



SUPPORTING DISCLOSURE & COMMON TYPES OF INDUSTRY ACCOMMODATIONS

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As a national, non-profit organization, Trucking HR Canada advances modern HR solutions for the trucking and logistics workforce. One of our strategic priorities is to make a company's job easier by delivering a comprehensive collection of up-to-date guides, reports, templates and more to support effective human resource management, recruitment and retention efforts.

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ACCESSIBILITY FOR ONTARIANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

This resource references *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*. This Ontario based legislation outlines accessibility standards that came into effect in 2005. They are comprehensive and employers who follow them will likely be compliant with similar legislation from other provinces however consult your own provincial standards to confirm your legislative requirements. Employers not governed by the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* or other legislation, who choose to adopt the principles of this legislation will lead the market in their employment practices for persons with disabilities.



INTRODUCTION

The Supporting Disclosure & Common Types of Industry Accommodations tool was written to help companies create more inclusive and supportive policies and practices for people with disabilities. Help improve your company's capacity to accommodate with an understanding of:

- Why individuals may or may not disclose their disability
- Why employers should encourage disclosure
- How to create a safe environment for disclosure
- Strategies that can be used to help increase the rate of disclosure
- Common types of trucking and logistic industry accommodations

DISCLOSING A DISABILITY

The Decision to Disclose

The decision to disclose a disability to an employer can be difficult and there can be a lot to consider. For example, an employee with a disability may ask themselves:

- Will the employer understand my disability? If they don't, am I prepared to explain it?
- My disability is non-visible. Should I bother to disclose it or hope it doesn't become an issue?
- Does the employer have policies in place that will support my ability to contribute? Will they provide accommodations that will allow me to be successful?
- Do they have other persons with disabilities working for them or do they have any experience working with persons with disabilities?
- If I do decide to disclose, how do I say it and to whom will I say it?
- Will I be granted the same opportunities to progress as my peers?
- Can I trust my manager with this information? What will my colleagues think if they find out?

These decisions are difficult, even in environments that have proven to be diverse, inclusive and supportive. Job applicants and employees are not required to disclose a disability, but an employer's goal should be to make it as easy as possible for people to disclose a disability or accommodation requirement.



Benefits to Creating a Work Environment that Encourages Disclosure

Increasing a company's disclosure rate supports both the employee and employers in the following ways:

Higher productivity: Providing suitable accommodations to employees can remove barriers and improve performance and productivity.

Improved job satisfaction: Once employees have been accommodated, they may feel better supported and happier in their jobs.

Increased retention: When employees experience greater job satisfaction and productivity, they are generally more committed and stay with the employer longer, reducing turnover and recruitment costs.

Improved health and well-being: Hiding who you are is hard. Hiding a disability can be mentally and physically draining, and can negatively affect an employee's well-being.

Enhanced organizational culture: Employers that support disclosure are helping to create an open and trusting work environment. This positively impacts everyone.

Legislative compliance: When employers put measures and practices in place to encourage disclosure, they are more likely to be aligning with accessibility legislation.

The *Canadian Human Rights Act* sets out that employers have a duty to accommodate employees who fall under the Act up to the point of undue hardship, taking into account health, safety and cost.



CREATING AN ENVIRONMENT THAT ENCOURAGES & SUPPORTS DISCLOSURE

Creating a safe workplace is everyone’s responsibility. The chart below helps us understand how each person can support this mission.

WHO?	ACTION	WHY?
ORGANIZATION REPRESENTATIVE (E.G. HR, LEADERSHIP)	Assess your organizational culture	Employers need to understand prevailing perceptions, attitudes and values currently within the organization and to what extent they support a safe environment for disclosure.
	Make the commitment and take action to create a safe space to disclose	Policies are a good starting place, but commitment is demonstrated through actions. Appropriate actions will result in increased disclosure rates.
	Adhere to and exceed accessibility requirements	If you are in compliance with appropriate legislation (example AODA) then you already have a good foundation for having the policies and procedures in place to create a space for disclosure. Ensuring compliance is a great first step.
MANAGER/ SUPERVISOR	Foster an inclusive work environment	Team managers and supervisors play a key role in setting the tone and communicating expectations for creating an inclusive and safe space for employees. Make sure they are trained and aware of their role in the disclosure process.
	Deal with all disclosures in a confidential and timely manner	Respecting an employee’s concerns when they choose to share their disability helps build trust. Addressing accommodation requests in a timely manner will demonstrate that you value the employee and view their disclosure as important.
	Do not tolerate discrimination of any kind within your team	Discriminatory actions need to be dealt with immediately. A safe space to disclose can only be created when there is no fear of being harassed, bullied or treated differently as a result of making a disability known.
	Be aware of and address any bias or misperceptions you may have about the person and their disability	Check your own assumptions and actions. By being aware of conscious and unconscious bias, you are more likely to act in congruence with an environment that shows support for disclosure.
	Be a role model	If you have a disability, consider sharing your story and challenges. It will serve as evidence that you and the company are committed to diversity and inclusion. It demonstrates that career development and progression is possible for those with disabilities, which also increases the likelihood that they feel comfortable to disclose.



WHO?	ACTION	WHY?
CO-WORKERS	Participate in creating an inclusive and safe workplace	Being part of the solution and being inclusive in how you work day-to-day will help those with disabilities feel safe, comfortable and more likely to share their disability.
	Listen to specific needs and treat them with respect	Accessibility needs are individual and unique. Building rapport and being genuinely interested in understanding the challenges of a disability will help co-workers with disabilities feel safe and supported.
	Check assumptions	Believe and act like co-workers with disabilities are just as capable of producing quality work as you are. If persons with disabilities see that you treat them the same as other co-workers, they will be more trusting and comfortable to share their experience.

STRATEGIES FOR CREATING AN ENVIRONMENT THAT ENCOURAGES DISCLOSURE

Promote Trust

An employee disclosing a disability must be able to trust that their company and supervisor will take the disclosure seriously and treat them with respect.

DO

- Respect confidentiality and only share information that has been agreed to by the employee.
- Actively listen to the needs and concerns of the employee. Demonstrate that you have heard and understand their needs. Show appreciation that they feel comfortable with discussing their needs with you.
- Collaborate with the employee to identify effective solutions for accommodations, if needed.
- Give fair and equal consideration for promotions.
- Make yourself available to discuss any challenges an employee is facing.

Start from the Beginning but Don't Forget About the End

Creating a safe space begins during the recruitment process. If a job candidate feels they have been treated with respect from day one, they are more likely to feel comfortable disclosing their disability. If they have a positive experience, they may share that experience with others, even if they aren't selected for the role.



DO

- Ensure the first contact with all candidates is professional and respectful. The initial contact will set the brand of your company as an inclusive employer.
- HR, hiring managers and anyone else involved in the recruitment process need to be trained on appropriate legislation (such as the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*).
- Should the employee choose to leave your organization, conduct an exit interview to obtain feedback and suggestions on how to improve your strategies for creating a work environment that encourages and supports the disclosure of disabilities.

Provide Training and Education

Training and education can build confidence throughout your workforce when working with a colleague or team member with a disability.

DO

- Invest in employee education and training to help all employees understand the barriers that persons with disabilities face at work. There are a wide range of service providers that specialize in providing training to organizations on disability and accommodation. They can customize sessions to your organization's particular needs.
- Upskill your management and supervisors to better understand the different types of accommodations and how to develop accommodation plans.
- Provide support and/or training to managers and supervisors so they can have successful and supportive discussions with their employees with disabilities.

Build a Connection

Everyone wants to feel included in their workplace. Inclusion builds trust, comfort, and feelings of safety. For those with disabilities, deciding whether to disclose a disability can be largely dependent on whether they feel they have someone they can disclose to. Managers and supervisors who create the space to develop connections with their employees allow those conversations to take place.

DO

- Start early, spending time getting to know each employee.
- Create space for all employees. This will help those who haven't made the decision to disclose feel more comfortable doing so, even if it isn't right away.



- Schedule regular 1-1 meetings. Often individuals appreciate feeling connected to their managers, having dedicated time in a safe space to discuss any challenges, barriers, needs etc. they may have.
- Encourage participation in meetings. Ensure meetings are inclusive by creating opportunities for everyone to participate. This may mean providing information in advance, giving time for thinking during or breaking teams into smaller groups. Understanding how people communicate can help foster higher contribution levels and an overall feeling of safety.

Make Accessibility a Priority

Accessibility is a vital part of ensuring people with disabilities feel welcome and fully included in the workplace. This includes not only physical accessibility but also accessibility of information and communication technology.

DO

- Adopt a “access for all” mindset to prevent unintentional exclusion of job candidates and employees with disabilities.
- Be open to doing things in new ways. Some accommodations may require adapting to new technologies or being flexible in how or where you conduct meetings.
- Ensure your onboarding and orientation sessions are fully accessible to those with disabilities.
- Consider inclusivity when planning meetings and events. Ensure everyone can access and fully participate in meetings.

Implement a Communication Strategy

A well thought out communication plan can go a long way in building the trust.

DO

- Share, post and highlight your policies on accessibility, accommodation and inclusion.
- Routinely promote your organization's commitment to diversity, both internally and externally.
- Celebrate everyone's successes and accomplishments.



Provide Career Growth Opportunities

A common reason individuals choose not to disclose their disability is fear that this will limit their opportunity for career development and promotion. When persons with disabilities are treated the same as other employees and are provided the same opportunities for development, it reinforces the belief that the company values them and disclosing a disability will not affect their opportunity to grow within the organization.

DO

- Abide by fair promotion practices.
- Ensure mentoring, skills training and career development programs are equally accessible.

COMMON TYPES OF ACCOMMODATIONS

Common types of accommodation include:

- Flexible work hours or days or reduced work hours
- Modified or different duties
- Modified break schedule such as more frequent breaks
- Special chair or back support
- Modified or ergonomic workstation
- Working from home
- Computer, laptop or tablet with specialized software
- Human support
- Adapted or accessible parking
- Technical aids
- Accessible elevators
- Handrails, ramps, widened doorways or hallways
- Communication aids
- Adapted washroom
- Specialized transportation

These accommodations are standard for office work environments. In the trucking and logistics sector, employees working in the office comprise only a fraction of our workforce.

When considering other occupations such as truck drivers, warehouse workers or mechanics, there are many options to consider. Involve the person with the disability, their manager, registered health professional and representative (if applicable) in determining the best accommodation based on their needs.



ON THE ROAD

OCCUPATION	DISABILITY TYPE	POSSIBLE ACCOMMODATIONS
TRANSPORT TRUCK DRIVERS	Back injury	Suspension seat and vehicle cushion to minimize vibration and allow to sit for longer periods of time
	Wheelchair users	Swivel seat and lift to assist in getting in and out of the cab or vehicle
COURIER/ PICK UP DRIVERS	Hearing impairments	Hearing aids, hearing protection and portable TTY units
FLAT-BED DRIVERS	Learning disorder	Two-way radio so driver can confirm each order with supervisor
OWNER/ OPERATORS	Nerve disorder in the arms	Swivel knob to prevent prolonged periods of grasping the wheel
	Motor impairment affecting ability to reach overhead	Step stool or aerial lift that can raise the employee up so that reaching is performed at or below shoulder height
	Motor impairment with bending, twisting restrictions	Low task chair or mechanics seat and creeper to assist in viewing or conducting maintenance on the underside of the truck
	Motor impairment with climbing restrictions	Extended tractor steps and folding steps that both provide additional steps, which can reduce the climbing distance to get into the truck cab
	Motor impairment with lifting restrictions	Winches and chain hoists, hitch systems, truck mounted cranes, compact mobile cranes and lift gates to lift

IN THE SHOP

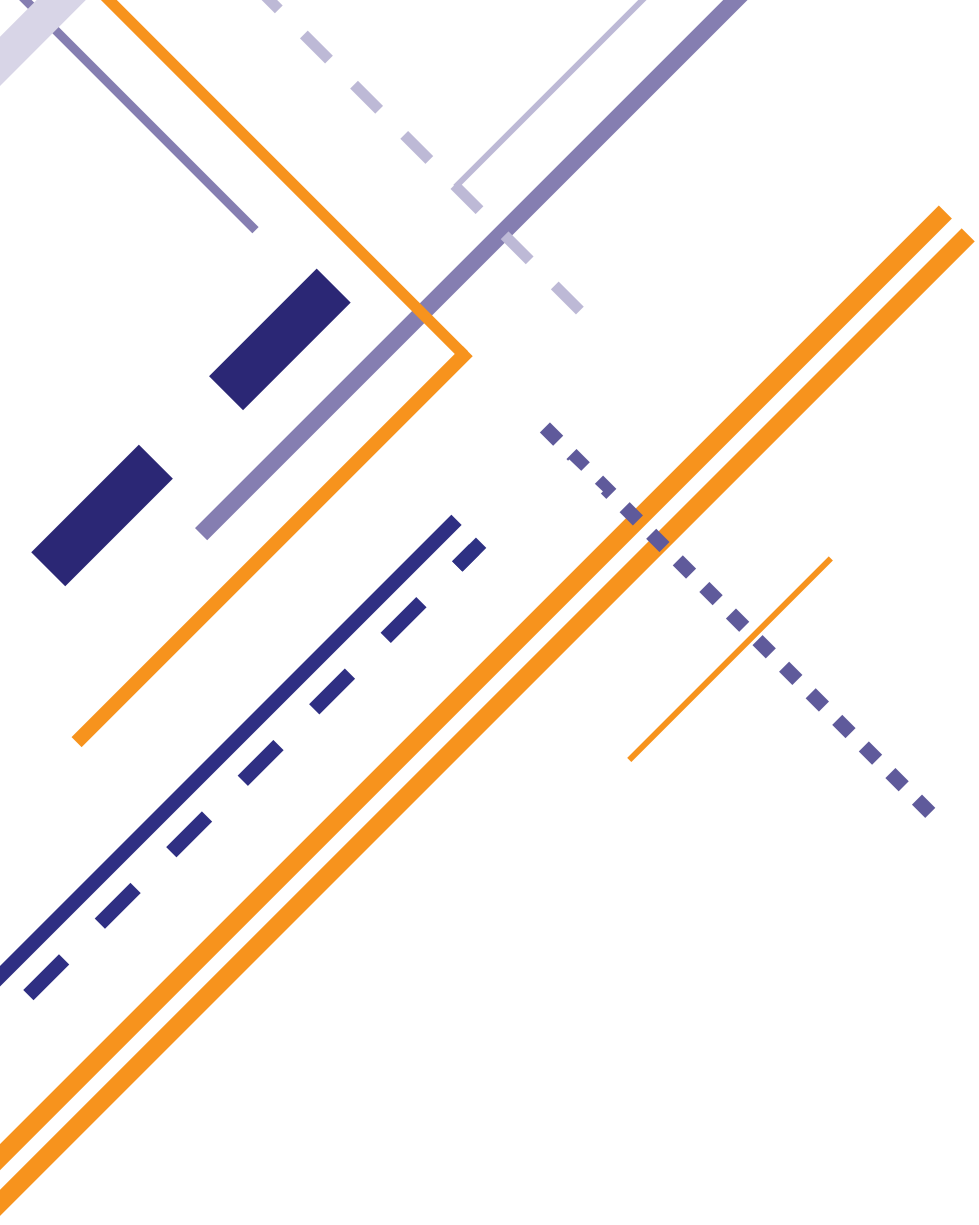
OCCUPATION	DISABILITY TYPE	POSSIBLE ACCOMMODATIONS
TRUCK MECHANIC	Motor impairment, bending	Tire lift, mechanic's low task chair, specialty creeper
TRANSPORTATION TRAILER TECHNICIAN	Motor impairment, lifting restrictions	Jib crane, tool balancers, work positioners
	Upper extremity limitations (neck, shoulder back, hands, arms)	Ergonomic hand and power tools
PARTS TECHNICIAN	Individuals affected by hand vibration e.g., arthritis	Anti-vibration gloves or tool wraps
TRUCK AND TRAILER TIRE TECHNICIAN	Motor impairments that cause difficulty pushing and/or pulling	Motorized carts to reduce excessive pushing/pulling

IN THE SHOP (Con't.)

OCCUPATION	DISABILITY TYPE	POSSIBLE ACCOMMODATIONS
	Respiratory distress/breathing problems	Air purifiers that filter irritants, chemicals, fragrant scents and other triggers
	Depression	Apps for anxiety and stress, flexible schedule, sun light simulators, Employee Assistance program

IN THE YARD

OCCUPATION	DISABILITY TYPE	POSSIBLE ACCOMMODATIONS
SHUNT DRIVER SHIPPER/RECEIVER MATERIAL HANDLER PURCHASING AND INVENTORY CONTROL WORKER	Chronic Pain	Ergonomic equipment, carts, lifts, stand/lean stools, wearable anti-fatigue matting, workstation space heaters or thermal wear; adjustable workstations for industrial settings, modified break schedule
	Mobility limitation - walking	Equipment such as four-wheelers, golf carts, and other small vehicles, communicating with e-mail, instant messaging, two-way radios, and cell phones can reduce walking on a job
	Motor impairments that cause difficulty pushing and/or pulling	Motorized carts to reduce excessive pushing/pulling
	Motor impairment, lifting restrictions	Lifts
	Low vision	Portable magnifier, information in large print, smart glasses, frequent breaks for eye fatigue, pens that include a bold felt tip or lighted pen, paper with tactile lines, bold print, or low glare, computers with screen magnification software, large print keyboard labels
	Anxiety disorder/managing panic attacks	Flexible schedule, modified break schedule, rest area or private space, support animal or support person, job coach
	Executive functioning limitations	Apps for concentration, noise cancelling headphones, recorded directives, checklists, timers and work planners



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