

Workplace Safety and Insurance Appeals Tribunal 2013 Accessibility Report

Introduction

This report summarizes the accessibility initiatives the Tribunal implemented in 2013 in compliance with the requirements in *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, (“the *AODA*”) the *Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation* (O. Reg 191/11) (“ the *IASR*”) and the *Accessibility Standards for Customer Service* (O.Reg. 429/07) (“the customer service regulation”). This report is posted on the Tribunal’s website and is available in accessible formats upon request.

The Tribunal’s *AODA* Self-Certified Accessibility Report to Access Ontario, in which the Tribunal achieved 100% compliance, is also posted on the Tribunal’s website.

Accessibility Policy-Integrated Accessibility Standards

The Tribunal posted its Accessibility Policy-Integrated Accessibility Standards on its website by January 1, 2013. This policy outlines the Tribunal’s commitment to providing an accessible and inclusive environment in accordance with the principles and requirements outlined in the *AODA* and the *IASR* in the following key areas: procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities, training, information and communication, and employment.

The Tribunal ensured that this Policy is available in various accessible formats, as are its Accessibility Policy for Customer Service and its Multi-Year Accessibility Plan–Integrated Accessibility Standards (see below).

Multi-Year Accessibility Plan–Integrated Accessibility Standards

The Tribunal also posted its comprehensive Multi-Year Accessibility Plan on its website by January 1, 2013. This plan complies with the principles and requirements in the *AODA* and *IASR*, and details the Tribunal’s strategy over the next 5 years to remove and prevent barriers to accessibility.

The Tribunal’s Accessibility Committee met in 2013 to discuss and review the Tribunal’s progress in complying with the requirements in the *IASR* and the Tribunal’s Multi-Year Accessibility Plan.

As part of the review process, the Accessibility Committee invited input on the Tribunal’s multi-year accessibility plan from Order in Council Appointees (“members”) and staff, particularly from those with disabilities.

Customer Service

In 2013 the Tribunal continued to provide accessible customer service to clients and stakeholders in compliance with the requirements of the customer service regulation. To support ongoing compliance, the Tribunal followed its Accessibility Policy for Customer Service which is posted on the Tribunal's website. The Tribunal continued to provide reasonable accommodation to parties to appeals, witnesses and representatives on a case by case basis. The Tribunal's Accessibility Coordinator was the primary contact for questions, comments, or information about the accessibility of the Tribunal's services. Examples of accommodations provided include,

- for a party to an appeal with a visual impairment, the Tribunal converted correspondence generated by the Tribunal into an accessible format and sent it electronically so the party could use a screen reader.
- the Tribunal arranged for an American Sign Language interpreter to interpret at a hearing for a hearing impaired worker.
- a worker participated in his hearing by conference call as he used a wheelchair, had other disabilities, and his doctor recommended that he not travel.
- a job applicant with a visual impairment participated in the recruitment process with her guide dog.

Procuring or Acquiring Goods, Services or Facilities

Over the past year, the Tribunal was mindful of accessibility requirements when procuring goods or services, and incorporated accessibility language into the Tribunal's tender documents. Tribunal managers and staff involved in procurement are aware of accessibility requirements in OPS procurement policies.

Training

The Tribunal provided the following training in 2013:

- In a major training initiative, employees and members were trained on the requirements of the *AODA*, *IASR*, and the *Human Rights Code* as it pertained to people with disabilities. The training was provided online in various accessible formats and was completed by September 30, 2013.
- Accessibility training has been incorporated into the Tribunal's general orientation program for new staff and is provided as soon as practicable after an employee or member commences employment. By the end of 2013, the Tribunal had held three training sessions on the customer service regulation for new staff.

- The Tribunal kept a written record, including dates and number of participants, of the above training.
- Four members of the Tribunal's Accessibility Committee attended the Ontario Disability Directorate's workshop on the requirements of the *IASR* in September, 2013. Various Tribunal staff and Accessibility Committee members received training on how to create accessible documents in Word.

Information and Communication

1) Feedback

The Tribunal has continued in 2013 to ensure that feedback processes are available in accessible formats (e.g. via website, mail, fax, TTY or telephone) and that communications supports are available, on request. The Tribunal notified the public about the availability of these options in its Accessibility Policy for Customer Service and its Accessibility Policy-Integrated Accessibility Standards, which are both posted on the Tribunal's website.

2) Accessible Formats and Communication Supports

The Tribunal continued in its work to ensure the availability of accessible formats and communications supports for persons with disabilities, upon request, in accordance with the requirements and time frame in the *IASR*. Examples of the Tribunal's work in providing accessible formats include:

- as noted above, upon request by a visually impaired party, the Tribunal converted correspondence generated by the Tribunal to an accessible format and sent it electronically so the party could use a screen reader.
- the format of Tribunal decisions released since January 1, 2012 was revised so that decisions can be read more effectively by visually impaired persons using screen readers.
- the format of the Tribunal's current annual report and two earlier annual reports was revised so that they can now be read more effectively by visually impaired persons using screen readers.
- Administrative Assistants and Chair's Office staff received training on how to create accessible documents in Word.
- a training program on how to create accessible documents in Word is being developed for all staff.

The public continues to be advised of the availability, upon request, of accessible formats in the Tribunal's Accessibility Policy for Customer Service and Accessibility Policy-Integrated

Accessibility Standards. Both policies are posted on the Tribunal's website and are available in accessible formats.

3) Accessible Website

The Tribunal continued to embed accessibility into its internet website. The Tribunal's public website conforms to WCAG 2.0 Level A, except where not practicable. The Tribunal will continue its work to ensure that its website will comply with the accessibility requirements in the *IASR* within the prescribed time frames, including reviewing its website for accessibility and usability, and ensuring that new resources are in plain language and accessible.

Employment

1) Recruitment, Communication Supports and Accessible Formats, Documented Individual Accommodation Plans, Return to Work, Performance Management, Career Development, Advancement and Redeployment

The Tribunal's Employment Accommodation and Return to Work Policy confirms the Tribunal's commitment to provide timely and effective employment accommodation and return to work for employees and members with injuries, illnesses or disabilities, including the development of individual accommodation plans. The Policy was available to Tribunal staff January 1, 2014 and is available in accessible formats.

In addition to developing the Employment Accommodation and Return to Work Policy, the Tribunal has undertaken the following measures to further promote an accessible workplace:

- enhanced employment practices, including recruitment and selection, so that they continue to be accessible and inclusive, enabling persons with disabilities to fully participate,
- revised templates and documentation relating to recruitment, and selection processes to include information about the availability of accommodation for persons with disabilities on request, where needed. In addition, notification of the Tribunal's policies for accommodating employees with disabilities is provided when the offer of employment is made to successful applicants,
- documented processes for the development of individual accommodation plans for employees with disabilities, and the return to work of employees absent from work due to their disability,
- consultation with an employee with a disability, upon request, to provide accessible formats and communications supports for information that is needed to perform the employee's job, and

- ensured performance management programs, career development and advancement opportunities, and redeployment processes take into account the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities as well as individual accommodation plans.

2) Workplace Emergency Response Information

The Tribunal prepared and provided individualized workplace emergency response information to employees or members where the Tribunal was made aware that they had disabilities for which individualized information is necessary. To assist in the preparation of the plans, the Tribunal circulated an emergency response information questionnaire, which employees who require assistance to evacuate the building in emergency situations were asked to complete. The Tribunal continues to review its workplace emergency response information practices to ensure compliance with accessibility requirements.