



THE ACCESSIBLE CANADA ACT
***– A Guide to Developing Your Feedback
Process and Sample Template***

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INTRODUCTION

Passed by the Federal Government in 2019, the Accessible Canada Act (ACA) is a transformative piece of legislation aimed at eliminating barriers and ensuring accessibility for people with disabilities. You are contributing to achieving a barrier-free Canada by 2040 through the development and implementation of your accessibility plan.

Federally regulated private employers were required to publish their accessibility plans by the following deadlines:

- **June 1st, 2023** – Employers with an average of 100+ employees.
- **June 1st, 2024** – Employers with an average of 10 – 99 employees.

Employers must also publish Progress Reports on the 1st and 2nd year anniversary date of your company's initial accessibility plan due date.

Trucking Hr Canada (THRC) has developed templates to help federally regulated industry fleets develop their Accessibility Plan and Progress Reports.

Access them in THRC's HR Resource Library:

- The Accessible Canada Act – A Sample Accessibility Plan
- The Accessible Canada Act – A Sample Progress Report

In addition to publishing accessibility plans and progress reports, companies are also required under the ACA to establish a process for receiving and responding to feedback related to their accessibility plan and progress report and/or any barriers that others encounter when interacting with your company.

A feedback process allows people to share their thoughts and experiences related to the accessibility of your business.

Trucking HR Canada has developed this guide to help fleet employers understand your responsibilities when developing, describing, and publishing your feedback process.

In this guide you will find:

- A description of feedback, developing a feedback process and publishing requirements.
- Minimum obligations to consider.
- A sample description of a feedback process.
- Answers to frequently asked questions (FAQs).



ENSURING COMPLIANCE

The ACA and its regulations have established clear standards for organizations to follow when collecting and responding to feedback. It also specifies what must be included in the feedback process and how and when to publish its description.

What is Feedback?

Under the Accessible Canada Act, feedback is information your company receives specific to:

- The barriers that people encounter, including employees, when dealing with your organization.
- The way you are implementing your accessibility plan.

When receiving feedback, understand that it comes from various perspectives and experiences and may be broad or detailed in nature. It could also be very positive or critical, long-winded, or to the point.

Your Obligation

Despite the type or tone of feedback, the ACA and its regulations require that companies:

- Acknowledge receipt of feedback received through their feedback process.
- Acknowledge the feedback using the same method in which it was received.
- Keep records of all feedback received for seven years.

Your Progress Report is required to have a Feedback section that describes the feedback received and how it has been considered by your organization.

What is A Feedback Process?

A feedback process is a series of actions or steps that an organization puts in place to allow individuals to submit their thoughts related to your organization's accessibility plan, progress reports, or barriers encountered when dealing with your business. The priority is to ensure your feedback process is ongoing and accessible to everyone.



Your Obligation

Given that organizations have varying resources, needs, and capabilities, there are multiple ways to create and maintain a feedback process. It's up to your organization to decide how you will receive and manage feedback.

At minimum, your feedback process must:

- **Designate a responsible person:** Assign and publicly identify an individual or position title who will handle feedback for your company. Remember, when publishing your accessibility plan or progress report, you must also include this person's name or position under the General heading.
- **Set submission methods:** Accept feedback through any communication method your organization already uses with the public, including:
 - email
 - mail
 - in person
 - by telephone

Note: If your company uses other electronic means like social media, online portals, webforms, chat bots etc., you must also accept feedback through those channels

- **Enable anonymous feedback:** Organizations must establish ways for people to submit feedback without providing identifying personal information. Anonymous feedback must be accepted and included in your reporting. Note: you are not required to acknowledge or respond to feedback submitted anonymously.
- **Acknowledge feedback:** Feedback can come from a variety of sources such as employees, customers, partners, vendors, members of the public, persons with disabilities or organizations representing them. You are required to acknowledge all feedback (except submissions received anonymously). It is also important to understand that you must confirm the receipt of feedback using the same method in which it was received. For example, if someone sends feedback via email, respond with an email.
- **Retain copies:** As previously noted, you must keep copies of all feedback received for seven (7) years. Similarly, you must keep a copy of your feedback process description for the longer of these two periods: either seven years from the day you publish it or until you publish a new description. If you have a public digital platform, make sure the description is available there. If not, keep an electronic or print copy that's accessible to the public.

Additionally, your process for receiving and dealing with feedback must:

- **Consider feedback received:** Organizations need a system to take feedback into account. How you do this is up to you, but keep in mind:
 - The topic and nature of the feedback
 - The resources and staff available
 - Timing of the feedback within your planning and reporting cycle
 - What will best help you identify, remove, and prevent barriers



- **Report on feedback:** The ACA requires organizations to publish progress reports updating the status of their accessibility plans. Under the mandatory Feedback section, describe the feedback received and how you have addressed it.

Best Practice: Organize and categorize your feedback

To effectively report and consider feedback received through your process, set up a spreadsheet or use a database to track it. Take it a step further by categorizing the feedback into themes. This makes it easier to analyze and apply the insights in your progress reports or accessibility plans.

How Do We Publish Our Feedback Process?

It is essential that organizations provide a description of their feedback process in a way that is easy to understand and accessible to everyone. There are legislated standards that will inform your description as well as the publication of it.

Your Obligation

To ensure your company is compliant with ACA regulations, follow these steps:

- **Write in clear language:** Publish your feedback process using simple, clear language. Keep sentences short and avoid technical terms, jargon, and acronyms whenever possible.
- **Use your digital platform:** If you use a digital platform (e.g., a website) as your main platform for public communication, make sure your feedback process description is published there. If your organization doesn't have a digital platform, simply print a copy of your description and display it alongside your accessibility plan. Make sure to place these documents in the reception area or at the entrance of each of your business locations. They should be clearly visible and easy for the public to access.
- **Make it easy to find:** Post the description of your feedback process directly on your homepage or provide a clear link from the homepage to the document. Publishing this alongside your accessibility and progress reports will help those wishing to use the process find it more readily.
- **Meet accessibility standards:** Ensure the publishing of your description complies with Level AA of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG).
- **Publish by the deadline:** You are required to publish the description of your feedback process at the same time as your initial accessibility plan. As a reminder, for federally regulated employers with an average of 100+ employees, the due date is June 1st, 2023, and for those with 10+ - 99 the deadline for publishing is June 1st, 2024.
- **Re-publish amendments:** If you change or update your organization's feedback process, publish the new version as soon as feasible. You can change your feedback process and amend your description at any time.



- **Notify the Accessibility Commissioner:** Once you publish the description of your feedback process, notify the Commissioner by email within 48 hours. Include the URL, hyperlink, or physical address where your description is posted. Note that you will also need to notify the Accessibility Commissioner every time you publish an amended version of your feedback process description. The email address is: Info.Com@chrc-ccdp.gc.ca
- **Make alternate formats available:** If someone needs the description of your feedback process in a different format, they can request it in any of the following ways:
 - print
 - large print
 - Braille
 - audio format
 - electronic format (compatible with adaptive technology for people with disabilities)

DESCRIBING YOUR FEEDBACK PROCESS

The ACA and its regulations don't specify how long your feedback process description should be, but it does outline the minimum requirements. As long as you meet those requirements, you can customize your feedback process to suit your unique size, structure, and resources.

To help fleet employers, Trucking HR Canada has created a sample description of a feedback process to serve as a guide. It can be expanded to include more detailed procedures for submitting, recording, analyzing, and storing feedback.



SAMPLE:

Description Of [*Company Name*]'s Feedback Process

Introduction

This document outlines [company name]'s accessibility feedback process, a requirement under the Accessible Canada Act (ACA). We welcome feedback about barriers experienced by employees, customers, or the public, as well as comments on the implementation of our accessibility plan. Your feedback helps us improve and ensure accessibility and inclusivity in all our services.

Our Feedback Process

If you have comments or feedback, please contact [name of position] using one of the following methods:

- Send an email to: [*email address*]
- Call us by phone at [*phone #*] or TTY at [*phone #*]
- Send mail to: [*company address*]
- [*insert information for any additional means by which your company receives information from the public e.g. web form, survey, social media, a formal complaints process, online chat or at your office location*]

Anonymous Feedback

If you would like to submit anonymous feedback, please call [*phone#*] or [*toll-free #*] and leave a voicemail message. Our designated accessibility representative reviews these messages weekly. Voice messages will be transcribed and saved electronically.

Feedback can also be provided anonymously through mail or by email (*provided the email address is generic and does not include identifying information or a personal signature*).

Additional Considerations

- [*Company name*] will acknowledge receipt of any non-anonymous feedback as quickly as possible, using the same method in which it was received.
- All accessibility feedback is stored for seven years from the date we receive it.



- Our employees are encouraged to use any of the feedback channels to share their thoughts on accessibility.
- If you need our feedback process in a different format, we're happy to provide it. Options include print, large print, Braille, audio, or an electronic format compatible with assistive technologies. You can request these via:
 - email
 - mail
 - telephone

How We Will Consider Your Feedback

Your feedback helps us enhance accessibility at our company. Some issues may be addressed immediately, while others will inform our future accessibility plans. All feedback is carefully organized, analyzed, and reported annually in our progress reports in the Feedback section.

Best Practice: Organize and categorize your feedback

To effectively report and consider feedback received through your process, set up a spreadsheet or use a database to track it. Take it a step further by categorizing the feedback into themes. This makes it easier to analyze and apply the insights in your progress reports or accessibility plans.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Is there a publishing cycle for the feedback process like there is for the accessibility plan and progress reports?

There's no set cycle for updating feedback processes or posting new descriptions.

If, however, you update your feedback process, you must publish the new version and notify the Accessibility Commissioner of the update. Follow the same steps as you did when you published the original description.

Is the feedback process the same as the consultation process?

There is a difference between consultation input and feedback:

- Consultation input comes from actively consulting with persons with disabilities.
- Feedback is the information you receive through your feedback process.

Think of consultation input as specific, targeted comments you gather when working directly with persons with disabilities on your accessibility plans and progress reports. This input is usually focused and collected within a set time frame.

Feedback can come from anyone at any time through your ongoing process.

How do we keep records of feedback that come to us through a live phone conversation or left as a voicemail message?

Create either a transcript or a recording. Make sure to inform callers that their conversations with your representatives might be recorded if this applies.

The ACA has laid out specifics on what we must do to be compliant with respect to developing and publishing our feedback process. Are there any aspects that are not specifically mandated?

The ACA and its regulations do not mandate a specific way in which you must:

- Respond to contributors beyond acknowledging receipt of their feedback.
- Take that feedback into consideration.
- Organize that feedback and plan any actions you will take as a result.



Why would we need to amend our feedback process?

If you're wondering if it's time to update your feedback process, consider these points:

- Has there been a change in how you receive or handle feedback?
- Is your current process generating the right amount and type of feedback?
- Are you getting more feedback through certain communication channels? Why?
- Have there been changes in your operations, structure, or resources that might call for a new feedback process?
- Are you using new ways to communicate with the public that your current feedback process doesn't cover?

How do we keep records of feedback that come to us through a live phone conversation or left as a voicemail message?

You can notify the Accessibility Commissioner via the [My Accessibility Portal](#) or by email at Info.Com@chrc-ccdp.gc.ca within 48 hours of publishing your feedback process.

When sending your notification by email the notice must include either:

- The URL of the description
- A link to the description, or
- The physical addresses of the places of business where a print copy of the description is displayed

We are required to publish our feedback process and initial accessibility plan at the same time. We must then notify the Accessibility Commissioner within 48 hours that we have published these documents. Can we combine these notifications or must they remain separate?

While the initial accessibility plan and description of the feedback process are to be published at the same time, you can send separate notifications for each OR include both in a single message. Just remember to always include the appropriate URLs, links or physical addresses for both documents.



How soon do we have to provide the accessible format once the request has been made?

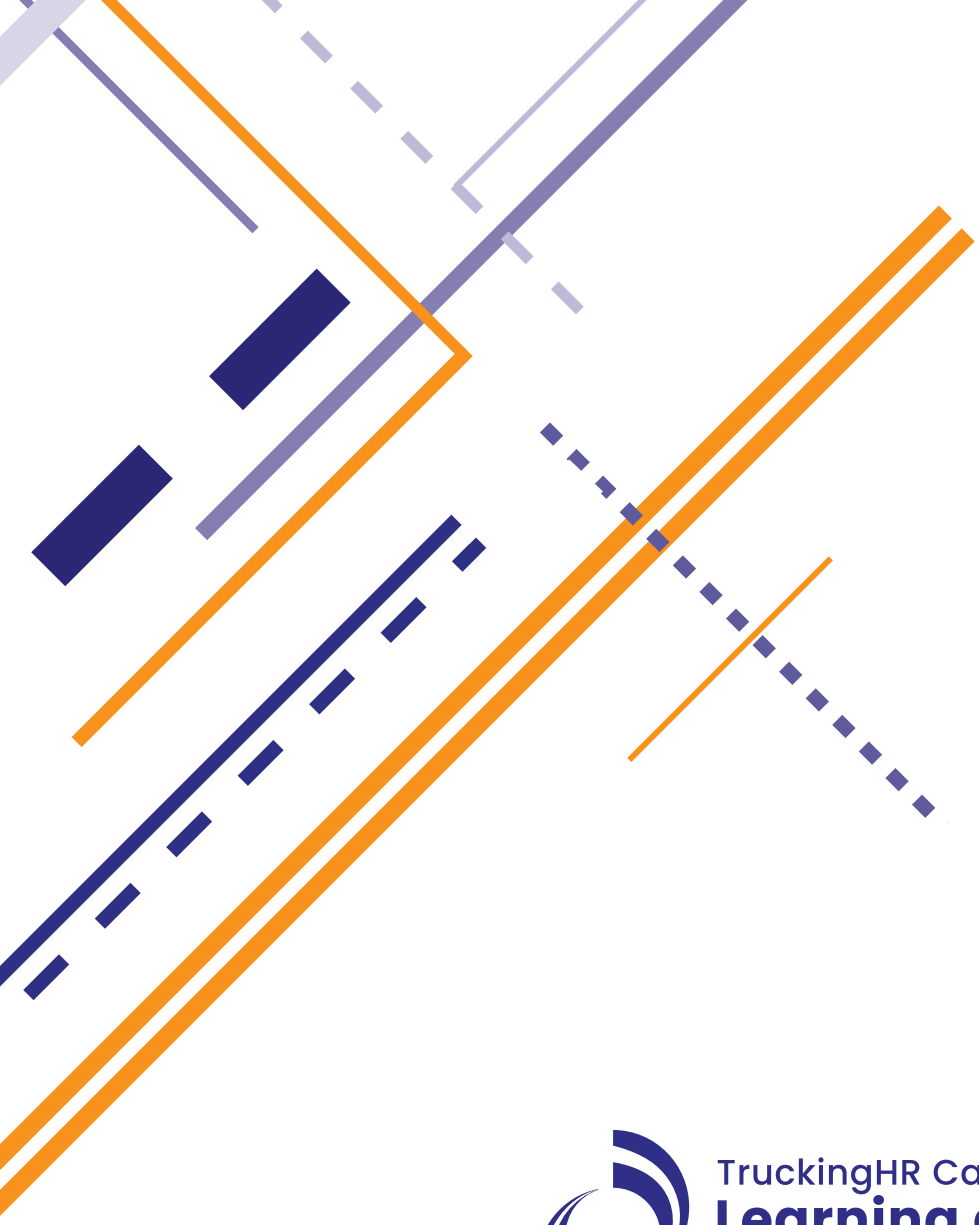
According to the deadlines in the ACA Regulations, the following deadlines apply:

- For print, large print, and electronic formats:
 - private sector organizations with an average of 100 or more employees: within 15 days of a request
 - private sector organizations with an average of 99 or fewer employees: within 20 days of a request
- For Braille or audio formats:
 - all organizations: within 45 days of a request

Where can I find more information related to descriptions of feedback processes?

The Federal Government has provided several resources and guidelines to help organizations develop a feedback process and publish a description of that process at <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/accessible-canada-regulations-guidance/feedback-process/introduction.html>





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