Ontario

Accessible workplaces

Ontario's Accessible Employment Standard requires you to make your employment practices accessible to meet the needs of employees and job applicants with disabilities. Learn how to meet the standard.

Businesses and non-profits with:
1-49 employees must complete 4 requirements by **January 1, 2017**
50+ employees must have completed 6 requirements by **January 1, 2016**

How to count your employees

Count all full-time, part-time, seasonal and contract workers. With most employees, you

- pay wages or a salary
- have control over the work assigned
- have a right to control the details of the work

Do not count volunteers and independent contractors. However, you are responsible for ensuring that the services they provide on your behalf follow the rules of Ontario's accessibility standards. You may need to ensure these individuals are trained to meet the requirements.

How to comply

If you have 1-49 employees, you must complete 4 requirements of the Accessible Employment Standard in your workplace:

- hiring (http://www.ontario.ca/page/accessible-workplaces#section-2)
- workplace information (http://www.ontario.ca/page/accessible-workplaces#section-3)
- talent and performance management (http://www.ontario.ca/page/accessible-workplaces#section-4)
- communicate accessibility policies (http://www.ontario.ca/page/accessible-workplaces#section-5)

Accessible Employment Standard for small businesses

Descriptive transcript: Accessible Employment Standard for Small Businesses (http://media.ontarionewsroom.com/desctxt/accessible-employment-standard-for-small-businesses.html)

If you have 50 or more employees, you must complete 6 requirements of the Accessible Employment Standard in your workplace:

- hiring (http://www.ontario.ca/page/accessible-workplaces#section-2)
- workplace information (http://www.ontario.ca/page/accessible-workplaces#section-3)

- talent and performance management (http://www.ontario.ca/page/accessible-workplaces#section-4)
- communicate accessibility policies (http://www.ontario.ca/page/accessible-workplaces#section-5)
- accommodation plans (http://www.ontario.ca/page/accessible-workplaces#section-6)
- return to work process (http://www.ontario.ca/page/accessible-workplaces#section-7)

Hiring

Notify employees and the public that you will accommodate the needs of people with disabilities in your hiring process.

You can:

- post the information on your website
- include it in job postings

Sample wording for notification

[Name of Organization] welcomes and encourages applications from people with disabilities. Accommodations are available on request for candidates taking part in all aspects of the selection process.

During the hiring process, tell job applicants when they are selected for an interview that accommodation will be provided.

If an applicant or successful candidate requests an accommodation, discuss their needs with them and make adjustments to support them.

Workplace information

You must provide workplace information in an accessible format if an employee asks for it. This includes:

- any information employees need to perform their jobs (e.g. job descriptions and manuals)
- general information that is available to all employees at work (e.g. company newsletters, bulletins about company policies and health and safety information)

Talk to your employees with disabilities about how they need to receive information.

You must also provide accessible emergency information to staff (http://www.ontario.ca/document/how-provide-emergency-information-accessible-employees) when you become aware an employee may need accommodation in an emergency. Obligated organizations were required to comply with this requirement by January 1, 2012.

How to make information accessible (http://www.ontario.ca/page/how-make-information-accessible)

Talent and performance management

If you have performance management or career development processes, you must consider the needs of an employee with disabilities when you:

- hold formal or informal performance reviews
- promote or move them to a new job

Examples include:

- making documents available in accessible formats (e.g., large print for people with low vision)
- providing feedback and coaching in a way that is accessible to them (e.g., allowing someone with a learning disability to record the conversation)
- providing the accommodations they need to successfully learn new skills or take on more responsibilities

If you do not have a formal or informal performance management program, you do not have to create one.

Communicate accessibility policies

You must tell your employees about your policies to support people with disabilities. Tell new employees when they are hired, and tell all your employees if you change the policies.

To get this information out, you can use:
- newsletters
- emails
- memos
- websites
- bulletin boards
- staff meetings
- one-on-one conversations

Accommodation plans

This requirement **does not apply to private-sector and non-profit organizations with fewer than 50 employees.**

You must develop and write a process for creating accommodation plans for employees with disabilities. This process must be documented and should include:
- how an employee participates in the development of their individual accommodation plan
- how an employee is assessed on an individual basis
- how a unionized employee can ask for a representative from their bargaining agent to participate in the development of the accommodation plan
- how a non-unionized employee can ask for a representative from the workplace to participate in the development of the accommodation plan
- how you, as an employer, can request assistance from an outside expert, at your expense
- the steps you will take to protect the privacy of the employee's personal information
- how and when you will provide the employee with their personalized accommodation plan
- the schedule for when and how the plan will be reviewed and updated
- how you will tell an employee that their individual accommodation plan has not been accepted
- how you will provide the plan in an accessible format

The plan must be documented and include:
- how you will provide workplace information in an accessible format, if requested

- how you will provide accessible emergency information, if needed
- any other accommodation that is to be provided

You and the employee with a disability will determine and implement appropriate accommodation measures. However, the final decision rests with you.

Sample

Sample accommodation process and template plan (http://www.forms.ssb.gov.on.ca/mbs/ssb/forms/ssbforms.nsf/FormDetail? OpenForm&ACT=RDR&TAB=PROFILE&SRCH=&ENV=WWE&TIT=0048&NO=009-0048E)

Return to work process

This requirement does not apply:

- to private-sector and non-profit organizations with fewer than 50 employees
- if an employee's injury or illness is covered by the return to work provision under any other law

You must develop and write a process to support employees who have been absent from work due to a disability and require disability-related accommodations to return to work.

Sample

Sample return to work process and template plan (http://www.forms.ssb.gov.on.ca/mbs/ssb/forms/ssbforms.nsf/FormDetail? OpenForm&ACT=RDR&TAB=PROFILE&SRCH=&ENV=WWE&TIT=accessibility&NO=009-0047E)

Learn about other accessibility requirements and deadlines (http://www.ontario.ca/page/accessibility-rules-businesses-and-non-profits) that affect you.

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