

BACKGROUND



Backgrounder
April 20, 2010

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA 2005)

Ontario passed the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*, (AODA), in 2005, becoming the first jurisdiction in Canada to legally commit to breaking down barriers by 2025. Under the AODA, accessibility standards will be developed. They are the rules that businesses and organizations in Ontario must follow to identify, prevent and remove barriers for people with disabilities.

Ontario is developing accessibility standards in the following areas:

- customer service, which came into force January 1, 2008
- transportation
- information and communications
- employment
- built environment

The **Accessibility Standards for Customer Service**, also called the customer service standard, is the first standard to be developed. It determines how businesses must communicate with people with disabilities. It also establishes what policies and practices businesses must have in place in order to help them better serve these customers.

The Accessibility Standards for Customer Service applies to all people, businesses and organizations that:

- provide goods or services either directly to the public or to other businesses or organizations and
- have one or more employees in Ontario.

These private sector organizations must comply by January 1, 2012.

Accessibility Works

Accessibility Works is a partnership between the OCC and the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario. Accessibility Works provides free resources to businesses in order to help them become aware of and comply with the *Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Standard (O. Reg 429/07)*.

Key resources and tools will include:

- Web-based information and an online training module designed specifically to help business implement and comply with the customer service standard;
- Facilitators information kit to help the OCC's 160 affiliated local Chambers of Commerce and Boards of Trade disseminate information to their corporate members;
- Up to 40 information sessions held with local Chambers of Commerce and Boards of Trade

- 30 -

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