



The Corporation of the County of Bruce

Policy: Integrated Accessibility Standards

Department: Clerk-Treasury

Section: Administration

Effective Date: October 4, 2012

Revision Date: June, 2013 & May, 2014

Review Date:

1. Purpose

Under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 all public and private sector organizations must meet the requirements of accessibility standards established by regulation. This policy establishes the Integrated Accessibility Standards in the areas of Employment, Information and Communication and Transportation for the County of Bruce in accordance with Ontario Regulation 191/11 and with the Ministry of Community and Social Services intent to "streamline, align and phase-in accessibility requirements and allow for progress on accessibility and reduce the regulatory burden for obligated organizations". This regulation came into force July 1, 2011.

2. Scope and Responsibilities

This policy has been drafted in accordance with the Regulation and addresses how the County of Bruce achieves accessibility through meeting the Regulation's requirements. It provides the overall strategic direction that we will follow to provide accessibility supports to Ontarians with disabilities.

The requirements of the Regulation include:

- Establishment, implementation, maintenance and documentation of a multi-year accessibility plan, which outlines the organization's strategy to prevent and remove barriers and meet its requirements under the Regulation;
- Incorporation of accessibility criteria and features when procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities;
- Training;
- Other specific requirements under the Information and Communication, Employment and Transportation Standards

3. Policy Statement and Organizational Commitment

The County of Bruce is committed and guided by the four core principles of Dignity, Independence, Integration and Equal Opportunity and supports the full inclusion of persons as set out in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005.

The County of Bruce shall use every effort to ensure that we meet the needs of people with disabilities, in a timely manner, through the implementation of this policy.

4. Definitions

Accessible means capable of being entered or reached, approachable, easy to get at, capable of being influenced, obtainable, easy to understand or appreciate.

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.

Accommodation means the special arrangement made or assistance provided so that persons with disabilities can participate in the experiences available to persons without disabilities. Accommodation will vary depending on the persons unique needs.

Beach Access Routes means routes that are constructed and intended for pedestrian use by the public and that provide access from off-street parking facilities.

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.

Communications means the interaction between two or more persons or entities, or any combination of them, where information is provided, sent or received.

Conversion Ready means an electronic or digital format that facilitates conversion into an accessible format.

Designated Public Sector Organization means every municipality and every person or organization listed in Column 1 of Table 1 of Ontario Regulation 146/10 (Public Bodies and Commission Public Bodies - Definitions) made under the Public Service of Ontario Act, 2006.

IAP means Individual Accommodation Plan.

Information includes data, facts and knowledge that exists in any format, including text, audio, digital or images, and that conveys meaning.

Internet Website means a collection of related web pages, images, videos or other digital assets that are addressed relative to a common Uniform Resource Identifier (URI) and is accessible to the public.

Maintenance means activities that are intended to keep existing public spaces and elements in existing public spaces in good working order or to restore the spaces or elements to their original condition, examples of which include painting and minor repairs.

Mobility Aid means a device used to facilitate the transport, in a seated posture, or a person with a disability.

Mobility Assistive Device means a cane, walker, wheelchair, scooter or similar aid.

New Internet Website means either a website with a new domain or a website with an existing domain name undergoing a significant refresh.

Recreational Trails means public pedestrian trails that are intended for recreational and leisure purposes.

Redeployment means the reassignment of employees to other departments or jobs within the organization as an alternative to layoff, when a particular job or department has been eliminated.

Unconvertible means

- (a) if it is not technically feasible to convert the information or communications;
- (b) the technology to convert the information or communications is not readily available

Web Content Accessibility Guidelines means the world wide web consortium recommendation, dated December 2008, entitled "Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0".

5. General Provisions

(a) Multi Year Accessibility Plan

The County of Bruce's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan outlines a phased-in strategy to prevent and remove barriers and addresses the current and future requirements of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005. The County of Bruce will report annually on the progress and implementation of the plan, post the information on the County website and will provide it in alternative formats upon request. The plan will be reviewed and updated at least once every five years.

(b) Procuring or Acquiring Goods, Services or Facilities

The County of Bruce will use accessibility criteria and features when procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities, except where it is not practical to do so (in which case, if requested we will provide an explanation).

(c) Training

The County of Bruce will ensure that training is provided to all employees and regular fee-for-service staff on the requirements of the accessibility standards referred to in the Regulation and on the Human Rights Code as it pertains to persons with disabilities. Training will be provided as soon as practicable. If any changes are made to this policy or the requirements, training will be provided. The County of Bruce shall maintain a record of the dates when training is provided and the number of individuals to whom it was provided.

6. Information and Communications Standards

The County of Bruce will create, provide and receive information and communications in ways that are accessible to people with disabilities.

If the County of Bruce determines that it is not technically feasible to convert the information or communications or the technology to convert the information or communication is not readily available, we will be obligated to provide the person that requires the information with:

- (a)** an explanation as to why the information and communications are unconvertible; and
- (b)** a summary of the unconvertible information or communications.

7. Emergency Information

If the County of Bruce prepares emergency procedures, plans or public safety information and makes the information available to the public, we shall provide the information in an accessible format or with appropriate communication supports, as soon as practicable, upon request.

8. Feedback

The County of Bruce has a process in place for receiving and responding to feedback and will ensure that those processes are provided in accessible formats and with communications supports upon request. The County of Bruce will notify the public about the availability of accessible formats and communication supports.

9. Accessible Formats and Communication Supports

The County of Bruce shall be obligated to provide or arrange for accessible formats and communication supports for persons with disabilities:

- (a)** Upon request in a timely manner that takes into account the persons accessibility needs due to a disability;
- (b)** At a cost that is no more than the regular cost charges to other persons;
- (c)** Consult with the person making the request and determine suitability of an accessible format or communication support;
- (d)** Notify the public about the availability of accessible formats and communication supports.

10. Website Accessibility

The County of Bruce has made their internet website and web content conform to the World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level A. By January 1, 2014 any new web content will conform to WCAG 2.0 Level A. By January 1, 2021 all internet websites and web content will conform to WCAG 2.0 Level AA.

11. Education, Training and Materials

(a) Public Libraries

- Public Libraries shall provide access to or arrange for the provision of access to accessible materials where they exist;

- Public Libraries shall make information about the availability of accessible materials publicly available and shall provide information in an accessible format or with appropriate communication supports, upon request;
- Public Library Boards may provide accessible formats for archival materials, special collections and rare books.

12. Employment Standards

The Employment Standard builds upon the existing requirements under the Ontario Human Rights Code in relation to how to accommodate individuals with disabilities throughout the job application process and the employment relationship. It applies in respect to employees and does not apply to volunteers and other non-paid individuals.

The requirements of the Employment Standard shall be met by the County of Bruce by January 1, 2014 unless otherwise specified.

13. Recruitment

The County of Bruce shall notify employees and the public about the availability of accommodations for applicants with disabilities:

- During the recruitment process when job applicants are individually selected to participate in an assessment or selection process;
- If a selected applicant requests an accommodation, the County of Bruce shall consult with the applicant and provide or arrange for the provision of a suitable accommodation that takes into account the applicant's disability;
- Notify successful applicants of the policies for accommodating employees with disabilities.

14. Employee Notification

In addition and where an employee with a disability requests it, the County of Bruce will consult with the employee to provide or arrange for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports for:

- information that is needed in order to perform the employee's job;
- information that is generally available to employees in the workplace; and
- consult with the employee making the request in determining the suitability of an accessible format or communication support.

15. Accessible Formats

In addition and where an employee with a disability requests it, the County of Bruce will consult with the employee to provide or arrange for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports for:

- information that is needed in order to perform the employee's job;
- information that is generally available to employees in the workplace; and
- consult with the employee making the request in determining the suitability of an accessible format or communication support.

16. Individual Accommodation Plan

The County of Bruce shall have in place a written process for the development of a documented individual accommodation plan for employees with a disability.

Process to include:

- The employee participation in the development of the Individual Accommodation Plan;
- Assessment on an individual basis;
- Identification of accommodations to be provided;
- Timelines for the provision of accommodations;
- The County of Bruce may request an evaluation by outside medical or other expert, at our expense, to assist with determining accommodation and how to achieve accommodation;
- Employee may request the participation of a representative from their bargaining agent, where represented, or otherwise a representative from the workplace not from a bargaining agent;
- Steps taken to protect the privacy of the employee's personal information;
- Frequency with which the Individual Accommodation Plan will be reviewed and updated and the manner in which it will be done;
- If denied, the reasons for denial are to be provided to the employee;
- A format that takes into account the employee's disability needs;
- If requested, any information regarding accessible formats and communication supports provided;
- Identification of any other accommodation that is to be provided.

17. Return to Work

The County of Bruce will have in place a return to work process for employees who have been absent from work due to a disability and require disability-related accommodation in order to return to work. Such processes must be documented and must outline the steps that the County of Bruce will take to facilitate the return to work and include an individual accommodation plan.

18. Performance Management, Career Development and Advancement and Redeployment

The County of Bruce will take into account the accommodation needs and individual accommodation plans of employees when:

- Using performance management processes;
- Providing career development and advancement information;
- Using redeployment procedures.

19. Workplace Emergency Response Information

The County of Bruce shall provide individualized workplace emergency response information to employees who have a disability:

- if the disability is such that the individualized information is necessary and the employer is aware of the need for accommodation due to the employee's disability;
- if the employee who receives an individual workplace emergency response information requires assistance and with the employee's consent, the County of Bruce shall provide the workplace emergency information to the person designated by the County of Bruce to provide assistance to the employee;
- As soon as practicable after becoming aware of the need for accommodation due to the employee's disability;
- Review the individualized workplace emergency response information when the employee moves to a different location in the organization, when overall accommodations needs or plans are reviewed and when the employer reviews its general emergency response policies.

20. Transportation Standard

The Transportation Standard will make it easier for people to travel on specialized and public transit and in taxicabs in Ontario, including persons with disabilities, older Ontarians and families traveling with children in strollers.

The County of Bruce is not a provider of specialized or public transit and does not license taxicabs; therefore the transportation standard requirements do not apply to the County.

21. Design of Public Spaces

The County of Bruce commits to ensure the Design of Public Spaces meet accessibility requirements according to Regulation 413/12.

The County shall incorporate accessibility into Public Spaces that are newly constructed or redeveloped on and after January 1, 2016. The County will ensure that they follow the existing requirements stated under the Design of Public Spaces Standards (Accessibility Standards for the Built Environment) for recreational trails and beach access routes, outdoor public use eating areas, outdoor play spaces, exterior paths of travel, accessible parking, and service related elements (counters, waiting areas, etc.). When developing recreational trails the County shall consult with the public and persons with disabilities. The County shall also provide maintenance and restoration of public spaces by ensuring our multi-year accessibility plan includes procedures for preventative and emergency maintenance of accessible elements in public spaces and procedures for dealing with temporary disruptions when accessible elements required under this section are not in working order.

Being a public sector organization, accessibility reports shall be provided every two (2) years.

22. Regulatory Requirements

An Administrative Monetary Penalties scheme is being established under the AODA. The scheme will allow a director or designate to;

- issue an order against a person, organization or corporation to pay a penalty amount as a result of non-compliance with the AODA or the accessibility standards. The largest penalty amount that can be issued to an individual or an organization that is not a corporation is \$50,000.
- Establish an Administrative Monetary Penalties Program that prescribes the administrative penalties.

- Use of administrative monetary penalties will be considered an avenue of last resort when all other compliance assistance and improvement options have been exhausted.
- Designate the License Appeal Tribunal (LAT) to hear appeals from organizations of director's orders, but not individual complaints. Individuals who feel their human rights have not been met would continue to complain to the Ontario Human Rights Commission.