**CAN-ASC-5.2.1: Part 1: Design and Delivery of Accessible Programs and Services: Accessible Service Delivery – Accessibility for federally regulated entities as defined by the *Accessible Canada Act***

Draft Standard 

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# Accessibility Standards Canada: About us

Accessibility Standards Canada, under whose auspices this Standard has been produced, is a Government of Canada departmental corporation mandated through the *Accessible Canada Act.* Accessibility Standards Canada’s Standards contribute to the purpose of the *Accessible Canada Act*, which is to benefit all persons, especially persons with disabilities, through the realization of a Canada without barriers through the identification, removal, and prevention of accessibility barriers.

Disability, as defined by the *Accessible Canada Act*, means any impairment, including a physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication or sensory impairment — or a functional limitation — whether permanent, temporary, or episodic in nature, or evident or not, that, in interaction with a barrier, hinders a person’s full and equal participation in society.

All of Accessibility Standards Canada’s standards development work, including the work of our technical committees, is carried out in recognition of, and in accordance with, the following principles in the *Accessible Canada Act*:

* all persons must be treated with dignity regardless of their disabilities;
* all persons must have the same opportunity to make for themselves the lives that they are able and wish to have regardless of their disabilities;
* all persons must have barrier-free access to full and equal participation in society, regardless of their disabilities;
* all persons must have meaningful options and be free to make their own choices, with support if they desire, regardless of their disabilities;
* laws, policies, programs, services, and structures must take into account the disabilities of persons, the different ways that persons interact with their environments and the multiple and intersecting forms of marginalization and discrimination faced by persons;
* persons with disabilities must be involved in the development and design of laws, policies, programs, services, and structures; and
* the development and revision of accessibility standards and the making of regulations must be done with the objective of achieving the highest level of accessibility for persons with disabilities.

These principles align with the principles of the United Nations’ *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities,* ratified by the Government of Canada in 2010 to recognize the importance of promoting, protecting, and upholding the human rights of persons with disabilities to participate fully in their communities.

Accessibility Standards Canada seeks to create standards that are aligned with its vision. This includes commitments to break down barriers to accessibility and abide by the principle of “nothing without us” in our standards development process, where everyone, including persons with disabilities, can expect a Canada without barriers.

As part of the "nothing without us" principle, Accessibility Standards Canada promotes that accessibility is good for everyone, as it can have society wide benefits. As a result, Standards developed by Accessibility Standards Canada are designed to achieve the highest levels of accessibility. This means that Accessibility Standards Canada standards create equity-based technical requirements while taking into consideration national and international best practices, as opposed to focusing on minimum technical requirements.

This approach is meant to push innovation in standards and develop technical requirements that have broad positive impacts. This approach to innovation strives to improve the outcomes for all Canadians, including creating employment opportunities and solutions that contribute to Canada's economic growth.

The standards development process used by Accessibility Standards Canada is the most accessible in Canada, if not the world. Accessibility Standards Canada provides accommodations to meet the needs of Technical Committee members with disabilities. Accessibility Standards Canada provides compensation for people with disabilities to encourage their active participation. Accessibility Standards Canada ensures an accessible public review process, including accessible permission forms and multiple formats of the standard, to encourage Canadians with disabilities to comment. To facilitate an accessible experience for all, our standards are available for free on our website. This includes providing standards in multiple formats, including plain-language, American Sign language (ASL) and langue des signes québécoise (LSQ) summaries. This allows the following groups to benefit from the technical content of our standards:

* people with disabilities;
* people without disabilities;
* the federal public sector;
* private sector;
* non-government organizations;
* indigenous communities; and
* society.

Accessibility Standards Canada applies an intersectional framework to capture the experiences of people with disabilities who also identify as 2SLGBTQI+, Indigenous Peoples, women, and visible minorities. Its standards development process requires that technical committees apply a cross-disability perspective to ensure that no new barriers to accessibility are unintentionally created. In addition, standards developed by Accessibility Standards Canada align with 14 of the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, which were adopted by Canada in 2015 to promote partnership, peace and prosperity for all people and the planet by 2030.

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In addition to its focus on developing accessibility standards, Accessibility Standards Canada has been a leader amongst Canadian federal organizations for promoting and adopting accessibility internal to government. Accessibility Standards Canada is the first organization in the federal government to have a Board of Directors majority-led by persons with disabilities. Accessibility Standards Canada has a state-of-the-art accessible office space for its employees, Board of Directors, and Technical Committee Members. The carefully designed accessible workspace aligns with the organization’s belief in the importance of equitable design.

To obtain additional information on Accessibility Standards Canada, its standards or publications, please contact:

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# Introduction

## General

This Standard provides requirements for the realization of an equitable, inclusive, and barrier-free service delivery experience for all customers throughout the entire service delivery experience.

The purpose of this document is to promote accessible service delivery that allows all customers to obtain, use, and benefit from services that are offered by service providers. Accessible service delivery provides all customers with the opportunity to:

* receive essential information about a service that meets their communication needs;
* access a service in-person, through the phone, digitally, or through any other means of access; and
* receive services in a manner that meets their individualized needs.

This Standard promotes equity-based requirements that go above mandatory minimums. This means that the technical requirements in this document strive to provide the highest level of accessibility for the widest range of users.

Service providers that apply these requirements promote an inclusive service delivery experience that responds to the needs of a wide range of customers.

At present, this document provides a greater focus on the delivery of services and provides minimal guidance on the design of equitable services and the design and delivery of equitable programs. Further documents are being developed to provide requirements on how to design equitable services and design and deliver equitable programs.

In the spirit of this Standard, whenever possible, persons with disabilities should be consulted and involved in the development of accessible service to achieve an equitable outcome.

It is also important to consider multiple perspectives that can make service delivery more effective and meaningful. As such, reaching out to employees who deliver a service, customers who receive a service, and the public can provide ideas on how to improve the accessibility of service delivery.

Organizations working with or representing persons with disabilities can also offer a perspective on the different types of barriers that customers might face. They can also connect service providers with persons with disabilities to provide input and feedback on service delivery.

## Service delivery principles

The Standard respects and complements the principles, purpose, and requirements of the *Accessible Canada Act* through the following principles:

1. Services shall be provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.
2. Persons with disabilities shall be given an opportunity equal to that given to others to obtain, use, and benefit from a service.
3. When communicating with a person with a disability, the service provider shall do so in a manner that takes into account the person’s disability.

# Scope

## Purpose

This Standard specifies the technical requirements for providing accessible service delivery that allows for all customers to obtain, use, and benefit from services.

## Intended audience

The Standard is intended for use by federally regulated entities. It may also be used in the delivery of services in the provincial, municipal, private, and non-profit sectors.

## Terminology

In this Standard, three terms are defined as follows:

* Shall: Expresses a requirement, or a provision that the user is obliged to satisfy to comply with the Standard.
* Should: Expresses a recommendation, or that which is advised but not required.
* May: Expresses an option, or that which is permissible within the limits of the Standard.

Notes accompanying clauses do not include requirements or alternative requirements; the purpose of a note accompanying a clause is to separate explanatory or informative material.

Notes to tables and figures are considered part of the table or figure and may be written as requirements.

Annexes are designated normative (mandatory) or informative (non-mandatory) to define their application.

# Definitions, symbols, and abbreviations

This section contains the definitions, symbols, and abbreviations that the draft document uses.

The following definitions apply to this Standard:

**Accessible format** – Includes other formats of communicating information including, but not limited to audio formats, braille, large print, plain language, and sign language (ASL/LSQ).

**Assistive device** – Any medical device, mobility aid, communication aid, or other aid that is specifically designed to assist a person with a disability.

**Communication supports** – Supports that persons with disabilities may need to access information, including, but not limited to:

* Sign language interpretation
* Writing, email, or texting
* Captioning
* Audio description
* Assistive listening systems
* Augmentative and alternative communication devices, including:
	+ Letter, word, or picture boards
	+ Devices that convert text to speech
* Reading aloud
* Rephrasing in clear language

Adapted from the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* Integrated Accessibility Standards (<https://www.ontario.ca/laws-beta/regulation/110191#BK12>)

**Customer** – Any person who accesses, receives or benefits from the services of a service provider.

**Note**: It includes someone who attempts to access, receive, or benefit from a service or program.

Disability – Any impairment, including a physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication or sensory impairment—or a functional limitation—whether permanent, temporary or episodic in nature, or evident or not, that, in interaction with a barrier, hinders a person’s full and equal participation in society.

Equitable – Considering all customers’ unique experiences and individual needs, in the delivery of customer service, to ensure customers have access to the resources and opportunities that are necessary to obtain, use, and benefit from the services.

Guide dog – A dog that is trained to guide a person who is Blind or partially sighted and is certified as a guide dog.

Inclusive design – Design that considers the full range of human diversity with respect to ability, language, culture, gender, age and other forms of human difference (from the [Inclusive Design Research Centre](https://legacy.idrc.ocadu.ca/about-the-idrc/49-resources/online-resources/articles-and-papers/443-whatisinclusivedesign)).

Mobility aid – Any manual or electric wheelchair, scooter, walker, cane, crutch, prosthesis, or other aid that is specifically designed to assist a person with a disability with a need related to mobility.

**Plain language** – A communication is in plain language if its wording, structure, and design are so clear that the intended audience can easily find what they need, understand what they find, and use that information. From the [International Plain Language Federation](https://www.iplfederation.org/) (https://www.iplfederation.org/)

**Service** – An interaction that helps customers get what they need, such as information, support, or completing tasks. Services can be delivered in-person, through the phone, digitally, or through any other means of access.

**Service dog** – A dog that is:

1. individually trained by an organization or person specialized in service dog training to assist a person, with a need related to their disability;
2. not otherwise prohibited by law;
3. behaving in a controlled and non-aggressive manner while assisting the person with a disability; and
4. readily identifiable by visual indicators, such as a vest or harness, as a service dog required for a disability-related service.

**Service provider** – Any organization that delivers services or benefits to customers.

**Note**: The Standard is intended for use by federally regulated entities. It may also be used in the delivery of services in the provincial, municipal, private, and non-profit sectors.

# General requirements

## Policies, practices and measures

In consultation with persons with disabilities, service providers shall develop, establish and implement policies, practices and measures to provide accessible services through one or more of the following:

1. in-person delivery;
2. through the phone;
3. digital service delivery; and
4. through any other means of access.

### Access to policies, practices, and measures

Every service provider’s policies, practices, and measures shall:

1. be made available to the public; and
2. be accessible to persons with disabilities, complying with Clause [6.3](#_Accessible_communication).

## Equitable service delivery

Equitable service delivery shall not create extra cost for the individual receiving the service and service providers shall make every effort to avoid delays to the individual receiving the service.

1. Persons with disabilities shall receive services that are equitable to the services given to other customers to obtain, use and benefit.
2. A service provider shall not deny a person with a disability the opportunity to obtain, use, and benefit from a service if that individual otherwise qualifies for that service.
3. To achieve equitable service delivery, service providers shall consider:
4. the needs of persons with disabilities;
5. the ways that customers interact with the service being delivered;
6. the intersection of the different forms of discrimination; and
7. comply with Clause 6.3, Clause 6.4 and Clause 7.

## Accessible communication

Service providers shall:

1. take steps to ensure that all customers, their companions, and support persons all receive accessible communications;
2. provide electronic information or communication complying with Clause 8.3;
3. notify the public about the availability of accessible formats and communication supports and how to access these services/supports; and
4. upon request, provide or arrange accessible formats and communication supports for persons with disabilities that:
	1. are provided in consultation with the customer making the request to determine the suitability of the accessible format or communication support;
	2. are provided in a timely manner;
	3. take into account the customer’s needs; and
	4. are available at a cost that is no more than the regular cost charged to other customers.

## Alternate delivery methods

Service providers shall develop, implement, and make public a written process to offer and provide alternate services or methods for service delivery to persons with disabilities when the primary methods result in a barrier. The process shall include how the alternate service or methods of service delivery will be actively offered and can be requested.

The alternate service or service delivery shall:

1. be provided upon request;
2. take into consideration the customer’s needs;
3. be agreed upon by both the service provider and the customer requesting the service;
4. be provided to a customer so that they experience a level of service that is equitable to that of other customers;
5. be available without additional costs to the customer requesting the service; and
6. be timely.

# Communication

## General

When service providers communicate with a person with a disability, they shall:

1. Take steps to accommodate the customer in their preferred method of communication.
2. Provide an accessible format complying with Clause 6.3 if the service provider cannot accommodate the preferred method of communication.

## Essential information

### General

All customers require essential information to fully understand the service(s) being offered. This information is required before they make or finalize a decision.

### Identifying essential information

The service provider shall focus the communication on necessary and essential information with enough context to complete the task or activity.

### Communicating essential information

When communicating essential information to customers, service providers shall:

1. clearly emphasize essential information so this information stands out to the customer, whether in verbal and written text or auditory formats;
2. use plain language complying with Clause 7.3;
3. offer clear instructions in accessible formats complying with Clause 6.3;
4. use simple, visual and auditory aids to summarize complex information (for example, using infographics to summarize the key benefits between different services); and
5. notify customers of significant changes to the service(s).

## Plain language

Plain language should be used in all essential communications with customers. The service provider should create communication that is clear, timely, accurate, and accessible in plain language for anyone who might need it.

## Interpretation services

Interpretation services provided through relay shall comply with Clause 8.3.

**Note**: Examples of interpretation services can include, but are not limited to, text relay, sign relay, lip-reading relay, captioned telephony and speech to speech relay.

## Disruption of services

### Notification of disruptions

Service providers shall develop, implement, and make public, a process to be followed for planned and unplanned temporary disruptions to a service, which describes:

1. the steps to be taken when planned and unplanned disruptions occur;
2. the methods and locations used to notify/communicate disruptions to internal and external partners; and
3. the roles and responsibilities when planned and unplanned disruptions occur.

The notice of disruption shall:

1. be provided in accessible formats complying with Clause 6.3;
2. be provided in advance, when planned, and as soon as possible, when unplanned;
3. include the estimated duration of the disruption;
4. describe alternative service locations or alternative service delivery methods, when available; and
5. provide contact information where a customer could receive immediate assistance.

**Note**: Examples of notification methods can include, but are not limited to, individual or group emails, phone calls, large print signage at location of disruption, social media posts, website posts.

# Digital service delivery

## Platforms

Service providers shall ensure that all technological, virtual and digital platforms used to deliver customer service are accessible and meet the needs of persons with various disabilities.

## Service design and delivery

Service providers shall ensure that services delivered on technological, virtual and digital platforms are designed and delivered in an accessible manner and are delivered in a way that meets the needs of persons with various disabilities, complying with Clause 6.2.

## Service platforms, design and delivery

Service providers shall ensure that all technological, virtual and digital platforms used to deliver customer service comply with [CAN/ASC - EN 301 549:2024 - Accessibility requirements for ICT products and services.](https://accessible.canada.ca/en-301-549-accessibility-requirements-ict-products-and-services)

# Service delivery in the built environment

## Application

The requirements of Clause 9 shall apply to any one or more of the following:

1. the design, construction and occupancy of all new buildings;
2. the alteration, major renovation, reconstruction, relocation and occupancy of all existing buildings; and
3. both site-built and factory-constructed buildings.

**Note**: Occupancy is the use or intended use of a building or part thereof for the shelter or support of persons, animals or property. Alteration is a change or extension to any matter or thing or to any occupancy regulated by this Standard. A building is any structure used or intended for supporting or sheltering any use or occupancy.

## Information

1. Service providers shall make the following information publicly available:
	1. map and description of the layout/wayfinding for the physical environment;
	2. written description of the physical environment, location, and accessibility features and services including how to access accessible entry and exit ways;
	3. written description of emergency egress (exit), type of fire alarms, and elevators;
	4. photographs of the physical environment, location and accessibility features and services, if applicable; and
	5. contact information of an employee for questions, accommodation requests or alternative service delivery options.
2. For part a), service providers shall:
	1. share digital information in a format complying with Clause 8.3; and
	2. share information in an accessible format complying with Clause 6.3 if no digital means of communication exists.
3. Upon request, service providers shall provide the information in part a) in an accessible format complying with Clause 6.3.

## Design of built environment

The following built environment elements that facilitate access to a service shall comply with [CAN/ASC B651:23 Accessible design for the built environment:](https://www.csagroup.org/store/product/CSA-ASC%20B651%3A23/)

1. interior circulation;
2. exterior circulation;
3. signage;
4. queuing lines;
5. the built environment of information kiosks; and
6. vehicular access.

Service providers shall provide visible alarms, emergency signage, areas of refuge, evacuation plans, and accessible egress routes that comply with [CAN/ASC B651:23 Accessible design for the built environment](https://www.csagroup.org/store/product/CSA-ASC%20B651%3A23/). Upon request, evacuation plans shall be made available in an accessible format complying with Clause 6.3.

Self-service interactive devices used in service delivery shall comply with [CSA/ASC B651.2:25 Accessible design for self-service interactive devices including automated banking machines](https://www.csagroup.org/store/product/CSA-ASC_B651.2%3A25/).

## Guide dog or service dog relief areas

A guide or service dog relief area shall be provided near the entrance closest to where the service(s) is being offered.

The guide or service dog relief area shall:

1. have the following features that comply with CAN/ASC B651:23 Accessible design for the built environment:
	1. an accessible path;
	2. slope;
	3. firm and stable surface;
	4. overhead cover allowing for sufficient headroom; and
	5. signage.
2. be at least 2600 mm (8.6 ft) x 2600 mm (8.6 ft); and
3. have a waste bin and waste disposal bag near the entrance of the relief area that is regularly maintained.

# Support person

## General

Where applicable, if a person with a disability is accompanied by a support person, a service provider shall:

1. allow a person with a disability to enter with their support person;
2. not require proof that the person with a disability requires a support person;
3. allow the person with a disability to always be accompanied by their support person while accessing the service; and
4. not charge any fees or other charges for a support person to remain with the customer.

# Guide dogs and service dogs

## Entry on premises

If a person with a disability is accompanied by a guide dog or service dog, the service provider shall, unless otherwise prohibited by law, ensure that the person with a disability is:

1. permitted to enter the premises with the guide dog or service dog; and
2. allowed to keep the guide dog or service dog with them at all times.

## Inquiries and documentation

A service provider shall not ask about a customer’s disability and may only ask if an animal is a guide dog or service dog, as per the definitions in this Standard.

A service provider shall not require or request documentation.

## Alternatives

Service providers shall provide alternatives if a guide dog or service dog is prohibited by law.

# Training

## Persons who must be trained

Every service provider shall ensure that training about accessible service delivery is provided to the following persons:

1. Every person who is an employee of the service provider (including senior management) or a volunteer with the service provider.
2. Any individual who is involved with the design and the delivery of a service.
3. Every other person who provides services on behalf of the service provider.
4. Every person who works directly with the public or whose work impacts the public.

## Contents of training

Training for persons identified in Clause 12.1 shall:

1. include a review of:
	1. the purposes of the *Accessible Canada Act*;
	2. the *Accessible Canada Regulations*;
	3. the *Canadian Human Rights Act*;
	4. the requirements of this Standard;
	5. the organizations’ strategies, policies, and procedures related to accessibility; and
	6. other applicable laws.
2. provide specific information on:
	1. in-person and digital communication;
	2. barriers and accommodations;
	3. how to consult with persons with disabilities; and
	4. how to interact with persons with disabilities who:
		1. use an assistive device or adaptive technology;
		2. use a mobility aid;
		3. are accompanied by a support person(s); and
		4. are accompanied by a guide dog or service dog;
	5. how to use equipment, assistive devices, or adaptive technology provided by the service provider that may help with the delivery of service(s) to a person with a disability;
	6. the availability of the organization’s accessibility features and services;
	7. what to do if a person with a disability encounters a barrier to service(s);
	8. visible and non-visible disabilities; and
	9. the principles of inclusive design.
3. be appropriate to the duties of persons who must be trained.

## Development and delivery method

### Development

Training shall be developed in consultation with persons with disabilities and they shall be appropriately compensated for their time and expertise.

Training development may include input from organizations with relevant subject matter expertise that represent people with disabilities.

### Delivery method

Persons with disabilities should be included as key members of the team delivering the training and shall be appropriately compensated for their time and expertise.

Training delivery may include input from organizations with relevant subject matter expertise that represent people with disabilities.

## Timing

Service providers shall provide training to individual(s), complying with Clause 12.1:

1. before or immediately after the person joins an organization or begins work with the organization;
2. provide ongoing training in connection with changes to the service provider’s measures, policies, and practices regarding accessible service delivery; and
3. at a minimum of every two years.

## Training information

Every service provider shall prepare and maintain a training policy and plan that:

1. summarizes the content of the training; and
2. specifies when the training is to be provided.

Upon request, service providers shall provide a copy of the document to any customer in an accessible format complying with Clause 6.2.

## Review of training programs

### Timing of review

Service providers shall conduct a review:

1. on an annual basis, at a minimum, of their training materials on accessible service delivery; and
2. when:
	1. new information on how to provide services to persons with disabilities emerges;
	2. there are changes to processes that impact how services are delivered, or new processes are developed;
	3. the service provider introduces new service(s); and
	4. there are changes to relevant standards and regulations.

### Review of content

1. Review of training content shall include consultation with persons with disabilities and they shall be appropriately compensated for their time and expertise. Review of training content may include input from organizations with relevant subject matter expertise that represent people with disabilities.
2. The review of content shall:
	1. ensure that the training materials continue to offer practical information; and
	2. incorporate new information on how to provide accessible service delivery to persons with disabilities.

## Maintenance of training records

Every service provider shall keep records of the training provided under Clause 12 that includes:

1. a list of people that have been trained;
2. the dates on which they were trained;
3. the percentage of people that have received the required training complying with Clause 12.4;
4. a copy of the training policy and plan, complying with Clause 12.6; and
5. a copy of the training content delivered.

# Feedback

All service providers shall establish a process for receiving, acknowledging, addressing, and responding to feedback related to accessible service delivery in a timely manner, that aligns with the requirements of Part 1 of the [Accessible Canada Regulations (SOR/2021-241)](https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/regulations/SOR-2021-241/index.html).

**Note**: Refer to the [Guidance on the Accessible Canada Regulations: Descriptions of feedback processes](https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/accessible-canada-regulations-guidance/feedback-process.html) (https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/accessible-canada-regulations-guidance/feedback-process.html).