

Frequently Asked Questions: The Accessibility for Manitobans Act

1. Why do we need accessibility legislation?

Improving accessibility is the right thing to do. It is also the smart thing to do. Nearly every Manitoban has a disability, knows someone with a disability or will have a disability in the coming years. According to Statistics Canada, nearly one in six Manitobans had a disability. This number will grow as our population ages.

2. What are accessibility barriers?

An accessibility barrier is anything that limits or prevents a person from receiving information, services and goods, or accessing a space, or participating in an activity. Barriers disable individuals from doing many of the things other people take for granted. Barriers arise when there is no planning and no understanding of how they affect the daily of lives of many people.

Barriers may be:

- **structural**
- **information and communication**
- **new technology**
- **policies and common practices**
- **Attitudes** - the greatest barrier of all

3. What are accessibility standards?

Accessibility standards set out what has to be done by when with specific and achievable goals. They are often referred to as the building blocks of *The Accessibility for Manitobans Act*. The standards address barriers and set out requirements in five key areas of daily living.

1. Customer Service (passed in November 2015)
2. Employment (under development)
3. Information and Communication
4. Transportation (sector specific)
5. Built environment

4. When will accessibility standards be law?

Accessibility standards will be developed over the next number of years. Each standard will set out a timeline, depending on the complexity of the area, and on the type and size of organization.

The Accessible Customer Service Standard became law in Manitoba on November 1, 2015.

5. Which businesses and organizations are affected by the legislation?

The Accessibility for Manitobans Act affects all organizations and businesses in Manitoba, which must comply with each standard as it becomes law.

6. What are accessibility plans and who is affected?

All public sector organizations are required to prepare an Accessibility Plan that addresses systemic barriers in policies, practices and procedures. Plans must be made available to members of the public upon request.

Public sector organizations include Manitoba government, municipalities, colleges and universities, crown corporations, regional health authorities, crown corporations and government agencies, boards and commissions

7. What is the content of an accessibility plan?

An accessibility plan must include:

- a report on what measures the public sector organization has taken to identify, prevent and remove barriers that disable people;
- a plan, and time line to identify, remove and prevent barriers that disable people;
- A review process of policies, proposed policies, programs, practices and services and any proposed enactments or by-laws that will be administered by the public sector body

In preparing an accessibility plan, a public sector body must consult with persons disabled by barriers or representatives from organizations of persons disabled by barriers.

Please see [How to Create Your Accessibility Plan](#).

8. What are the deadlines for the public sector to develop Accessibility Plans?

Compliance differs depending on your organization:

- **2016:** Manitoba government and all its departments, universities and colleges, school divisions, crown corporations, regional health authorities and cities with populations over 10,000
- **2017:** all other public sector bodies, including smaller municipalities, any board, commission, association, agency or similar body whose management, directors or governing members are appointed by an act of the Legislature or by the Lieutenant Governor in Council

NOTE: The act allows two or more smaller municipalities to share an Accessibility Plan.

9. How do accessibility standards affect the Building Code?

Existing legislation that already addresses accessibility will not be contradicted or duplicated. As such, [The Manitoba Building Code](#) will continue to govern the construction of all new structures and major retrofits to existing buildings. *The Manitoba Building Code* does not apply retroactively. That means that structures are required to comply with the regulations of the Code at the time of its construction or major renovation.

10. How does The Accessibility for Manitobans Act affect *The Human Rights Code (Manitoba)*?

The Accessibility for Manitobans Act is a proactive law which builds on the principals of [The Human Rights Code \(Manitoba\)](#). The rights and responsibilities covered by *The Human Rights Code* override any other law, unless that law specifically says otherwise.