**Summary of Standard**

**CAN/ASC-1.1:2024 - Employment**



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# Introduction to the first employment Standard

This is the first edition of the **CAN/ASC-1.1:2024 - Employment**.

This Standard is intended to align with:

* other relevant standards like the **Canadian Standards Association (CSA) Z1011 Work disability management system**.
* the accessibility planning framework requirement for federally regulated entities so that they could fulfill their planning and reporting obligations under the *Accessible Canada Act*.
* relevant human rights codes and employment legislation, including:
  + *Accessible Canada Act*,
  + *Canada Labour Code*,
  + *Canadian Human Rights Act*, and
  + *Employment Equity Act*.

# Long range goals and purpose

This Standard envisions a work environment that is accessible, inclusive, barrier-free, and discrimination-free for all workers, including persons with disabilities. This Standard will help organizations integrate disability confidence: **Disability confidence** involves becoming comfortable and competent in managing a workforce that includes workers with disabilities.

# Work and work environments

This Standard covers diverse types of employment contracts and work-related activities. It applies to physical and virtual settings, as well as policies, practices, culture, and resources for any given employer.

This Standard sets out the essential requirements for an accessibility strategy that organizations must adopt to create inclusive and accessible employment systems. It offers clear guidance on the roles, policies, and practices needed to support workers with disabilities and promote workplace equity.

# System and structure

The requirements in this Standard define a framework of systemic change through environmental solutions and policies to facilitate accessibility and inclusion in the workplace. **Clause 10** focuses on structural support, policy, and leadership in organizations by emphasizing the development of systems, policies, and practices.

# Range of barriers to equity

During their employment journey, people with disabilities encounter barriers to accessibility and inclusion in the work environment. These might include:

* transitional barriers (barriers to accessing the work environment);
* attitudinal barriers (differential treatment and discrimination in the work environment);
* environmental barriers (barriers found within the work environment); and,
* barriers to ensuring a safe work environment for all workers.

A **barrier** is anything that hinders the full and equal participation in society of persons with disabilities. This includes a physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication, sensory disability, or functional limitation (Source: *Accessible Canada Act*).

# Identity and intersectional effects

Several social, environmental, and individual factors affect persons with disabilities at various stages of the **employment life cycle**. These factors may include:

* the nature of the lived experience with disability;
* age of onset;
* overlapping identities (intersectionality);
* size of the employer;
* type of workplace;
* type of work; and,
* formal and informal policies and practices within the workplace.

This Standard recognizes that people with disabilities have intersecting identities in which disability is experienced, recognizes that these are unique to an individual, and interact with other aspects of identity. Accessibility is not viewed in isolation but as part of a person's overall identity and experience.

**Intersectionality** is a way to understand how a person or group can be affected by different forms of discrimination at the same time. It shows how several types of oppression, like racism, sexism, ableism, and homophobia, overlap and create unique challenges, especially for **marginalized people**. Multiple aspects of identity, like race, gender, disability, or sexual orientation, can combine to change an individual’s experience.

**Marginalized people** are individuals or groups excluded or disadvantaged socially, economically, or politically, often due to characteristics like race, gender, sexuality, or disability. They typically face discrimination, limited access to resources, and reduced influence in decision-making across areas like education, healthcare, and employment.

This Standard promotes the integration of accessibility and disability confidence into broader diversity and representation efforts. These elements must be viewed as interconnected parts of creating an inclusive workplace.

Organizations that embrace **disability confidence**:

* recognize the value of individuals with disabilities;
* create an environment where employees feel comfortable disclosing their disability if they choose;
* provide training and resources to promote awareness and reduce biases; and
* require leaders to champion inclusion at all levels of the organization.

Inclusive employment values diversity and representation in the workforce. This leads to more meaningful worker engagement, motivation, and a healthier workplace overall.

**Disability confidence** involves becoming comfortable and competent in managing a workforce that includes workers with disabilities.

# Guiding principles for accessible employment

This Standard requires employers to:

* Provide accommodation, accessibility, and inclusivity throughout the employment lifecycle,
* Encourage taking initiative to remove barriers in the workplace.

# Scope of application and intended audience

This Standard applies to:

* federally regulated organizations or bodies and persons specified in Section 7 of the *Accessible Canada Act*.
* Primary audience includes but is not limited to employers in federally regulated industries, third-party contractors, workplace parties, and related service providers.

This Standard integrates accessibility with broader diversity efforts in several ways.

Organizations must develop an employment accessibility strategy with measurable objectives and supporting policies. The organization must publish this strategy, monitor progress, and review it every three years based on feedback and suggestions for improvement. To ensure the strategy is successful, the organization must:

* define and communicate clear roles and responsibilities of all internal workplace parties;
* provide necessary resources to support the strategy including premises, equipment, communication tools and work time; and
* promote dialogue about inclusive employment issues among all workplace parties, including people with disabilities, external experts, service providers, and program administrators.

The organization must communicate updates to this strategy annually to workers and interested parties, showing accountability and commitment to the health and safety of all workers.

Senior management must:

* lead by example;
* promote a culture of accessibility and inclusion;
* provide anti-ableism training;
* set up confidential complaint processes; and
* protect workers from reprisals.

**Ableism** involves excluding and discriminating against people with disabilities through attitudes, prejudices, and actions that devalue their potential. **Anti-ableism** involves an active approach that challenges and counters these inequalities, negative stereotypes, and stigmas.

Managers, supervisors, and internal experts are responsible to carry out policies, encourage disclosure of adjustments needed for accommodation, and consult external experts when needed. In unionized workplaces, organizations must work with union representatives to promote accessibility and inclusion.

Workers must also promote a culture of accessibility and inclusion in the organization. Workers must:

* take part in system improvement;
* engage in good faith accommodation processes; and
* promote an inclusive culture where all workers feel comfortable disclosing their accommodation needs without fear of reprisal.

# Organizational policies

Organizational policies form the foundation of an inclusive workplace and reflect the organization’s commitment to accessibility. Organizations must review existing policies, develop new policies to support accessibility goals, and assess them using an approach that is both intersectional and accessible. The organization shall ensure that its policies are non-discriminatory, and include things like pre-employment processes, career development, and individual accommodation.

The accessibility policy must include commitments to:

* identify, prevent, and remove barriers in the workplace;
* meet legal requirements; and
* set up a framework for measuring progress on the organization’s accessibility objectives.

This policy must be developed with the participation of workers. It must be documented and made available to all employees and the public.

# Information technology (IT)

IT professionals and those that work directly with IT professionals ensure the accessibility of technology in the workplace.

The organization must ensure:

* accessibility barriers are removed and prevented in current IT tools and equipment;
* accessibility is a priority when buying new technology;
* accessibility is integrated into the lifecycle management of IT solutions;
* accessibility features are enabled to ensure maximum usability;
* the organization meets the requirements of **CAN/ASC - EN 301 549:2024 Standard**; and
* accessibility is a priority in both internal and public IT systems.

Information technology must not result in accessibility limitations for people with disabilities in areas like audiovisual content, websites, web and mobile applications, software, and kiosks.

**Human Resource Information System** software maintains, manages, and processes detailed worker information and human resources-related policies and procedures. A human resource information system may be used as part of a Human Resource Management System.

The organization must:

* identify and implement accessibility criteria to support its accessibility objectives when selecting any new Human Resource Information System.
* review and assess any existing Human Resource Information System using the identified accessibility criteria to identify, remove, and prevent barriers to employment for workers with disabilities.

# Seven phases of the employment lifecycle

This Standard considers seven phases of the **employment lifecycle** and aims to help users of the Standard throughout all phases of the cycle:

1. recruitment;
2. hiring;
3. **onboarding;**
4. retention;
5. promotion and career development;
6. performance management; and
7. job exit.

**Onboarding** is the process of integrating new employees into an organization or system through training and orientation. It helps employees learn their role and workplace culture, ensuring confidence and comfort in the transition.

The framework of systemic change is balanced by a person-centered, individualized approach to accessibility and accommodation throughout the employment journey. This approach will create an inclusive workplace that respects diversity and gives equitable opportunities to workers with disabilities throughout the employment lifecycle.

## Preliminary phases

**Clause 12** addresses identifying, preventing, and removing barriers met during recruitment, hiring, and onboarding.

### Recruitment commitment statement

Organizations must develop and publicly post a statement of commitment to accessibility, equity, and inclusion in their recruitment procedures and job advertisements. They must invite applications from under-represented groups and provide accommodations throughout the process at no cost to applicants.

### Candidate recruitment process

Organizations must develop accessible recruiting processes and advertising practices. They must also:

* publicize job vacancies in accessible formats;
* encourage candidates to identify any accommodation needs;
* keep disability disclosure confidential; and
* provide all recruitment materials in accessible formats.

When using applicant tracking systems and Artificial Intelligence (AI), organizations must make sure that screening is based on bona fide job requirements, and:

* take steps to prove their systems are not discriminatory,
* make it a priority to mitigate bias in Artificial Intelligence hiring tools they use,
* make sure they conduct ongoing analysis of Artificial Intelligence data and algorithms for fairness.

### Job postings

Job postings must ensure inclusivity and do not exclude people with disabilities. They must list accurate job requirements, encourage candidates with different abilities or alternative expertise, list only bona fide job requirements, and provide information about accommodation policies and work environment. They must also:

* provide disability awareness training to interviewers;
* provide information about the accessibility features of the interview location;
* invite candidates to specify any accessibility considerations for the location;
* provide copies of interview instructions and questions in accessible format; and
* encourage candidates to identify the supports they need without asking about the nature of their disability.

### Hiring and onboarding

The organization must notify successful applicants of their current accommodation policies and availability of any tailored accommodations for their specific disability-related needs. They need to ensure that the pay is proper for the job roles and responsibilities.

Onboarding for new workers must include:

* an accessible orientation;
* a support person to help in the onboarding process;
* essential information in accessible formats;
* consultation with the worker to learn more about additional accommodation needs; and
* a process for workers to request accommodations.

## Active employment phase

### Ongoing employment support

**Clause 13** addresses the identifying, preventing, and removing barriers to worker retention, professional development, pay equity, performance management, and job exit. Employers must be certain that:

* all workers receive disability awareness training;
* follow-up services are offered to promptly resolve problems;
* accommodating adjustments are reviewed and updated as needed; and
* individuals are consulted when engaging external service providers for accommodating adjustment.

### Job exit

The organization must make sure that:

* job exit policies and procedures are fair, just, and available to everyone,
* policies and procedures are provided in an easy-to-access format,
* policies and procedures apply equally to all workers, with or without disabilities.

The organization must:

* gather information from job exits to find trends and ways to improve the retention of workers with disabilities,
* send overall data on job exits of workers with disabilities to senior management,
* ask workers with disabilities for feedback on any unresolved barriers they faced during their employment.

# Annexes

Informative annexes provide more information and context on concepts presented within this Standard. The Standard states general requirements while the annexes provide detail. The list identifies a few annexes that everyone should read in addition to reading the Standard.

## Requirements

* Clause 10 Structural support, policy, and leadership (systems, policies, and practices)
* Clause 12 Recruitment, hiring, and onboarding
* Clause 13 Retention and career development

## Information only

* Annex D (informative): Intersectional accessibility lens
* Annex E (informative): Anti-Ableism policies
* Annex G (Informative): Bibliography