Accessibility Plan
Progress Report

December 2024

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

As a centre for excellence serving the total well-being of workers in Canada, the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (CCOHS) is committed to accessibility in all facets of our reach as a service provider and employer. More than 6.2 million of the people we serve are living with a disability and facing barriers in access to programs, services, facilities, and employment.

In our commitment to fulfilling our mandate for all Canadians, and our alignment with the overarching vision of the *Accessible Canada Act* last year, we created our first Accessibility Plan (the Plan) after a review of our products, services, building, and practices as an employer and service provider, and in consultation with those who are directly impacted by what we do. Through those consultations, we collected valuable information to inform our Accessibility Plan.

Over the next three years, we committed to take meaningful actions to gain momentum and fulfill the commitments of our Plan, invite feedback and consultation on our progress, and report on how far we've come.

We are pleased to present our second annual Accessibility Plan Progress Report building on the progress we reported in June. The report highlights the steps we have taken since publishing our initial Accessibility Plan. We will look to continuously improve as we incorporate feedback from future consultations and as new developments arise and will post another update in December 2025. Because of this commitment to create a barrier-free organization, we believe we will make even greater strides to improve the total well-being of all working Canadians.

Feedback

We welcome feedback about the implementation of our Accessibility Plan, our progress, and barriers you may have encountered or observed whether you are an employee, client, customer, member of the public, or member of a group representing the interests of persons with disabilities.

Our Director of Human Resources is responsible for receiving accessibility feedback and coordinating with internal experts who oversee each of the priority areas. You can provide your feedback in any of the following ways:

- Accessibility feedback form
- E-mail: accessibility@ccohs.ca
- Phone: 1-800-668-4284
- Mail: 135 Hunter Street East
                        Hamilton, Ontario L8N 1M5

We will acknowledge receipt of feedback in the same manner as the feedback was provided unless it is requested using a different format. If feedback is provided anonymously, we will not be able to issue acknowledgement of receipt.

Alternate Formats

We will provide any information relating to our Accessibility Plan Progress Report and/or feedback process in alternate formats, upon request, including print, large print, Braille, audio (French and English) or electronic formats compatible with adaptive technology that assists persons with disabilities. Requests for documentation in Braille or audio format will be fulfilled within 45 business days of the request. All other requests will be fulfilled within 15 business days.

Executive Summary of our Accessibility Plan

Through our consultations and considerations of our current policies, procedures, practices, and other indicators, CCOHS identified the following overarching goals for our first Accessibility Plan:

- Our goal for employment is to address barriers in the recruitment and selection (hiring) process, and the employee experience related to the inclusivity of our policies, procedures, and practices as an employer.
- Our goal for the built environment is to partner with property management and Public Services and Procurement Canada to improve the accessibility of our building and continue to reinforce a scent free environment.
- Our goal for information and communications technology is to provide all users, including those with disabilities, with modern tools that enhance productivity and

improve efficiency, while providing a supportive and inclusive technology environment.

- Our goal for communications is to provide credible informational assets and services in clear language that are easily accessible and inclusive to persons with disabilities.
- Our goal for procurement is to modernize our procurement practices so that the goods and services we procure are accessible.
- Our goal for the design and delivery of products and services is to review each product and service to determine how we can identify, remove, and prevent barriers.

Our Plan describes the barriers identified through our consultations, and the specific objectives CCOHS will undertake to achieve these goals. Our progress on the items above is described in this Progress Report.

An Overview of CCOHS

The Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (CCOHS) is a federal departmental corporation reporting to the Parliament of Canada through the Minister of Labour and is governed by a Council of Governors representing governments (federal, provincial, and territorial), employers, and workers; a structure that ensures a balanced, impartial approach.

The CCOHS mandate is to promote health and safety in the workplace and the physical and mental health of working people in Canada, by

- facilitating consultation and cooperation among federal, provincial, and territorial jurisdictions and participation by labour and employers

- offering credible guidance and resources and innovative products and services that are easy to access to help prevent work-related injury and illness, and

- serving as a national centre for statistics and other information related to occupational health and safety.

CCOHS is located in Hamilton, Ontario and has 110 full time equivalent employees.

For more than 40 years, CCOHS has been motivated and inspired by the guiding principle that everyone has a fundamental right to a healthy and safe working environment. Through our programs and services, built on our knowledge, fueled by our commitment, and realized through our actions, CCOHS advocates for the total physical and psychological health and well-being of working people in Canada by providing workplaces and working people with the information they need to make workplaces healthier and work safe.

ACCESSIBILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

EMPLOYMENT

The goal of the Employment pillar of the *Accessible Canada Act* is to ensure access to employment opportunities and accessible workplaces.

The objectives we identified for our Accessibility Plan under the employment pillar include:

- enhance our hiring policy and procedure with an accessibility lens, make information available and accessible to job seekers, internal and external candidates, and be ready to respond to needs for accommodation. Make the process seamless, supporting them to compete for positions to their full potential.
- enhance our employment policies, procedures and practices with an accessibility lens and make information available and accessible to employees, supporting them to achieve their full potential.
- train employees on neurodiversity, review our existing practices for inclusivity and make the necessary changes to fight stigma and fully leverage the talents and contributions of neurodiverse people.
- continue to seek input from our knowledgeable workforce about our efforts and practices, respond to and action feedback.

Our progress on the employment pillar as of December 2024 includes:

Hiring Policy and Process Enhancements

- ➢ Human Resources has undergone a review of the CCOHS Hiring Policy and Process through an accessibility lens and made the necessary modifications to ensure that the documents are written in plain language and an accessible format.
- ➢ The document was enhanced to include language that provides clarity regarding the process for requesting and receiving accommodations.
- ➢ Our new CCOHS Hiring Policy and Procedure was launched in December 2024 and reaffirms and strengthens our commitment to, and process for, accessibility and accommodations for persons with disabilities in hiring and promotion.

Other Policy and Procedure Enhancements

- ➢ Human Resources has begun the process of reviewing and updating the following policies to ensure plain language and accessible format, and including accessibility language where needed, these priority policies include the:
  - o Disability Management Program

- Family Care Accommodation Guideline
- Workload Management Program - *complete*
- Hybrid Work Policy - *complete*
- Discipline Policy
- Code of Conduct - *complete*
- Whistleblower Policy - *complete*
- Accessing Pregnancy Loss Leave Procedure
- Health and Safety Policy - *complete*

Neurodiversity in the Workplace

- Human Resources has launched a Neurodiversity Series awareness and training program for all employees, which will conclude in January of 2025.
- The Neurodiversity Series includes:
  - Formal training on disability, inclusion and barriers which integrates neurodiversity in the training content
  - Information about and access to resources and networks for support
  - Self-assessment tools
  - Informative internal and external videos and resources
  - Information about internal supports and programs for neurodiverse staff
- Human resources also included this training series as part of the onboarding for new employees.

BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The goal of the Built Environment pillar of the *Accessible Canada Act* is to ensure all people can move freely around federal buildings and public spaces.

The objectives we identified for our Accessibility Plan under the built environment pillar include:

- Plan and acquire accessibility aids including signage that includes tactile and auditory capabilities.
- Adapt and update our existing building to support new requirements and improvements.
- Develop documentation and training for new employees and/or visitors to the physical building to allow them to understand and easily navigate the building.
- Identify people with specific accessibility needs and provide appropriate training and documentation to meet their requirements.

- Develop multiple accessible formats of training that accommodate the range of needs of individuals who may need them, to facilitate a positive experience within the physical building.
- Ongoing consultation, as we rely on the existing cadence of accessibility reviews conducted by Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC) to alert facility services regarding additional changes and improvements that may be recommended or required.

Our progress on the built environment pillar as of December 2024 includes:

- With PSPC being the common service provider for all departments, they continue to focus on removing barriers to accessibility across their properties.
- PSPC completed 54 technical accessibility assessments to Government of Canada owned or leased buildings including the CCOHS building. It will continue to follow the action plan, which outlines improvements such as touchless elevators, indoor wayfinding solutions and fully accessible and gender inclusive washrooms.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES (ICT)

The goal of the Information and Communication Technologies pillar of the *Accessible Canada Act* is to ensure the accessibility of digital content and technologies.

The objectives we identified for our Accessibility Plan under the information and communication technologies pillar include:

- Plan, design and/or acquire new technology solutions that are aligned and compliant with mandatory accessibility standards. Continuously research emerging technologies that easily allow for integration or implementation of accessibility standards.
- Adapt and update existing programs and technology, from researching emerging technologies, integrating applicable upgrades within existing systems, allocating cycles within upcoming projects for retrofitting systems as it relates to accessibility, and retiring and replacing existing systems/legacy technology that cannot be adapted or upgraded.
- Provide user training and guidance. Create a catalogue of CCOHS technologies with accessibility functions and assistive technology that is available and implement regular training for solution design specialists and technical architectures who are accountable for developing and designing CCOHS systems. Implement regular training for system design subject matter experts within CCOHS business functions.

- Have ongoing consultation with and regular retraining of staff on accessibility standards with respect to software design and user interface.
- Conduct accessibility scans on new internally developed applications using third party tools as an additional reference for compliance over and above the design decisions that have already been implemented.

Our progress on the information and communication technologies pillar as of December 2024 includes:

- ➢ In all technology work going forward, we continue to review our products for accessibility and make updates as needed.
- ➢ A number of upgrades to existing CCOHS systems have been implemented.
- ➢ We have launched the Business Safety Portal with mandatory accessibility standards integrated into UI design and implemented across the web application.

COMMUNICATIONS (other than ICT)

The goal of the Communications pillar of the *Accessible Canada Act* is to ensure barrier free services and spaces for persons with disabilities.

The objectives we identified for our Accessibility Plan under the communications pillar include:

- educate all staff on plain language principles.
- implement the CCOHS Style Guide across the organization.
- evaluate the website for compliance with web accessibility guidelines and create a plan to address key areas of concern.
- continue to offer sign language options in our hosted events.

Our progress on the communications pillar as of December 2024 includes:

- ➢ CCOHS Style Guide is now posted on the MyCCOHS intranet, for easy access across the organization.
- ➢ Posters and infographics available from the CCOHS website, that are outdated and don't meet optimal accessibility standards are in the process of being updated.
- ➢ "Embracing Neurodiversity in the Workplace" was assigned as part of the Neurodiversity training for all staff.
- ➢ Ongoing improvements to the CCOHS Website as a result of the accessibility audit done in March 2024.

- Ongoing execution of our national "Spell it Out" campaign, which aims to spread awareness about the importance of using plain language when communicating health and safety information. This is expected to be launched in early 2025.
- All PDF documents, posters, infographics, podcasts, and videos are produced to meet accessibility requirements (alt descriptions, transcripts, text only formats, etc.

PROCUREMENT OF GOODS, SERVICES AND FACILITIES

The goal of the Design and Delivery of Programs and Services pillar of the *Accessible Canada Act* is to ensure Canadians receive services that are accessible to all.

The objectives we identified for our Accessibility Plan under the procurement of goods, services and facilities pillar include:

- incorporate accessibility into our procurement and contracting documents, templates, and guidance.
- provide training and guidance to increase awareness amongst staff who handle procurement and managers to consider accessibility in the process.

Our progress on the procurement of goods and services pillar as of December 2024 includes:

- Members of the Procurement team completed training titled "ACCESSibility Micro-Learning Series: Procurement", which outlined five important elements of accessibility procurement.
- The procurement team has identified another Canada School of Public Service(CSPS) course that will be presented to managers with Section 32 authority for Procurement in the Winter of 2025. This course aims to teach participants about the different barriers faced by people with disabilities and how to make their workplace and the services they provide inclusive, accessible, and barrier free. The topics in the course acknowledge the personal impact of exclusion, learning from the experience of people with disabilities, identifying the often-simple steps needed to make documents of service accessible as well as finding tools and resources to support your work and share with others.

DESIGN AND DELIVERY OF PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

The goal of the Design and Delivery of Programs and Services pillar of the *Accessible Canada Act* is to ensure Canadians receive services that are accessible to all.

The objectives we identified for our Accessibility Plan under the design and delivery of products and services pillar include:

- Use customer surveys focused on accessibility of products and services and determine if the users encounter barriers to accessibility.
- Consult with various subject matter experts to determine if the accessibility meets their clients' needs.
- Review results for upgrades to existing products and services.
- Incorporate accessibility feedback into our e-courses and implement changes.
- Provide accessibility training for those developing and designing products and services.
- Add sign language to various products and procedures where possible.
- Review neurological, speech, visual and auditory accessibility.
- Ensure that new products and services comply with the Accessibility Plan.

Our progress on the design and delivery of products and services pillar as of December 2024 includes:

- ➢ All new CCOHS e-courses go through an evaluation process with screen reader NVDA (non-visual desktop access), which now provides closed captioning to all new courses.
- ➢ CCOHS has updated the LMS (learning management system) to now allow for the closed captioning function to run.
- ➢ All employees in the Education Services have now been fully trained on the requirements of Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) standards for contrast. The training for the motion portion is expected to be completed in 2025.
- ➢ Enhancements were made to our courses enabling that any aminations are supported with descriptive audio for the visually impaired, as well as descriptive text.
- ➢ Legacy technology that did not allow screen readers to be used has been discontinued and CCOHS has transferred over to Rise-a new platform to enable screen reading technology.
- ➢ CCOHS is looking into adding an accessibility survey at the end of courses, to ensure that we are complying with the requirements of WCAG for the government.

- The Inquiries employees have undergone a curriculum of training that includes plain language writing and plain language principles. We will proceed with training our Clients Services team with the same curriculum.
- All current and new PDF publications are accessible, alt text is provided for all non-decorative images, and plain language applied to tables and content wherever possible.
- The Inquiries Satisfaction Survey is in the process of being updated to enable it to be read by a screen reader.

TRANSPORTATION

The goal of the Transportation pillar of the *Accessible Canada Act* is to ensure a barrier-free federal transportation network.

CCOHS is not engaged in any transportation related work. The pillar is listed here as a requirement of the Act, but there are no activities applicable to CCOHS.