

# A Checklist

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> *for Planning Accessible Conferences*

Please use this checklist to track your progress on your way to an accessible conference. If your event is truly inclusive, you should be able to answer “yes” to most of these questions.



For more information on planning an inclusive and accessible event, please reference 'A Planning Guide for Accessible Conferences'.

This checklist was based on the one provided by the Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services, [Planning an Accessible Meeting: A Checklist](#) (see resources section in this document). However, some modifications have been made.

### Choosing the Location

The following are three (3) considerations when choosing the location:

- Did you visit the site before booking a location? You'll want to check the location's accessible features for yourself.
- Is any renovation or construction work scheduled during your event? This could affect accessibility.
- Are staff of the facility trained in providing accessible customer service?

### Exterior Access

The following are considerations for signage, parking, sidewalk and/or paths of travel and accessible transit.

#### Signage

Do the signs for the street address or building name have the two points listed below:

- Clearly visible from the street?
- Well lit at night (for evening events)?

#### Parking

The following are five (5) parking considerations:

- Are sufficient accessible parking spots available for the estimated number of attendees with disabilities? If not, can you arrange for more designated parking spaces close to the building during the event? Are accessible metered parking or a public parking lot with accessible spaces nearby?
- Are designated parking spots for persons with disabilities close to the entrance of the building?
- Do the parking spots have a firm, slip-resistant surface?

- Is there a curb cut or level access from the parking area to the main entrance?
- Are parking areas clear of snow, ice, wet leaves and standing water?

### Sidewalks and/or Paths of Travel

The following are five (5) considerations for the sidewalks and/or paths of travel:

- Is there a barrier-free path of travel from the parking lot or drop-off area to the meeting entrance? Stairs, sudden changes in level, slippery or unstable ground can impede accessibility.
- Are sidewalks wide enough for easy access? Are they obstacle-free?
- Are walkways clear of snow, ice, wet leaves and standing water?
- Are ramps gradual in slope? Do they have handrails on both sides?
- Are sidewalks and walkways separated from roads and driveways?

### Accessible Transit

The following are three (3) considerations for accessible transit:

- Can people get to the event using accessible transit?
- Is there a drop-off area in front of the building? Is the drop-off area protected by an awning or overhang?
- Have you made sure there are accessible transportation options to all conference events and external social activities?

## Interior Access

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*The following are considerations for entrances and lobbies, elevators, accessible washrooms, hallways and corridors, as well as meeting and conference rooms.*

### Entrances and Lobbies

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The following are nine (9) considerations for entrances and lobbies:

- Are entrances (especially the main entrance) wide enough for people using a wheelchair or scooter?
- If the main entrance is not accessible, does a sign clearly visible at the front of the building indicate the location of an accessible entrance?
- Are entrances well lit? Are they away from isolated areas?
- If the door is locked after hours, can someone gain entry without having to push a buzzer or bell?
- Are door handles easy to open? Ideally, doors should have lever handles and/or be equipped with an automatic opener. Turning a knob can be difficult for people with limited strength and dexterity.
- Do signs in the lobby clearly indicate where in the building the meeting is being held?
- Are signs large enough and clear enough, so that people with low vision can read them?
- Are signs mounted at a comfortable height, so that people who use wheelchairs can read them?
- Can you arrange for staff or volunteers to be at entrances and throughout the facility to help persons with disabilities get to the meeting room?

### Elevators

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The following are six (6) elevator considerations:

- Are elevators located close to the meeting room? Are the elevators large enough to accommodate people who use wheelchairs and scooters, as well as their attendants?
- Are there enough elevators to safely and conveniently transport the number of attendees who use mobility devices?

- Do elevators have Braille buttons and raised numerals for people who are blind or have low vision?
- Are the elevator controls mounted at a comfortable height for a person using a wheelchair or scooter?
- Does the elevator have an auditory signal to alert people who are blind or have low vision?
- Does the elevator have a visual cue system in each elevator lobby to alert people who are deaf or hard of hearing?

### Accessible Washrooms

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The following are seven (7) accessible washroom considerations:

- Do washroom doors have Braille lettering or a raised (tactile) male/female symbol?
- Are washroom doors equipped with an automatic or push-button opener?
- Are washrooms large enough to accommodate people who use scooters and power wheelchairs? Do washrooms have at least one accessible stall?
- Is there at least one accessible unisex washroom on the same floor as the event? Remember: A minimum of a five-foot turning radius is needed for wheelchair users to manoeuvre without restriction.
- Can someone using a wheelchair or a scooter reach the faucets and turn the water on using one hand?
- Are washroom accessories and dispensers also within easy reach of a person using a wheelchair or scooter? Are the dispensers automatic or easy to use?
- Are the accessible washrooms located near the meeting rooms?

### Hallways and Corridors

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The following are three (3) considerations for hallways and corridors:

- Are major hallways and all essential doorways throughout the facility wide enough to accommodate people using wheelchairs and scooters?

- Are interior doors easy to open with one hand without having to twist the wrist?
- Do floor coverings (such as low-pile carpeting, hardwood flooring or tile) allow people using mobility aids, such as wheelchairs and scooters, to move easily through the facility?

### **Meeting and Conference Rooms**

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The following are twelve (12) considerations for the meeting and conference rooms:

- Is the meeting room on the building entry floor?
- Is the meeting room large enough to provide circulation and seating for an adequate or anticipated number of participants who use wheelchairs, scooters, guide dogs or other mobility aids?
- Is accessible seating available throughout the meeting space?
- Are the reception/refreshment areas in an area large enough to easily accommodate people who use wheelchairs, scooters, guide dogs or other mobility aids?
- Are the stages and speaking areas, including lectern or podium, accessible to people with limited mobility?
- Is there a well-lit space for the sign-language interpreters?
- Is the area free of distracting background noises, such as ventilation systems or sound from adjacent rooms?
- If the meeting room has windows, are there drapes or blinds that can be used to reduce light or glare?
- Are lighting levels in the room adjustable?
- Are cables, wires and microphones well secured and away from aisles and other traffic areas?
- Have you reminded guest speakers and exhibitors to provide printed handout materials in alternative formats should they be requested ahead of time?
- Have the accessibility needs of the presenters been addressed?

### **Refreshment and Dietary Arrangements**

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The following are six (6) considerations for refreshments and dietary arrangements:

- Are you giving participants an opportunity to indicate any dietary needs ahead of time (for example, when registering for the event)?
- Where beverages are being served, are bendable straws and lightweight cups available within easy reach of people using wheelchairs or scooters?
- Are sugar-free beverages, juices and water available for people with dietary concerns such as diabetes?
- If food is provided buffet style, will someone be on hand to help serve people who have visual and physical disabilities?
- If pastries and cookies are on the menu, will you also have fresh fruits and vegetables available for people with dietary concerns?
- Is there access to the outdoors to allow people to walk their service dogs during meal and health breaks?

### **Hotels and Lodging**

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The following are two (2) hotel and lodging considerations:

- Have you identified hotels or other lodgings that have accessible rooms?
- Is the travel between the hotel or other lodgings and the conference accessible?

### **Invitations and Promotional Materials**

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The following are five (5) considerations for invitations and promotional materials:

- Do your invitations and promotional material about your accessible event include the International Symbol of Accessibility and other accessibility symbols?
- Are you providing invitations and event information in alternate formats for people or organizations that require or request them? Some examples are: Braille, audiotape, e-mail, large print, computer disk or USB memory drive.

- Do the invitation and promotional materials include a note that lets participants request any additional requirements they might have? Have you identified a single contact person for accessibility requests?
- Have you included persons with disabilities in the planning committee?
- Have you contacted a resource centre for persons with disabilities for input and advice?

### **Website and Accessible Communications**

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The following are four (4) considerations for website and accessible communication:

- Have you arranged for a sign-language interpreter and/or real-time captioner to be present?
- On your print materials, have you included information that your materials are available in alternative formats and in French, as well as information on how to obtain them?
- Have you calculated the quantities of multiple format documents you will need according to the anticipated audience? For example, if your audience is geared toward seniors, you might want to produce a greater number of printed materials in large print.
- Have you worked with a web developer to determine whether your conference website meets the standard criteria set out by AODA?

### **Training**

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The following is a training consideration:

- Have staff and volunteers been appropriately trained on accessibility and customer service?

### **Outside Professionals**

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The following are two (2) considerations for outside professionals:

- Have outside professionals been booked?
- Have you provided them with a schedule, so they know which sessions they are attending and when?

### **Planning the Agenda**

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The following is a consideration when planning the agenda:

- Does the agenda take into account for adequate breaks and time between sessions, for travel between events and health breaks?

### **Last-minute Considerations**

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The following are eight (8) last-minute considerations:

- Have you done a last-minute walk-through to remove any obstacles that might have emerged?
- Are signs to the venue, conference hall, meeting rooms and accessible washrooms clear and appropriately placed?
- Have you checked the hallway or accessible routes to make sure they are not blocked by any items, including low-hanging or protruding objects?
- Has food been labeled and particular dietary requests been met?
- Have you checked to make sure no trashcans have been placed in front of elevator buttons, blocking doorways and routes of travel, or blocking paper towel dispensers in restrooms?
- Have the audio systems been tested? Are induction loops and microphones ready for use?
- Have you checked that there are no slippery or wet floors?
- Is the entrance way free of snow, ice, wet leaves and standing water? Are the sidewalks and curb cuts clear as well? Is the area free of vehicles, especially delivery trucks, blocking the ramp or curb cut?

### **Events Evaluation**

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The following is a consideration for event evaluation:

- Does the conference evaluation include at least one question about accessibility?

## > Resources

### Legislation

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Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (2005), is available at the following website address: [http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/statutes/english/elaws\\_statutes\\_05a11\\_e.htm](http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/statutes/english/elaws_statutes_05a11_e.htm)

### Barriers to Participation and Inclusion

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Ministry of Community and Social Services, Understanding Barriers to Accessibility, Government of Ontario (2012), is available at the following website address: [http://www.mcsc.gov.on.ca/en/mcsc/programs/accessibility/understanding\\_accessibility/understanding\\_barriers.aspx](http://www.mcsc.gov.on.ca/en/mcsc/programs/accessibility/understanding_accessibility/understanding_barriers.aspx)

### Useful Documents on Accessible Meeting Planning

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Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, Guide to Planning Inclusive Meetings, Government of Canada (2009), is available at the following website address: [http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection\\_2010/rhdcc-hrsdc/HS28-141-2009-eng.pdf](http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2010/rhdcc-hrsdc/HS28-141-2009-eng.pdf)

Ministry of Community and Social Services, Planning an accessible meeting, Government of Ontario (2012), is available at the following website address: [http://www.mcsc.gov.on.ca/en/mcsc/programs/accessibility/understanding\\_accessibility/planning\\_meeting.aspx](http://www.mcsc.gov.on.ca/en/mcsc/programs/accessibility/understanding_accessibility/planning_meeting.aspx)

Ministry of Community and Social Services, Planning an accessible meeting: A checklist, Government of Ontario (2012), is available at the following website address: [http://www.mcsc.gov.on.ca/en/mcsc/programs/accessibility/understanding\\_accessibility/planning\\_meeting\\_checklist.aspx](http://www.mcsc.gov.on.ca/en/mcsc/programs/accessibility/understanding_accessibility/planning_meeting_checklist.aspx)

### Web Accessibility

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The World Wide Web Consortium (W3C), How Persons with Disabilities Use the Web, is available at the following website address: <http://www.w3.org/WAI/intro/people-use-web/Overview.html>

The World Wide Web Consortium (W3C), Understanding WCAG 2.0, is available at the following website address: <http://www.w3.org/TR/UNDERSTANDING-WCAG20>

The World Wide Web Consortium (W3C), Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0, is available at the following website address: <http://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG20>

Information and Communications Standards, section 14: Accessible Websites and Web Content (contains the compliance schedule), is available at the following website address: [http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/source/regs/english/2011/elaws\\_src\\_regs\\_r11191\\_e.htm#BK15](http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/source/regs/english/2011/elaws_src_regs_r11191_e.htm#BK15)

### Signs and Printed Material

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Graphics Artist Guild, Downloadable Disability Access Symbols, is available at the following website address: [https://www.graphicartistsguild.org/tools\\_resources/downloadable-disability-access-symbols](https://www.graphicartistsguild.org/tools_resources/downloadable-disability-access-symbols)

CNIB has developed Clear Print, an accessible design standard for printed items ranging from magazines to computer screens, is available at the following website address: <http://www.cnib.ca/en/services/resources/clearprint/Pages/default.aspx>

### Interpreters, Intervenors and Captionists

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One way to begin planning interpreter services or other accessibility services, such as intervenors and captionists, is to get in touch with the Canadian Hearing Society (website address is <http://www.chs.ca>) or the Association of Visual Language Interpreters of Canada (website address is <http://www.avlic.ca>). They can direct you to local service providers.

The Canadian Deafblind and Rubella Association (CDRA) can put you in touch with intervenors; it has local chapters throughout the country. Their website address is <http://www.cdbanational.com/en/indexe.html>

Your local university's accessibility office or office for students with disabilities will also be able to assist you with finding interpreters or other accessibility services.

### Planning for Emergencies

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Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, Planning for safety: Evacuating people, who need assistance in an emergency, is available at the following website address: <http://www12.hrsdc.gc.ca/p.5bd.2t.1.3ls@-eng.jsp?pid=3435>

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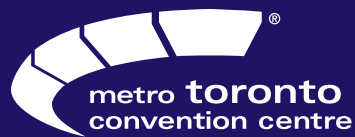
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