

# **Multi-Year Accessibility Plan**

**AIRD & BERLIS LLP/  
MAXIMS LIMITED PARTNERSHIP**

## **Accessibility Policy**

The goal of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (the “Act”) is to create a more accessible Ontario by identifying, and to the extent possible, preventing and eliminating barriers experienced by persons with a disability.

The Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07 (the “Customer Service Standard”) was established under the Act to ensure goods and services are, where at all possible, equally accessible to every member of the public.

The Integrated Accessibility Standards, Ontario Regulation 191/11 (the “Integrated Accessibility Standard”) establishes particular accessibility standards for information and communications, employment, transportation and the design of public spaces.

This policy and related policies outline Aird & Berlis LLP/Maxims Limited Partnership (the Firm) strategies and actions to prevent and remove barriers to accessibility and to meet the requirements under AODA and its regulations.

### **Our Commitment**

The Firm is committed to providing its services in a way that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities. This commitment will be integrated wherever possible and will ensure that persons with disabilities will benefit from the same services, in a similar way as other clients.

The Firm is committed to ensuring that every employee, partner or volunteer receives equitable treatment with respect to employment and services, without discrimination, and receives accommodation where required, in accordance with the provisions of the Ontario Human Rights Code and the AODA and its Regulations. The Firm will meet the accessibility needs of persons with disabilities in a timely manner.

### **Accessibility Plan is Available to the Public**

This policy and any other accessibility information is available to the public and can be found on our firm website.

<https://www.airdberlis.com/docs/default-source/accessibility-documents/aird-berlis-multi-year-accessibility-plan.pdf>

## **Multi-Year Accessibility Plan**

Our Multi-year Accessibility Plan is a roadmap for how we will improve the Firm's accessibility. The Multi-year Accessibility Plan outlines the ways we will prevent and remove barriers to address the current and future requirements of AODA, as well as to fulfill our commitment as outlined in the Firm's Accessibility Policies. The multi-year plan will be posted on our website and will be reviewed and updated regularly and at least every five years.

The following accessibility standards are currently applicable to the Firm:

- Customer Service
- Employment Standard
- Information and Communication

### **CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARD**

#### *Our Commitment:*

The Firm will provide services in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities;

The Firm will provide integrated services to people with disabilities wherever possible and we will provide alternative measures to provide services to people with disabilities where integration is not possible; and

The Firm will provide equal opportunity to people with disabilities to obtain, use or benefit from our services.

#### *Action Taken:*

- Develop, review and revise as necessary a plan to provide Accessibility Standards for Customer Service.
- Ensure all persons who deal with the public or other third parties and all those involved in developing policies in this regard are trained to communicate and provide the best customer service to all clients, including persons with disabilities.
- Ensure completion of accessibility training is tracked and recorded.
- Ensure there is access and direction on how to use fully-accessible telephone services.
- Ensure that if a person with a disability is accompanied by a support person, the support person is accommodated and that there will be no additional fees or charges as a result.
- Ensure that persons with disabilities who require the use of a service animal are permitted to access all areas of your premises open to the public or third party, with the service animal.

- Provide notice to clients or third parties in the event of a temporary service disruption as soon as possible.
- Welcome and appreciate feedback from persons with disabilities through multiple communication channels.
- An *Accessibility* tab has been added to our website ([www.airdberlis.com](http://www.airdberlis.com)) under *Who We Are*.
- Report compliance with the Customer Service Standard.

***Required Legislative Time Frame:***

January 1, 2013

***The Firm's Status:***

The Firm's policy on the Customer Service Standard was completed by January 2013 and is reviewed periodically.

**EMPLOYMENT STANDARD**

**Workplace Emergency Response Information**

*Our Commitment:*

The Firm is committed to providing the Partners, employees, clients and all individuals in our premises with publicly available emergency information in an accessible way upon request.

Where the Firm is aware that an employee has a disability and that there is a need of accommodation, individualized workplace emergency response information will be provided to the employee as soon as practicable if such information is necessary given the nature of the disability.

*Action Taken:*

- Identify individuals requiring individual emergency plan.
- Individualized workplace emergency response information procedures have been developed for employees with disabilities, as required.
- Workplace emergency response information forms have been prepared for employees who have disclosed a disability and who are being accommodated according to their disabilities.
- Where required, the Firm will provide assistance to specific disabled individuals, with the disabled individual's prior consent, to help them evacuate the workplace in the case of an emergency or disaster.

- These individualized emergency plans have been communicated to the individuals' respective managers and safety personnel on an as needed basis.
- On an ongoing and regular basis, the Firm will review and assess general workplace emergency response procedures and individualized emergency plans to ensure accessibility issues are addressed.

***Required Legislative Time Frame:***

January 1, 2013

***The Firm's Status:***

The Firm currently has Emergency Response Information and Emergency Individualized Plans for Firm members. The Firm will continue to review this information to ensure that it continues to be applicable, due to changes in disabilities, as people join and leave the firm and as the Firm becomes aware of individuals with disabilities.

**Accessibility in Employment**

*Our Commitment:*

The Firm is committed to fair and accessible employment practices that attract and retain employees with disabilities. This includes providing accessibility across all stages of the employment cycle.

*Planned Action:*

- Notify our employees and the public about the availability of accommodation for applicants with disabilities in its recruitment processes.
- During our recruitment process, we will notify job applicants, when they are individually selected to participate in an assessment or selection process, that accommodations are available upon request in relation to the materials or processes to be used.
- In circumstances where a selected applicant requests an accommodation, we will consult with the applicant and provide or arrange for the provision of a suitable accommodation, in a manner that takes into account the applicant's accessibility needs due to disability.
- When making offers of employment, we will notify the successful applicant of our policies for accommodating employees with disabilities.
- We will inform our employees of our policies used to support our employees 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 disability.
- In circumstances where an employee with a disability so requests, we will consult with the employee to provide or arrange for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports for information that is needed in order to perform the employee's job and information that is generally available to employees in the workplace.

- We will develop and have in place a written process for the development of documented individual accommodation plans for employees with disabilities.
- In circumstances where employees are absent from work due to a disability and require disability-related accommodations in order to return to work, we will develop and have in place a return to work process for these employees and we will document the process.
- In circumstances where we use performance management plans in respect of our employees, we will take into account the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities, as well as individual accommodation plans.
- In circumstances where we provide career development and advancement to our employees, we will take into account the accessibility needs of our employees with disabilities as well as any individual accommodation plans.
- In circumstances where we redeploy employees, we will take into account the accessibility needs of our employees with disabilities, as well as individual accommodation plans.

***Required Legislative Time Frame:***

January 1, 2016

***The Firm's Status:***

Completed

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS STANDARD**

### *Our Commitment:*

The Firm is committed to making firm information and communications accessible to persons with disabilities. The Firm will make changes to the website and web content which take into consideration the four principles of accessibility: perceivable; operable; understandable and robust. We will ensure that the content is directly accessible to as many people as possible, and capable of being re-presented in different formats to match different peoples' sensory, physical and cognitive abilities.

## **Feedback, Accessible Formats and Communication Supports**

### *Action Taken & Planned:*

- Provide or arrange for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports.
- Consult with the person making the request to determine the suitability of the accessible format or communication support.
- Provide or arrange for the provision of accessible formats and communicating supports in a timely manner that takes into account the person's accessibility needs due to disability, and at a cost no more than the regular cost charged to other persons.
- Notify the public about the availability of accessible formats and communication supports.

### ***Required Legislative Time Frame:***

January 1, 2013 – Customer Service Standard, January 1, 2015 - Feedback

### ***The Firm's Status:***

The Customer Service Standard requirements have been completed.

## **Accessible Websites and Web Content**

### *Action Planned:*

- The Firm shall make their internet and intranet websites and web content conform with the World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guideline (WCAG) 2.0 at Level A.
- Ensure development of next generation website and any digital platform meet AODA Information and Communications Standards and that partnering vendors have necessary expertise with such technology.

- Use guiding principles in the development of any applications as outlined by the Ontario Government's new online Design Program Standard, which specifies compliance with international accessibility guidelines, W3C WCAG 2.0.
- Develop and communicate Firm best practices.
- Expand Firm awareness of requirements for compliance with Information and Communications Standards of AODA.
- Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 covers a wide range of recommendations for making Web content more accessible. Following these guidelines will make content accessible to a wider range of people with disabilities, including blindness and low vision, deafness and hearing loss, learning disabilities, cognitive limitations, limited movement, speech disabilities, photosensitivity and combinations of these. Following these guidelines will also often make your Web content more usable to users in general.

***Required Legislative Time Frame:***

January 1, 2014 for WCAG 2.0 Level A – January 1, 2021 – new internet websites and web content.

***The Firm's Status:***

Completed.



## **GENERAL**

### **Training**

#### *Our Commitment:*

The Firm is committed to implementing a process to ensure that all Firm members, volunteers and third-party contractors who provide services on the Firm's behalf, and persons participating in the development and approval of the Firm's policies, are provided with appropriate training on the requirements of the IAS and on the Ontario Human Rights Code as it pertains to persons with disabilities, and are provided with such training as soon as possible.

#### *Action Taken and Planned:*

- Determine and ensure that appropriate training on the requirements of IAS and on the Ontario Human Rights Code as it pertains to persons with disabilities, and are provided to all employees, Partners, volunteers or third-party members who deliver services on behalf of the firm.
- Ensure that the training is provided to persons referenced above as soon as practical.
- Keep and maintain a record of the training provided.
- Ensure that training is provided on any changes to the prescribed policies on an ongoing basis.

#### ***Required Legislative Time Frame:***

Implementation January 1, 2013 for Customer Service Standard, January 1, 2015 – General Training

#### ***The Firm's Status:***

Customer Service Standard training initially completed but ongoing.  
General Requirements under IAS completed.