

Making Way

For Ontarians with Disabilities

ACCESSIBILITY IS A RIGHT

What you need to know about new
accessibility requirements in Peel



The Region of Peel has established an Accessibility Planning Program to implement accessibility legislation, support our Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) and make Peel accessible for all.

Mandate

To contribute to creating receptive, accessible Regional programs and services, and a workplace that ensures full participation of individuals with disabilities.

Activities

- Develop policies to reduce barriers, such as Peel's Accessible Customer Service Policy
- Promote public awareness and education
- Educate staff on accessibility matters
- Host public events, including the annual International Day of Persons with Disabilities, to bring key accessibility issues to the forefront

For more information, visit peelregion.ca/accessibility or contact Meenu Sikand, Accessibility Planning Specialist at 905-791-7800, ext. 4778 or e-mail aac@peelregion.ca



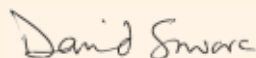
Accessibility is a right

All businesses in Peel have an obligation to make their services accessible to every member of our community.

Standards are changing

- The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA) requires all businesses to make their services and facilities accessible.
- As of January 2010, public sector organizations, such as the Region of Peel, had to comply with new Accessible Standards for Customer Service.
- Effective January 2011, all private sector and non-profit businesses are obligated to comply with these new standards.
- By 2025, Ontario is mandated to have total community access.

“The Region of Peel is committed to eliminating barriers so persons with disabilities can continue to be actively involved in all aspects of society.”



**David Szwarc,
Chief Administrative Officer, Region of Peel**

What does this mean for people with a disability?

Ontario's new Accessible Customer Service standards are helping to ensure the Province is accessible to everyone who lives and visits here. The new standards recognize accessibility as a right and requires all businesses to make their products and services accessible.

What does this mean for our communities?

Helping all citizens participate in our communities is essential to a thriving and prosperous Ontario. Close to 15 per cent of Peel residents live with a disability. Enabling everyone to fully participate in their community and access businesses, benefits us all. For example, it is estimated that the implementation of AODA standards could make Ontario a choice destination among tourists with a disability and increase retail sales by \$4-\$9 billion each year.



Through Accessibility Planning, Peel Region is working to make regional programs, services and facilities more accessible and inclusive to all.

“I am honoured to lead such a dedicated and knowledgeable team. Each member brings diverse professional and personal experiences to the table and helps the AAC provide recommendations that are representative of all of Peel’s communities. As a team, we will continue working together to help break down barriers in Peel and ensure accessibility for all by implementing the provincial AODA standards.”

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'W. Goursky'.

**William Goursky, Chair
Region of Peel Accessibility Advisory Committee**

What does this mean for businesses?

Reducing barriers to products and services makes good business sense. Canadians with disabilities spend \$25 billion every year and influence the spending decisions of 12-15 million other consumers.

AODA standards require businesses in Ontario with at least one employee to provide accessible customer service by January 2012.

This includes:

- Developing a customer service policy for serving people with disabilities.
- Ensuring people are able to use their own assistive devices, service animals or personal care worker to access services.
- Training staff to serve customers with disabilities.

Businesses with 20 or more employees must also file a compliance report to the Government of Ontario. For a complete list of requirements visit mcss.gov.on.ca.

Peel Region's Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC)

The AAC is a council-appointed committee mandated to make Regional programs, services and facilities inclusive and accessible. It is supported by, and informs the work of, Peel Region's Accessibility Planning Program.

AAC Objectives

- To address legislative requirements under the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act*;
- To assist the Region of Peel in identify and prioritize barriers for elimination;
- To advise Regional Council on accessibility issues, monitor the progress of the Region's accessibility initiatives, and report to Council annually.

AAC Activities

- Public outreach and awareness building;
- Educate Regional staff about the legal duties and responsibilities under the provincial accessibility legislations (ODA and AODA) and international and national laws;
- Offer advice to the community to help make events, facilities and services more inclusive and accessible;
- Support Peel Regional Council in the development of Universal Accessibility Standards that allow citizens with diverse abilities to reside in social housing.



Each year Regional employees and the AAC celebrate National Access Awareness Week – an educational event that educates and promotes better access for persons with disabilities.



The Region of Peel and Accessibility Advisory Committee were honoured with an award for outstanding contributions in the area of accessibility by the Human Endeavour and Punjabi Community Health Centre. Receiving the award is AAC Chair William Goursky (L) and Regional Chair Emil Kolb (R).



Region of Peel Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC)



Back row (left to right): Community Member Raj Chopra, Regional Councillor Nando Iannicca, Community Member Pavlo Tourko, Regional Councillor Richard Paterak, Community Member Ram Iyer, Community Member Maureen Tymkow

Front row (left to right): Regional Chair Emil Kolb, Vice-Chair Naz Husain, Chair William Goursky, Community Member Glenn Barnes

Absent from photo: Councillor Sandra Hames, Community Member Harvinder Bajwa, Community Member Maria Parker