

POLICY MANUAL	Section No. : AC 7-7.2
	Effective : May 27, 2013
SECTION : Accessibility	Revised :
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The purpose of the this policy is to outline the requirements established under the Integrated Accessibility Standards, Ontario Regulation 191/11 of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, which reflects a number of accessibility standards that organizations, including Welland Public Library, are required to meet. The Welland Public Library meets the obligations set out in the *Act* and the accompanying regulations, in partnership with the City of Welland.

1. Statement of Organization Commitment

The Welland Public Library (hereinafter called “The Library”) establishes practices and procedures that respect the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.

2. Scope

Unless otherwise stated, this policy applies to paid employees, volunteers, and third-party contractors who are conducting business on behalf of the Library.

3. Responsibilities

The requirements of the regulation include the establishment, implementation, maintenance and documentation of multi-year accessibility plan, which outlines:

- The strategy of the City of Welland (including Welland Public Library) to prevent and remove barriers and meet its requirements under the Regulations;
- The incorporation of accessibility criteria and features when procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities;
- The incorporation of accessibility features when designing, procuring or acquiring self-service kiosks;
- Training;
- The specific requirements under the Information and Communication Standards, and the Employment Standards.

This policy is supported by procedures which outline detailed processes and accommodation.

1. Definitions

Accessible (or Alternative) Formats may include, but are not limited to, large print, recorded audio and electronic formats, Braille and other formats usable by persons with disabilities;

Accommodation means the special arrangement; made or assistance provided so that customers, volunteers and employees with disabilities can participate in the experiences

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available to customers, volunteers, and employees without disabilities. Accommodation will vary depending on unique needs;

Communication supports may include, but are not limited to, captioning, alternative and augmentative communication supports, plain language, sign language and other supports that facilitate effective communications;

Communications means the interaction between two or more persons or entities, or any combination of them, where information is provided, sent or received;

Conversion ready means an electronic or digital format that facilitates conversion into an accessible format;

Disability – “Disability” as defined in the Human Rights Code, means:

- (a) Any degree of physical disability, malformation or disfiguration that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical coordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other service animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device;
- (b) A condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability;
- (c) A learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language;
- (d) A mental disorder; or
- (e) An injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997. Section 10, Ontario Human Rights Code, 1990.

Employee means anyone that is employed by the Welland Public Library Board;

Information includes data, facts and knowledge that exists in any format, including text, audio, digital or images, and that conveys meaning;

Kiosk means an interactive electronic terminal, including a point-of-sale device, intended for public use that allows users to access one or more services or products or both.

Volunteer includes a person who is recruited directly by the Library and voluntarily undertakes a task on behalf of the Library;

2. Guidelines and Procedures

3.1 Accessibility Plan

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The City of Welland’s Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (“the Plan”), which includes the Welland Public Library Board, outlines the strategy to prevent and remove barriers, and to meet its requirements under the regulation;

The plan is posted on the City and Library’s websites, and will be provided in alternate formats upon request, as soon as practicable;

The plan will be reviewed and updated at least once every five years;

The City of Welland will report annually on the progress and implementation of the plan; this report will include the progress of the Library.

3.2 Procuring or Acquiring Goods, Services or Facilities

The Library will incorporate accessibility criteria and features when procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities, except when it is not practical to do so. If the Library determines that it is not practicable to incorporate accessibility criteria and features when procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities, it shall provide an explanation, upon request.

3.3 Training

The Library will ensure that training is provided to all employees and volunteers on the requirements of the accessibility standards referred to in the Regulation and on the Human Rights Code as it pertain to persons with disabilities. Training will be provided as soon as practicable and will be appropriate to the duties of the employees, volunteers or other persons.

Accessible Information and Communication Standards

3.4 Accessible formats and communication supports

The Library will notify the public about the availability of accessible formats and communication supports.

The Library will, upon request, provide or arrange for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports for persons with disabilities:

- in a timely manner that takes into account the person’s accessibility needs;
- consult with the person making the request in determining the suitability of an accessible format of communication support.

3.5 Emergency Procedure, Plans or Public Safety Information

Where the Library prepares emergency procedures, plans or public safety information and makes that information available to the public, the information will be in an accessible format or with appropriate communication supports, as soon as practicable, upon request.

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3.6 Feedback

The Library has processes in place for receiving and responding to feedback and will ensure that those processes are provided in accessible formats and with communication supports upon request.

3.7 Accessible Websites and Web Content

The Library shall work towards making its website and web content conform to the *World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0*, initially at Level A (by January 1, 2014) and increasing to Level AA (by January 1, 2021) in accordance with the timeframes as set out under the Regulation.

Employment Standards

The Employment Standard builds upon the existing requirements under the *Ontario Human Rights Code* in relation to how to accommodate individuals with disabilities throughout the job application process and the employment relationship. It applies in respect to employees and does not apply to volunteers and other non-paid individuals. The requirements of the Employment Standard shall be met by January 1, 2014.

3.9 Recruitment

The Welland Public Library shall notify employees and the public about the availability of accommodations for applicants with disabilities:

- During the recruitment process when job applicants are individually selected to participate in an assessment or selection process;
- If a selected applicant requests accommodation, the Library shall consult with the applicant and provide or arrange for the provision of a suitable accommodation that takes into account the applicant's disability;
- Notify successful applicants of the policies for accommodating employees with disabilities.

3.10 Informing Workers of Supports

The Library shall inform its employees of Library policies used to support its workers with disabilities, including but not limited to, policies on the provision of job accommodations that take into account an employee's accessibility needs due to a disability.

This information will be provided to new employees as soon as practicable after they begin their employment.

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Updated information will be provided to employees whenever there is a change to existing policies on the provision of job accommodations.

3.11 Accessible Formats and Communication Supports for Employees

When requested by an employee, the Library will consult with the employee to provide or arrange for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports needed to perform the employee's job and information generally available to employees in the workplace.

3.12 Individual Accommodation Plan (IAP)

The Library shall develop and have in place a written process for the development of documented individual accommodation plans for employees with disabilities. The process shall include:

- the employee's participation in the development of the IAP;
- assessment on an individual basis;
- identification of accommodations to be provided;
- timelines for the provision of accommodation;
- Welland Public Library may request an evaluation by outside medical or other expert, where represented, or otherwise a representative from the workplace;
- steps taken to protect the privacy of the employee's personal information;
- frequency with which the IAP will be reviewed and updated and the manner in which it will be done;
- if denied, the reasons for denial are to be provided to the employee;
- a format that takes into account the employee's disability needs;
- if requested, any information regarding accessible formats and communication supports provided;
- identification of any other accommodation that is to be provided.

3.13 Return to Work

The Library shall develop, document and have in place a return to work process for employees who have been absent from work due to a disability and require disability-related accommodation in order to return to work.

3.14 Performance Management, Career Development and Advancement, and Redeployment

The Library shall take into account the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities and individual accommodation plans in performance management processes, when providing career development and advancement opportunities and when considering redeployment of employees with disabilities.

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3.15 Workplace Emergency Response Information

The Library will provide individualized workplace emergency response information to employees who have a disability, if the disability is such that the individualized information is necessary and the Library has been made aware of the need for accommodation due to the employee's disability.

Individualized workplace emergency response information will be reviewed when an employee moves to a different location in the organization, when the employee's overall accommodation needs or plans are reviewed and when the Library reviews its general emergency response policies.