



# **Applying a Comprehensive Accessibility Lens to Your Company Practices**

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## APPLYING A COMPREHENSIVE ACCESSIBILITY LENS TO YOUR COMPANY PRACTICES

Review your company's practices to ensure that the needs of people with disabilities are considered and met as best as possible. Remember that they can be anyone within the company's eco-system – employees, contractors, clients, suppliers, visitors and members of the public.

Using practices that work for people with disabilities will lead to systems that work better for everyone.

### Start with a Focus on the Workplace

Review the relevant practices affecting your workers. Capture your findings.

Practice	How might this affect persons with disabilities?	What actions could remove barriers?
Human resource practices that affect workers, such as:		
• Recruitment		
• Careers and performance management		
• Compensation & benefits		
• Training practices		
• Engagement and surveys		
Internal communication and information sharing methods		
Meetings and events		
Information and technology systems used by employees and contractors		
Tools, equipment and work methods used by employees and contractors		
The workplace environment and facilities		
Emergency preparedness		
Anti-discrimination and anti-harassment policies and approaches		

Employee and contractor experiences  
on the road and at customer sites

Other?

## Helpful Tips:

### A. Consider intersecting identity factors. How might the experience be different for ...

- People with physical disabilities
- People with invisible disabilities
- People with episodic or multiple disabilities
- People with diverse identities, such as people with a disability who are:
  - Women
  - Indigenous (First Nations, Inuit, Métis)
  - Racialized (Black, South Asian, Chinese, etc.)
  - LGBTQ2+
  - Religious minorities (e.g. Muslims)
  - Older employees
- Employees with various roles in the company – managers, drivers and/ or non-driving workers etc.

### B. Get input from people with lived experience

Consult with a wide range of people with lived experience, including persons with disabilities. **COMPLIANCE TIP:** Remember that this type of consultation is required by the Accessible Canada Act.

### C. Prioritize a few key considerations

Remember: Start with a few good practices that are generally applicable. Over time and as needed, build on those and aim for continuous improvement to meet more complex needs. For example, offering an ASL (American Sign Language) version of important company communications is a good practice for accessibility, but be aware that ASL will be less familiar to many deaf francophones or to people who are newcomers from places such as Europe, South America and Australia.

Find good practices by consulting persons with disabilities, reaching out to agencies, sharing knowledge with other companies, or doing web-based research.

**Putting it into action – An example:**

ABC Transport is operating in a highly competitive labour market. To be able to reach out to potential applicants with disabilities and other possible barriers, they decided to improve the accessibility of their recruitment materials. They decided to take these steps:

- Find out about, and then implement, accessibility best practices for websites.
- Ask some of their employees with disabilities to give candid feedback about the images, language, and ease of use of the recruitment materials.
- Update their recruitment materials to reflect persons with disabilities and to explicitly invite applications from this population.
- Rewrite the materials for better readability – for people who face challenges with complex information or for whom English is not their first language.
- Provide contact information for an individual who can provide a more personalized, welcoming and supportive experience to potential applicants.
- Create a standard process so they are more prepared to quickly provide information in accessible formats when requested.

**Continue with Applying an Accessibility Lens to Other Business Practices**

**COMPLIANCE TIP:** Go beyond the above focus on workers and HR practices. If your company is subject to the Accessible Canada Act, your accessibility plan should include:

- Built environment
  - Ensure that workspaces and the work environment are accessible for all.
  - *For example:* Facilities that are visited by external individuals such as clients, suppliers, inspectors, and other visitors
- Communication and inclusive messaging
  - Provide barrier free access for the public, clients and employees to all the communications that the company produces for this audience.
  - *For example:* Information, websites, forms that reflect persons with disabilities – used with clients, suppliers, general public

- Information and communication technologies
  - Review the various technological tools used to send, store, create, share or exchange information.
  - *For example:* Accessibility built into websites, alternative methods of providing / accessing information for business transactions, telephone or other interactions, etc.
- Procurement
  - Ensure that accessibility is considered at the beginning of the buying process.
  - *For example:* Explicit preference for suppliers who can ensure accessible products and services, bidding processes that are accessible to people with various types of disabilities, bias-aware processes for reviewing bids.
- Designing and delivering programs and services
  - When designing and delivering the company's internal and external programs and services, accessibility considerations should be part of the process right from the very start.
  - *For example:* Use the questions in the various sections of this lens throughout the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation stages; engage with individuals with disabilities to be able to reflect their lived experience with barriers and best practices.
- Transportation
  - Take into consideration barriers to operation and provide accessible methods, materials and equipment to employees, and customers / suppliers as applicable, as needed.
  - *For example:* Work schedules that do not pose barriers to people with disabilities (including mental health, vision limitations, episodic pain, etc.), equipment to make work tasks easier, employee transportation (taxis, etc.) that are accessible to people with visible and non-visible disabilities.

### Helpful Tips for Taking Action:

- Keep a tracking sheet of barriers or requested accommodations to flag trends. You might see new ideas to improve accessibility in your operations.
- Read a few of the Accessibility Plans that trucking and logistics firms have posted online (see below for one example). You might be able to learn from the experiences of other companies.
- Visit THRC's [Connector Tool](#), an online database of organizations and information that can help build more inclusive workplaces for people with disabilities.

- Refer to some of these other tools:
  - [From THRC:](#)
    - Accessible Canada Act – A Sample Accessibility Plan
    - Invisible Disabilities
    - Integrated Accessibility Standards Policy – A Sample
    - Reflecting AODA and Best Practices: An Employer Compliance Checklist
  - Sample government sources, depending on jurisdiction:
    - [Accessibility Standards Canada](#)
    - [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act \(AODA\)](#)