

The Law Society of Upper Canada's Report on the Obligations of law firms under the Integrated Accessibility Standards, pursuant to the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)

In this report by the Law Society of Upper Canada's Equity and Aboriginal Issues Committee, the legal obligations of law firms, under the [Integrated Accessibility Standards](#) in relation to the [AODA](#), are clearly outlined. Legal obligations are presented based on the number of employees in a given law firm.

TAB 3.6

FOR INFORMATION

**ACCESSIBILITY FOR ONTARIANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT –
INTEGRATED REGULATION**

BACKGROUND

48. In 2011, the Ontario government approved the Integrated Accessibility Standards, Ontario Regulation 191/11 pursuant to the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005. The *Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation* sets out special requirements in four areas: employment, information and communications, transportation, design of public spaces, and general requirements that apply to all four areas.
49. As a result, most private sector organizations, including law firms, will have to develop accessibility policies and a plan to outline how they will comply with the regulation, consider accessibility when designing or buying self-service kiosks, train staff and volunteers so that everyone who provides goods or services on their behalf understands the *Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation* and its requirements, and the Ontario *Human Rights Code* (as it relates to people with disabilities).
50. The Ministry of Economic Development, Trade and Employment has developed a series of online resources to assist organizations in complying with legal obligations. In order to assist law firms in accessing the government's resources that are most relevant to them, the Law Society has produced the documents presented at **TABS 3.6.1 and 3.6.2** with a list of compliance dates and links to the government website.
51. The Equity Advisory Group and the Equity Committee have reviewed and approved the documents.

TAB 3.6.1

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005

Integrated Accessibility Standards
Ontario Regulation 191/11Legal Obligations of Law Firms of 50 or more employees

This document provides the list of obligations of law firms of 50 or more employees under the *Integrated Accessibility Standards*, Ontario Regulation 191/11 and links to relevant resources developed by the Ministry of Economic Development, Trade and Employment

The document has been prepared to assist law firms of 50 or more employees develop their resources to comply with their obligations under the *Integrated Accessibility Standards*. This document is not intended to replace law firms' responsibility to know its legal obligations.

General

Obligation	Effective
Develop, implement and maintain policies about how the firm achieves accessibility under the Reg., including a statement of the firm's commitment to met accessibility needs in a timely manner; prepare written documents and make them publicly available (Section 3) For more information, please see: http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/en/mcass/programs/accessibility/info_sheets/general/policies.aspx	Jan.1, 2014
Establish, implement, maintain and document a multi-year accessibility plan and review at least once every 5 years; post plan on website and provide in accessible format upon request (Section 4) For more information, please see: http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/en/mcass/programs/accessibility/info_sheets/general/plan.aspx	Jan. 1, 2014
Have regard to accessibility when designing, procuring or acquiring self-	Jan. 1, 2014

Obligation	Effective
<p>service kiosks (interactive electronic terminals) (Section 6)</p> <p>For more information, please see: http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/en/mcass/programs/accessibility/info_sheets/general/kiosks.aspx</p>	
<p>Training on the regulation and Human Rights Code for employees, volunteers, those who develop law firm's policies and those who provide goods, services or facilities on behalf of the firm. . Maintain record of training, including dates and who received the training. (Section 7)</p> <p>For more information, please see: http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/en/mcass/programs/accessibility/info_sheets/general/train.aspx</p>	Jan. 1, 2015

Information and Communications

Obligation	Effective
<p>Any process for receiving and responding to feedback must be accessible and the public must be notified about the availability of accessible formats and communication supports (Section 11)</p> <p>For more information, please see: http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/en/mcass/programs/accessibility/info_sheets/info_comm/feedback.aspx</p>	Jan. 1, 2015
<p>Upon request, provide communications in accessible format in a timely manner and notify public about availability of accessible communications (Section 12)</p> <p>For more information, please see: http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/en/mcass/programs/accessibility/info_sheets/info_comm/info_public.aspx</p>	Jan. 1, 2016
<p>If a firm prepares emergency procedures, plans or public safety information that is available to the public, provide the information in an accessible format upon request (Section 13)</p> <p>For more information, please see: http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/en/mcass/programs/accessibility/info_sheets/info_comm/emergency_info.aspx</p>	Jan. 1, 2012

Obligation	Effective
<p>Make internet websites web content and increasing to level AA conform with the World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0, initially at level A (Section 14)</p> <p>For more information, please see: http://www.mcsc.gov.on.ca/en/mcsc/programs/accessibility/info_sheets/info_comm_website.aspx</p>	<p>Jan. 1, 2014 conform to level A for new internet sites and web content; all internet sites conform with level AA by Jan. 1, 2021 (with some exceptions)</p>

The sections on education or training organizations do not apply to law firms

Education or training organization is defined as an organization falling into one of the following categories:

- Governed by the Education Act or the Private Career Colleges Act, 2005;
- Offers a post-secondary program leading to a degree under the Post-Secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act, 2000;
- Designated public sector organization listed in the Regulation;
- Provides courses or programs that result in the acquisition of a diploma or certificate named by the Minister of Education under the Education Act;
- A private school within the meaning of the Education Act.

Employment

Obligation	Effective
<p>Availability of accommodation in recruitment, including assessment and selection processes, notices to successful applicants, informing employees of support. (Sections 22, 23, 24, 25)</p> <p>For more information, please see: http://www.mcsc.gov.on.ca/en/mcsc/programs/accessibility/info_sheets/employment_hiring.aspx</p>	<p>Jan. 1, 2016</p>

Obligation	Effective
http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/en/mcass/programs/accessibility/info_sheets/employment/staff_policies.aspx	
<p>Upon request, provide employee with accessible formats and communication supports for information needed in order to perform job, information generally available to employees. Consult with employee to determine suitability. (Section 26)</p> <p>For more information, please see: http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/en/mcass/programs/accessibility/info_sheets/employment/employee_info.aspx</p>	Jan. 1, 2016
<p>Provide individualized workplace emergency response information to employees with disabilities, if the disability is such that the individualized information is necessary and the employer is aware of the need for accommodation. (Section 27)</p> <p>For more information, please see: http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/en/mcass/programs/accessibility/info_sheets/employment/employees_safe.aspx</p>	Jan. 1, 2012
<p>Documented individual accommodation plans and written processes (Section 28)</p> <p>For more information, please see: http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/en/mcass/programs/accessibility/info_sheets/employment/accommodation.aspx</p>	Jan 1, 2016
<p>Develop and have in place return to work processes (Section 29)</p> <p>For more information, please see: http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/en/mcass/programs/accessibility/info_sheets/employment/return_work.aspx</p>	Jan. 1, 2016
<p>Take into account accessibility needs in performance management, career development and advancement and redeployment (Sections 30, 31, 32)</p> <p>For more information, please see: http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/en/mcass/programs/accessibility/info_sheets/employment/perform_manage.aspx</p>	Jan. 1, 2016

Design of Public Spaces

Should a firm wish to build a new construction or redevelop an existing space in the firm, the firm should consult the Design of Public Spaces Standard. This standard covers:

- Recreational trails/beach access routes
- Outdoor public eating areas like rest stops or picnic areas
- Outdoor play spaces, like playgrounds in provincial parks and local communities
- Outdoor paths of travel, like sidewalks, ramps, stairs, curb ramps, rest areas and accessible pedestrian signals
- Accessible parking (on and off street)

For more information, please see:

http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/en/mcass/programs/accessibility/info_sheets/public_spaces/trails_beach.aspx

http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/en/mcass/programs/accessibility/info_sheets/public_spaces/eating_areas.aspx

http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/en/mcass/programs/accessibility/info_sheets/public_spaces/play_spaces.aspx

http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/en/mcass/programs/accessibility/info_sheets/public_spaces/exterior_paths.aspx

http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/en/mcass/programs/accessibility/info_sheets/public_spaces/parking.aspx

http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/en/mcass/programs/accessibility/info_sheets/public_spaces/service_counters.aspx

http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/en/mcass/programs/accessibility/info_sheets/public_spaces/maintain_accessible_spaces.aspx

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005

Integrated Accessibility Standards
Ontario Regulation 191/11Legal Obligations of Law Firms of
Fewer than 50 Employees

This document provides the list of obligations of law firms of fewer than 50 employees under the *Integrated Accessibility Standards*, Ontario Regulation 191/11 and links to relevant resources developed by the Ministry of Economic Development, Trade and Employment.

The document has been prepared to assist law firms of fewer than 50 employees develop their resources to comply with their obligations under the *Integrated Accessibility Standards*. This document is not intended to replace law firms' responsibility to know its legal obligations.

General

Obligation	Effective
Develop, implement and maintain policies about how the law firm achieves accessibility under the Reg (Section 3) For more information, please see: http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/en/mcass/programs/accessibility/info_sheets/general/policies.aspx	Jan.1, 2015
Have regard to accessibility when designing, procuring or acquiring self-service kiosks (interactive electronic terminals) (Section 6) For more information, please see: http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/en/mcass/programs/accessibility/info_sheets/general/kiosks.aspx	Jan. 1, 2015
Training on the regulation and Human Rights Code for employees, volunteers, those who develop law firm's policies and those who provide goods, services or facilities on behalf of the firm. (Section 7)	Jan. 1, 2015

Obligation	Effective
For more information, please see: http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/en/mcass/programs/accessibility/info_sheets/general/train.aspx	

Information and Communications

Obligation	Effective
Any process for receiving and responding to feedback must be accessible and the public must be notified about the availability of accessible formats and communication supports (Section 11) For more information, please see: http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/en/mcass/programs/accessibility/info_sheets/info_comm/feedback.aspx	Jan. 1, 2016
Upon request, provide communications in accessible format in a timely manner and notify public about availability of accessible communications (Section 12) For more information, please see: http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/en/mcass/programs/accessibility/info_sheets/info_comm/info_public.aspx	Jan. 1, 2017
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<p>Upon request, provide employee with accessible formats and communication supports for information needed in order to perform job, information generally available to employees. Consult with employee to determine suitability. (Section 26)</p> <p>For information, please see: http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/en/mcass/programs/accessibility/info_sheets/employment/employee_info.aspx</p>	<p>Jan. 1, 2017</p>
<p>Provide individualized workplace emergency response information to employees with disabilities, if the disability is such that the individualized information is necessary and the employer is aware of the need for accommodation. (Section 27)</p> <p>For more information, please see: http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/en/mcass/programs/accessibility/info_sheets/employment/employees_safe.aspx</p>	<p>Jan. 1, 2012</p>
<p>Take into account accessibility needs in performance management, career development and advancement and redeployment (Sections 30, 31, 32)</p>	<p>Jan. 1, 2017</p>

Obligation	Effective
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For more information, please see:

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http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/en/mcass/programs/accessibility/info_sheets/public_spaces/eating_areas.aspx

http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/en/mcass/programs/accessibility/info_sheets/public_spaces/play_spaces.aspx

http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/en/mcass/programs/accessibility/info_sheets/public_spaces/exterior_paths.aspx

http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/en/mcass/programs/accessibility/info_sheets/public_spaces/parking.aspx

http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/en/mcass/programs/accessibility/info_sheets/public_spaces/service_counters.aspx

http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/en/mcass/programs/accessibility/info_sheets/public_spaces/maintain_accessible_spaces.aspx

NOTE: Law firms of fewer than 50 employees are exempted from the requirement to file accessibility reports under section 14 of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 with respect to the accessibility standards in this Regulation.