structures and premises by 2025.

This consolidated Metrolinx policy document addresses the requirements outlined in two regulations under the AODA, which apply to public sector organizations and other persons or organizations that provide goods and services to members of the public:

Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07, and (ACSS) establishes accessibility standards concerning customer service.

Integrated Accessibility Standards, Ontario Regulation 191/11, (IAS) establishes accessibility standards for information and communications, employment, and transportation.

2. Application

This policy outlines how Metrolinx complies with the regulations and applies the corporate commitment for customer service to all customers. It clarifies what our customers can expect from us. The term “customer” applies both to our employees and the services they

can expect from Metrolinx as an employer, and to external customers who use our services. The policy guides the activities of all persons acting on behalf of Metrolinx, including employees and contractors.

The policy applies to Metrolinx and its operating divisions, GO Transit, PRESTO, and the Union Pearson Express (UP Express). It guides Metrolinx activities in planning, designing, and procuring future goods, facilities, and services as well as in operating current ones.

This policy is available in alternate formats upon request.

The chart on the next page references the pages in this document that address each of the AODA regulation clauses that apply to Metrolinx. The regulatory compliance date for each clause is also provided. The policies for some topics, such as training and communications, respond to clauses in both regulations, as noted in the bottom section of the table.

Reg. Clause Number	Page # In This Policy	Accessibility Requirements	Regulatory Compliance Date
ACCESSIBLE CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARD (ACSS) REGULATION			
ACSS 4	16	Use of service animals and support persons	Jan. 1 2010
INTEGRATED ACCESSIBILITY STANDARD (IAS) REGULATION			
> Part I General			
IAS 4	6	Accessibility plans	Jan. 1 2013
IAS 5	11	Procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities	Jan. 1 2013
IAS 6	18	Self-service kiosks	Jan. 1 2014
> Part II Information and Communications Standards			
IAS 13	11	Emergency procedure, plans or public safety information	Jan. 1 2012
IAS 14	11	Accessible websites and web content:	
		- new content	Jan. 1 2014
		- existing content	Jan. 1 2021
> Part III Employment Standards			
IAS 22	11	Recruitment, general	Jan. 1 2014
IAS 23	11	Recruitment, assessment or selection process	Jan. 1 2014
IAS 24	11	Notice to successful applicants	Jan. 1 2014
IAS 25	11	Informing employees of supports	Jan. 1 2014
IAS 27	12	Workplace emergency response information	Jan. 1 2012
IAS 28	12	Documented individual accommodation plans	Jan. 1 2014
IAS 29	12	Return to work process	Jan. 1 2014
IAS 30	13	Performance management	Jan. 1 2014
IAS 31	13	Career development and advancement	Jan. 1 2014
IAS 32	13	Redeployment	Jan. 1 2014
> Part IV Transportation Standards			
IAS 34	15	Availability of information on accessibility equipment	Jan. 1 2012
IAS 35	14	Non-functioning accessibility equipment	July 1 2011
IAS 37	17	Emergency preparedness and response policies	Jan. 1 2012
IAS 38	16	Fares, support persons	Jan. 1 2014
IAS 44	13	General responsibilities	Jan. 1 2012
IAS 45	14	Alternative accessible method of transportation	Jan. 1 2013
IAS 46	16	Fares (Fare parity)	July 1 2011
IAS 47	15	Transit stops	Jan. 1 2012
IAS 48	16	Storage of mobility aids etc.	July 1 2011
IAS 49	17	Priority seating	Jan. 1 2012
IAS 50	14	Accessible Service Disruptions	Jan. 1 2012
IAS 51	15	Pre-boarding announcements:	
		- verbal	July 1 2011
		- electronic	Jan. 1 2017
IAS 52	15	On-board announcements:	
		- verbal	July 1 2011
		- electronic	Jan. 1 2017
IAS 59	13	Lifting devices, etc.	Jan. 1 2013
ACCESSIBLE CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARD & INTEGRATED ACCESSIBILITY STANDARD REGULATION			
ACSS 6, IAS 7 & 36	6	Training	Jan. 1 2010 (ACSS); Jan. 1 2014 (IAS)
ACSS 9, IAS 12 & 26	9	Accessible Formats and Communication Supports	Jan. 1 2010 (ACSS); IAS Jan. 1 2014 (employees), Jan. 1 2015 (public)
ACSS 7, IAS 11	10	Feedback	Jan. 1 2010 (ACSS); Jan. 1 2014 (IAS)
ACSS 5, IAS 50	14	Service disruptions	Jan. 1 2010 (ACSS); Jan. 1 2013 (IAS)
ACSS 4, IAS 38	16	Support persons (Fares and Transportation Policies)	Jan. 1 2010 (ACSS); Jan. 1 2014 (IAS)

3. Definitions

(a) Assistive (Appliance or) Device

A device used to assist customers with disabilities to carry out activities of daily living, which they would normally accomplish independently were it not for the limitations imposed by their disability. Examples of these devices include, but are not necessarily limited to manual and powered wheelchairs, and scooters, wheeled walkers (these devices are known as Wheeled Mobility Aids, or WMAs), non-wheeled walkers, canes and crutches.

(b) Disability

Any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, congenital disorder 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 assistive appliance or device; a condition of mental health 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 health 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.

(c) Service Animal

Any animal used by a customer with a disability for reasons relating to the disability where it is readily apparent that the animal is used by the customer for reasons relating to his or her disability; or where the customer provides a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that he or she requires the animal for reasons relating to his or her disability; or a valid identification card signed by the Attorney General of Canada or a certificate of training from a recognized guide dog or service animal training school.

(d) Support Person

A person who accompanies a customer with a disability to assist him or her with communication, mobility, personal care, medical needs, or with access to goods or services.

4. Metrolinx's Commitment

Metrolinx is committed to ensuring that its services and operations are accessible to all customers and employees in accordance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities ACT (AODA), and to working with partners in the GTHA to plan, build and operate an integrated accessible transportation system. The organization will work diligently to remove existing, and avoid creating, barriers to access and will demonstrate leadership, consulting widely and incorporating best practices to enhance accessibility in its services.

5. General Principles

Metrolinx will ensure that its policies, practices and procedures are consistent with the following guiding principles:

- The dignity and independence of all people are maintained and respected;
- Services provided to customers with disabilities are integrated with those provided to customers who do not have apparent disabilities, unless an alternative measure is necessary to enable a customer with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from Metrolinx services;
- Customers with disabilities are given opportunities equivalent to those available to customers without disabilities to obtain, use or benefit from Metrolinx services.
- All customers, whether their disability is apparent or not, should experience the same attention to excellent customer service, and have their need for accommodation addressed when they use Metrolinx services.

- Input by people with disabilities is sought through an effective Accessibility Advisory Committee, public consultations and customer review of selected specific proposals to ensure that Metrolinx services meet the needs of all customers.

3. Policies

(a) Accessibility Plan (IAS Clause 4)

The Metrolinx Multi-Year Accessibility Plan outlines corporate initiatives to prevent and remove barriers from our workplace and services. Metrolinx prepares annual status reports on the progress of the Accessibility Plan, and will post the status reports on our website.

Metrolinx will undertake annual consultations with people with disabilities to ensure that the content of the Multi-Year Plan responds to customer needs. Input from these public consultations will be sent to the appropriate Operating Divisions and Business Units for consideration, response, and action if appropriate.

Metrolinx will review and update the Accessibility Plan at least once every five years.

(b) Training (ACSS Clause 6, IAS Clause 7, IAS Clause 36)

Metrolinx ensures that all persons to whom this policy applies (i.e., employees who provide direct or indirect service) receive training as required by the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, (Ontario Regulation 429/07), the Integrated Accessibility Standards (Ontario Regulation 191/11) and the Ontario Human Rights Code. The amount and format of training given is tailored to suit each person's interactions with the public and his or her involvement in the development of policies, procedures and practices pertaining to the provision of goods and services.

All front-line employees receive training prior to assuming the duties and responsibilities of their jobs and at least once every five years thereafter. All employees providing indirect service will receive and have ongoing access to an online program which complies with AODA standards.

(i) Sign Language Training

Metrolinx fully subsidizes sign language training for any employees who successfully complete an approved course.

(ii) Records of Training

Metrolinx keeps records of the training, including the date on which training is provided and the number of individuals to whom it is provided. The names of individuals trained are recorded for training administration purposes, subject to the Provincial Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA).

Staff are trained when they begin their employment and when changes are made to applicable mandatory requirements or corporate practice.

(c) Accessible Formats and Communication Supports (IAS Clauses 12, 26 ACSS Clause 9)

Metrolinx distributes information to customers, business partners and employees using best practice formats proven helpful to the majority of people with a range of disabilities. Upon request, Metrolinx will work with individuals with disabilities to provide, or arrange for the provision of information in accessible formats and to provide communication supports that work for that person. Metrolinx will also work with specific employees to provide, or arrange for the provision of, information needed in alternate accessible formats to allow the individual to perform his/her job. Information in accessible formats will be provided in a timely manner.

In areas where Metrolinx is still working to make materials more accessible (on-line forms, surveys and maps for example), Metrolinx is committed to meeting these requirements well ahead

of the necessary compliance dates. Complete compliance with respect to accessible formats will be in place for customers by the required date of January 1, 2015 and for employees by January 1, 2014.

In particular, Metrolinx will ensure that the following types of information are available in accessible formats as required by regulation:

- accessibility policies
- accessibility plans
- feedback processes
- emergency plans, procedures and public safety materials
- materials required for employees to perform their job, or that are generally available to employees
- individual accommodation plans
- information on accessible equipment
- emergency preparedness and response policies
- information on vehicle boarding procedures

Metrolinx notifies the public about availability of accessible formats and communications supports in a general statement on its website, and in association with each of the documents that is required by regulation to be provided, on request, in an accessible format.

(d) Feedback (IAS Clause 11, ACSS Clause 7)

In order to provide the best possible service to customers, Metrolinx is committed to consulting and soliciting input from the public on its services, including any accessibility matters. Feedback from the public or from providers of goods and services may be by telephone, in person, in writing, or in electronic format. Accessible formats and communication supports to facilitate effective feedback are available upon request.

Information about the feedback processes is readily available to the public and notice of these processes is posted on our website and/or in other locations as appropriate.

All feedback is taken seriously and each customer communication is directed to the responsible Operating Division(s) or Department(s) for review and necessary action.

(e) Accessible Websites and Web Content (IAS Clause 14)

Metrolinx is currently working to ensure that all new content on its Internet and Intranet websites, including web content, will conform to the World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0, at Level AA by 2014. For current web pages, Metrolinx is working to achieve this level of compliance in 2014, well in advance of the 2021 compliance date.

(f) Procuring or Acquiring Goods, Services or Facilities (IAS Clause 5)

Metrolinx ensures that accessibility criteria and features are incorporated when it procures or acquires goods, services or facilities, except where it is not possible to do so. Where it is not possible to incorporate accessibility criteria and features, Metrolinx will provide an explanation upon request.

(g) Employment

Metrolinx maintains an inclusive and accessible work environment that exemplifies fair treatment and equal opportunity for people with disabilities in all aspects of employment, and ensures compliance with all regulatory clauses pertinent to employment.

(i) Recruitment, Assessment, Selection and On-going Job Accommodation (IAS Clauses 22, 23, 24, 25)

Metrolinx will ensure that for all job applicants, successful candidates and employees, that accommodations are available upon request during interviews, hiring processes and throughout the term of employment. Accommodations will be implemented in consultation with the individual and based on their needs due to disability. Metrolinx will ensure that its employees of its policies (and any updates to policies) used to support employees with disabilities.

(ii) Workplace Emergency Response Information (IAS Clause 27)

Metrolinx will ensure there is a process to prepare documented individualized workplace emergency response information and processes for employees who have a disability. Metrolinx will provide this information as soon as possible after becoming aware of the need for accommodation. With employee consent, information is given to the person or people designated by Metrolinx to provide assistance to the employee.

Metrolinx will review the individualized workplace emergency response information when the employee moves to a different location in the organization, when the employee's overall accommodations needs or plans are reviewed, and, when Metrolinx reviews its general emergency response policies.

(iii) Documented Individual Accommodation Plans (IAS Clause 28)

Metrolinx will ensure that there is a written process, for the preparation of documented individual employee accommodation plans for those with disabilities.

Plans may include employee specific accessible formats and communications supports, individualized workplace emergency response information and any other accommodation that is to be provided.

(iv) Return to Work Process (IAS Clause 29)

Metrolinx will ensure that there is a documented return to work process for its employees who have been absent from work due to a disability and who require disability-related accommodations in order to return to work.

The return to work process will outline the steps Metrolinx will take to facilitate the return to work and includes documented individual accommodation plans.

(v) Performance Management, Career Development and Advancement & Redeployment (IAS Clauses 30, 31, 32)

Metrolinx will take into account the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities, as well as individual accommodation plans, when conducting performance management, providing career development, advancement or when redeploying employees.

(h) Transportation Services

Metrolinx plans, designs, and operates its transportation services for ease of travel by customers with disabilities. Designs of all new vehicles and infrastructure incorporate best practice, including accessible features identified in applicable regulations and codes.

(i) Boarding and Travel (IAS Clause 44)

Lifting devices, ramps or portable bridge plates, where required for vehicle boarding and alighting, are deployed upon request. Adequate time is provided to safely board, be secured if required, and deboard vehicles. Securement of wheeled mobility devices on GO buses is carried out by the driver. Customers with disabilities who require further assistance, should be accompanied by a support person. Customers and/or their accompanying support persons are responsible for optional securement of wheeled mobility devices on GO trains.

(ii) Service Disruptions (IAS Clause 50 ACSS Clause 5)

Where a route or scheduled service is temporarily changed and the change is known in advance of the commencement of the trip, Metrolinx makes arrangements to ensure that customers with disabilities reach their route destination. These arrangements are communicated in a manner that keeps the customer informed and takes into account the person's disability.

(iii) Non-Functioning Accessibility Equipment

When accessibility equipment or accessibility features that support a vehicle or service are not functioning this information is communicated as quickly as possible to the public using the Internet, subscription e-mail, and on-site/on-board communications if appropriate. If alternative service cannot be provided, Metrolinx takes

reasonable steps to accommodate customers who would otherwise use these vehicles or services.

Processes are in place to track the performance of all equipment and ensure that it meets customer needs. Non-functioning vehicles and services are repaired as soon as possible in accordance with key performance indicators for repair.

(iv) Alternative Accessible Methods of Transportation (Clause 45 IAS)

In event of service disruption or equipment failure, Metrolinx provides alternate transportation to people who are unable to use its conventional transportation services because of their disability.

(v) Transit Stops (Clause 47 IAS)

Metrolinx ensures that customers with disabilities are able to board or exit buses and streetcars at the closest available safe location, if the official stop is not accessible. Consideration is given to the preferences of the person with a disability in determining where to stop, and Metrolinx staff will report any temporarily inaccessible transit stops to the proper authority as soon as possible.

(i) Customer Communications

(i) Availability of Information on Accessibility Equipment
(IAS Clause 34)

The websites of Metrolinx and its operating divisions include information about accessibility equipment used to provide services to customers. This information is available in other formats upon request and is updated as necessary.

(ii) Pre-Boarding/ On-Board Announcements (Clauses 51 and 52 IAS)

Metrolinx ensures that verbal announcements regarding pre-boarding, route, direction, next stop or destination on are made on request.

Metrolinx is committed to introducing electronic (visible and audible) on-board announcements to provide this information on all vehicles by the compliance date of January 1, 2017.

(iii) Accessible Service Interruptions

Any arrangements required to provide alternative service in event of service disruptions are communicated to customers promptly in a manner that keeps the customer informed and takes into account their disability. Information about non-functioning accessibility equipment is communicated as quickly as possible to the public using the Internet, subscription e-mail, and on-site/on-board communications if appropriate

(j) Fares and Transportation Policies

(i) Fare Parity

People with disabilities pay the same fare as other customers for Metrolinx services.

(ii) Support Persons

Customers that require physical assistance during their travel on Metrolinx services (including assistance to board or alight from a vehicle) should be accompanied by a support person capable of providing that assistance. Metrolinx does not charge a fare for support persons who accompany people with disabilities to assist them.

(iii) Service Animals

Service animals accompanying customers with disabilities are permitted on all Metrolinx services and are permitted to enter premises owned and operated, by Metrolinx at all times. The owner of the service animal may be required to present appropriate identification. A customer traveling with the aid of a seeing-eye, hearing ear or special skills dog can still travel with a support person on a "Party Ticket."

(iv) Storage of Mobility Aids

Metrolinx stores mobility aids for customers on vehicles at no charge and keeps them in proximity to their owner at all times.

(v) Emergency Preparedness and Response Policies (Clause 37 IAS)

Metrolinx establishes, documents, implements, and maintains emergency preparedness and response policies that provide for the safety of customers with disabilities including on vehicles and at facilities.

(k) Transportation Vehicles and Facilities

(i) Priority Seating (Clause 49 IAS)

Metrolinx provides on its vehicles clearly marked courtesy seating (designated “Priority Seating”) for customers with disabilities. Metrolinx communicates the purpose of this seating and instructions that customers without disability must vacate it for those with disabilities through messaging on the vehicle, as well as a supporting communications program. Courtesy seating is located close to the vehicle entrance door and. Metrolinx also provides designated “Courtesy Seating” and encourages customers to voluntarily vacate it for anyone who may benefit from it.

(ii) Vehicle design

The design of all current and future vehicles used in the provision of its services incorporates best practices for the comfort and safety of customers with disabilities, including accessible features as identified in the AODA and its regulations.

(iii) Self- Service Kiosks (IAS Clause 6)

All new kiosks are designed with accessibility features. When existing kiosks are enhanced, accessibility improvements are incorporated as is practical.

Applicable Legislation and Covenants

- Canadian Human Rights Act (1977)
- Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (1982)
- Canadian Employment Equity Act (1995)
- (Ontario) Human Rights Code (1982),
- Ontarians with Disabilities Act (2001)
- Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (2005), and
- UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Canada signed the Convention in 2007 and it was ratified in 2010)

The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2005 (AODA)* is a Provincial Act written for the purpose of developing, implementing and enforcing accessibility standards in order to achieve accessibility for persons with disabilities with respect to goods, services, facilities, accommodation, employment, buildings, structures and premises by January 1, 2025.