

Accessibility Policy (AODA Standards & Practices)
Date: February 2023
Revision History: June 2025

Purpose

This consolidated policy outlines Ford Keast LLP's commitment to accessibility in compliance with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)*, including the *Customer Service Standard (Ontario Regulation 429/07)* and the *Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) (Ontario Regulation 191/11)*. The policy applies to the provision of services, employment practices, and accessibility standards compliance.

Policy Details

Ford Keast LLP is dedicated to creating an inclusive and accessible environment by adhering to the principles of dignity, independence, integration, and equal opportunity for all customers and employees. This policy is publicly available and can be accessed in alternative formats upon request.

Definitions

- ❖ Assistive Device: A technical aid or other instrument used to maintain or improve functional abilities for individuals with disabilities.
- ❖ Disability: As defined by the AODA and Ontario Human Rights Code, including physical, mental, developmental, and sensory impairments.
- ❖ Service Animal: An animal trained to provide assistance to individuals with disabilities.
- ❖ Support Person: An individual assisting another with communication, mobility, personal care, or medical needs.

Procedures

A. Provision of Goods and Services

Ford Keast LLP will:

- ❖ Ensure policies reflect the principles of dignity, independence, integration, and equal opportunity.
- ❖ Communicate in a manner accommodating to customers with disabilities.
- ❖ Provide alternative methods for accessing services when necessary.

B. Use of Assistive Devices

Customers and employees may use personal assistive devices. If accessibility is impacted, alternative arrangements will be made.

C. Use of Guide Dogs, Service Animals, and Support Persons

- ❖ Service animals are permitted on premises unless prohibited by law.

- ❖ Support persons are welcomed; where fees apply, advance notice of costs will be provided.
- ❖ Allergies or other health concerns will be accommodated by balancing all parties' needs.
- ❖ Verification of service animals may be requested if not readily apparent, including a physician's letter or recognized training ID.

D. Notice of Service Disruptions

- ❖ Notices will include information about the disruption, reasons, duration, and alternatives.
- ❖ Methods of notification: onsite postings, website updates, or direct customer contact.

E. Feedback Process

- ❖ Customers and employees can provide feedback through multiple channels (email, phone, in-person, etc.).
- ❖ Responses to feedback will be provided in a timely manner, addressing any concerns or complaints.

F. Training

- ❖ Training is mandatory for employees, volunteers, and contractors interacting with the public or creating policies.
- ❖ Training content includes AODA requirements, the Ontario Human Rights Code, and methods to interact with individuals with disabilities.
- ❖ Training will be provided within three months of hire and refreshed upon legislative or policy changes.
- ❖ Records of training completion are maintained.

G. Accessible Formats and Communication Supports

- ❖ Upon request, accessible formats or communication supports will be provided.
- ❖ Employees will be consulted to determine appropriate formats.

Employment Standards

A. Recruitment and Selection

- ❖ Job postings will notify applicants of accommodation availability.
- ❖ Accommodations will be provided during the recruitment process.
- ❖ Successful applicants will receive policies on workplace accommodations.
- ❖ Applicants and employees are encouraged to request accommodation in any format.

B. Workplace Emergency Response

- ❖ Individualized emergency response plans will be created for employees with disabilities.
- ❖ Plans are reviewed regularly, especially when physical locations or needs change.
- ❖ With consent, emergency information may be shared with designated personnel.

C. Individual Accommodation Plans

- ❖ Written accommodation plans will be developed collaboratively with employees.
- ❖ Plans will include workplace adjustments, accessible formats, and emergency details.
- ❖ The process ensures participation, privacy, and regular review.

D. Return to Work Process

- ❖ A documented process supports employees returning from disability-related absences.
- ❖ Accommodation plans will guide the reintegration.

E. Performance Management and Career Development

Accessibility needs and accommodation plans are considered in evaluations and advancement.

F. Redeployment

Individual needs and accommodations are considered during redeployment processes.

G. Religious Accommodation

Ford Keast LLP respects religious observances and will accommodate dress codes, prayer breaks, and religious holidays, barring undue hardship.

Integrated Accessibility Standards

A. Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

- ❖ A documented plan outlines the strategy to remove barriers and meet accessibility requirements.
- ❖ The plan is reviewed every five years and made available upon request and on the website.

B. Procurement

Accessibility criteria will be considered when procuring goods, services, or facilities, unless impracticable.

C. Website Accessibility

- ❖ The website and web content comply with WCAG 2.0 Level AA standards.
- ❖ Digital content and documents will be accessible where feasible.

Administration and Review

A. Notice of Availability

Accessibility policies are available on the website and in alternative formats upon request.

B. Contact Information

AODA Compliance Officer

Phone: 519-679-9330 x224

Email: aodacomplianceofficer@fordkeast.com

Address: 624 Maitland Street, London, Ontario N6B 2Z9

C. Review and Updates

This policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure alignment with legislative requirements and Ford Keast LLP practices.