



# **Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation Guidelines**

**July 2012**

**Part 2 – Information and Communications Standard**



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## Part 2 - Information and Communications Standard

### Overview

The Information and Communications Standard outlines requirements for organizations to create, provide and receive information and communications in ways that are accessible for people with disabilities. This should help people with disabilities access sources of information and communications that many of us rely on every day.

For example, it will help people with vision loss access more websites using their screen readers, expand large print and digital collections in public libraries and provide students with course information and learning materials in accessible formats.

Accessibility benefits everyone. Making accessibility a part of the way organizations send and receive information and communications will help business tap into opportunities to attract more customers, build customer loyalty and improve services. Reaching out to customers with disabilities may enable business to tap into \$9.6 billion more in revenue.

### Ontario Human Rights Code

The Ontario Human Rights Code requires organizations to accommodate people with disabilities to the point of undue hardship.

The Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation does not replace or affect legal rights or obligations that arise under the Ontario Human Rights Code and other laws relating to the accommodation of people with disabilities. This means that the Ontario Human Rights Code or other applicable legislation may require additional accommodation measures that go beyond or are different from the standards established by the regulations of the AODA.

### Requirements under the Information and Communications Standard

Part 2 includes 11 sections:

Administrative

1. Definitions and exemptions
2. Application



## Regulatory Requirements

3. Feedback
4. Accessible formats and communication supports
5. Emergency procedure, plans or public safety information
6. Accessible websites and web content (applies to Government of Ontario, Legislative Assembly, designated public sector organizations and large organizations with 50+ employees)
7. Educational and training resources and materials, etc. (applies to educational and training institutions, as defined in the regulation)
8. Training to educators (applies to educational and training institutions and to school boards, as defined in the regulation)
9. Producers of educational or training material
10. Libraries of educational and training institutions
11. Public libraries



## Section 9

### Definitions and Exceptions

The terms and exceptions identified below are intended to provide assistance in understanding and implementing the requirements outlined in the Information and Communications Standard.

#### Definitions

**communications** – the term communications as it used in the Information and Communications Standard refers to the interaction between two or more people or entities when information is provided, sent or received.

**conversion ready** – refers to an electronic or digital format that assists conversion into an accessible format such as Braille, large print, audio cassettes, CDs, DVDs, etc.

**information** – the term information as it is used in the Information and Communications Standard refers to knowledge, data and facts that convey meaning and that exist in any format such as text, audio, digital or images.

#### Exceptions

These exceptions apply to all requirements within the Information and Communications Standard.

The Information and Communications Standard does not apply to the following:

1. Products and product labels, except as specifically provided by this Part.
2. Unconvertible information or communications.
3. Information that the obligated organization does not control directly or indirectly through a contractual relationship, except as required under sections 15 and 18.

If an obligated organization determines that information or communications are unconvertible, the organization must provide the person requesting the information or communication with:

- an explanation as to why the information or communications are unconvertible; and
- a summary of the unconvertible information or communications.

For the purposes of the Information and Communications Standard, information or communications are unconvertible if,



- it is not technically feasible to convert the information or communications; or
- the technology to convert the information or communications is not readily available.

### **Application of Exception**

The Information and Communications Standard requires people and organizations to provide accessible information and communications about the goods, services or facilities offered to customers, clients and others.

It is not about making products, e.g., cold medicine, DVDs, etc. and/or labels on the packaging of these products, accessible.

In the examples of cold medicine or DVDs, a drugstore would have to find accessible ways to inform customers about the cold medicine available on the shelves and how to safely use it. A video store would have to find accessible ways to inform customers about their DVD selection.

Education and training institutions (as defined in the [regulation](#)) and their libraries, as well as producers of education and training materials and public libraries need to refer to their specific parts of the regulation (sections 15, 17, 18 and 19) to understand their obligations in terms of products.

The standard applies to information or communications an organization can directly control, meaning information an organization creates, owns or where a contractual relationship with a third party provider allows for modification. If an organization has control over the information or communications, they would have to convert it into an accessible format or provide it with appropriate communication supports, upon request.

For more information on accessible formats and communication supports, please see Information and Communications Standard, [Section 12, “Accessible Formats and Communication Supports”](#).



## **Section 10**

### **Application**

Under the Information and Communications Standard, the following sections apply to all obligated organizations:

- 9. Definitions and exceptions
- 11. Feedback
- 12. Accessible formats and communication supports
- 13. Emergency procedure, plans or public safety information



## Section 11

### Feedback

#### Requirement as Stated in the Regulation

11(1) Every obligated organization that has processes for receiving and responding to feedback shall ensure that the processes are accessible to persons with disabilities by providing or arranging for accessible formats and communications supports, upon request.

(2) Nothing in this section detracts from the obligations imposed under section 7 of Ontario Regulation 429/07 (Accessibility Standards for Customer Service) made under the Act.

#### Intent of this Requirement

The intent of this requirement is that all organizations with a process(es) for receiving and responding to feedback make them available to people with disabilities in accessible formats or with appropriate communication supports, on request.

Note: The regulation only applies to organizations that have processes for receiving and responding to feedback. Organizations that do not have processes are not required to create such processes.

**Table 1 - When do Organizations have to Comply**

Affected Organizations	Compliance Dates
Ontario Government and Legislative Assembly	January 1, 2013
Designated public sector organizations with 50+ employees	January 1, 2014
Designated public sector organizations with 1-49 employees	January 1, 2015
Private and not-for-profit organizations with 50+ employees	January 1, 2015
Private and not-for-profit organizations with 1-49 employees	January 1, 2016



## **Implementing the Requirement**

### **Receiving and Responding to Feedback**

Many organizations have external and/or internal processes in place to receive and respond to feedback from their clients, customers or employees. Those organizations that have processes in place to receive and respond to feedback must make them accessible to individuals with disabilities, on request.

Note: The regulation does not require organizations to create feedback processes if they do not currently use one.

Here are some of the ways organizations receive and respond to feedback.

### **Feedback from the Public**

There are many different ways for organizations to get feedback from the public, including the following methods:

- Follow-up phone surveys, e.g., after customers purchase new vehicles, the dealership calls them to ask if they are satisfied with their purchase.
- On-line questionnaires, e.g., a retail store sends its customers a survey asking them about their shopping habits and the types of stores they frequently visit.
- Cards to complete, e.g., after finishing their meals at a restaurant, customers are given comment cards to rate the quality of their experience.

### **Feedback from Employees**

Many organizations have established feedback processes for employees to comment on their experience in the workplace. Larger organizations may use web-based surveys or emails to collect feedback, while smaller organizations may choose to meet and talk with their employees or provide them printed evaluation forms to complete.

### **Customer Service Standard Feedback Requirement**

Under the Customer Service Standard, obligated organizations must establish a customer service feedback process for receiving and responding to feedback specifically about the manner in which they provide accessible goods or services to people with disabilities.

Obligated organizations must also make the information about their feedback processes available to the public. The processes must allow for feedback in a variety of ways including in person, by telephone, by writing or via email. The processes must also specify the actions that the organizations are required to take when complaints are received.



Obligated organizations need to comply with this requirement within the timelines specified in the [Accessibility Standards for Customer Service](#).

### **Creating an Accessible Feedback Process**

Providing accessible feedback processes may mean that instead of only one method for feedback, such as hand-written letters, organizations will need to be prepared to receive feedback in other ways such as over the telephone or by email, if requested.

When organizations provide customers with questionnaires or comment cards, they will also be required to provide the information in accessible formats or with the appropriate communication supports, on request.

Example: Some stores and workplaces have comment cards on which customers and employees can leave comments. These may be inaccessible to some people. If an individual requests an accessible way to offer feedback, the organization will have to develop another acceptable method such as verbal (over the telephone) or electronic (email) feedback.

Note: Lessons learned from implementing the accessible Customer Service feedback process may be applicable to increasing accessibility in all feedback processes the organization may have.

### **Accessible Formats and Communication Supports**

When making their feedback processes accessible, organizations are required to meet the requirements of Information and Communications Standard, [Section 12 – “Accessible Formats and Communications Supports”](#). This section includes a list of accessible formats and communication supports.

## **Section 12**

### **Accessible Formats and Communication Supports**

#### **Requirement as Stated in the Regulation**

12(1) Except as otherwise provided, every obligated organization shall upon request provide or arrange for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports for persons with disabilities,

a) in a timely manner that takes into account the person’s accessibility needs due to disability; and

b) at a cost that is no more than the regular cost charged to other persons.



(2) The obligated organization shall consult with the person making the request in determining the suitability of an accessible format or communication support.

(3) Every obligated organization shall notify the public about the availability of accessible formats and communication supports.

(4) Every obligated organization that is required to provide accessible formats or accessible formats and communication supports by section 3, 4, 11, 13, 19, 26, 28, 34, 37, 44 or 64 shall meet the requirements of subsections (1) and (2) but shall do so in accordance with the schedule set out in the referenced section and shall do so only to the extent that the requirements in subsections (1) and (2) are applicable to the requirements set out in the referenced section.

### **Intent of this Requirement**

The intent of this requirement is that all organizations provide information and communicate in an accessible manner about their goods, services or facilities to people with disabilities, on request.

The information must be provided in a timely manner and at a cost that is no more than the regular price charged to others.

Organizations are not required to make products and/or product labels accessible. Please refer to [Section 9 – “Application of Exception”](#) for more information.

**Table 2 - When do Organizations have to Comply**

<b>Affected Organizations</b>	<b>Compliance Dates</b>
Government of Ontario and Legislative Assembly	January 1, 2014
Designated public sector organizations with 50+ employees	January 1, 2015
Designated public sector organizations with 1-49 employees	January 1, 2016
Private and not-for-profit organizations with 50+ employees	January 1, 2016



Private and not-for-profit organizations with 1-49 employees

January 1, 2017

## Implementing the Requirement

### About Accessible Formats and Communication Supports

Some people use methods other than standard print to access information. Some communicate in ways other than the spoken word.

Alternatives to standard print are often referred to as “accessible formats”, and methods to assist communication are referred to as “communication supports”.

To be accessible to people with disabilities, organizations must be able to provide and to receive information and communications in an accessible manner.

There are many ways to do this, here are some examples:

- accessible electronic formats such as HTML and MS Word
- Braille
- accessible audio formats
- large print
- text transcripts of visual and audio information
- reading the written information aloud to the person directly
- exchanging hand-written notes (or providing a note taker or communication assistant)
- captioning or audio description<sup>1</sup>
- assistive listening systems
- augmentative and alternative communication methods and strategies such as the use of letter, word or picture boards, and devices that speak out messages
- sign language interpretation and intervenor services
- repeating, clarifying, or restating information

The requirement only applies to information and communications that an organization controls directly or indirectly through contractual relationships. The requirement does not apply to information one organization may be sharing on behalf of another organization.

Example: A hotel has information about its own facilities and also displays

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<sup>1</sup> Note: Live captioning and audio description are excluded from Accessible Web Requirements – see [section 14 for more information](#).



pamphlets on behalf of other organizations, such as local restaurants, in its lobby. The hotel is required to provide information about its own facilities in accessible formats. It is not required to provide the information about the restaurants (or the information from any other organization over which it does not have direct or indirect control of) in accessible formats.

Note: In the example above, the organization has obligations under the Customer Service Regulation to provide accessible customer service. For example, the hotel might ask staff to tell people with visual disabilities about the information contained in the pamphlets.

### **Consulting with the Person Making the Request**

When an individual requests an accessible format or communication support, organizations are required to consult with the person to determine their accessibility needs. Consultation is important to make sure the appropriate support is provided, for example not all persons who are blind use Braille.

Once this is established, the regulation gives organizations the flexibility to decide on the most appropriate accessible format or communication supports, given the needs of the person and the organizations' capability to deliver.

Example: A customer with a visual disability is unable to read a small retail store's written return policy. The store is required to work with the customer to determine an acceptable way of providing this information, based on the individual's needs and the capacity of the store to deliver certain formats and supports. In this situation, it may be acceptable for a store clerk to read out the store's return policy to the customer with a visual disability.

### **Unconvertible Information**

Some forms of information may be difficult or impossible to convert into an accessible format. For example, the visual information in an x-ray or architectural blue-print may be lost in the conversion processes, or an organization may not have access to the technologies that convert documents into accessible formats.

Organizations will need to determine, in consultation with the person requesting the information or communications, if it is possible to provide it in an accessible format or with appropriate communication supports.

If an organization determines they are unable to convert the information or communications into an accessible format, they will need to explain to the person why they are unable to do so and provide a summary of the content.

Example: A customer with a disability has requested that a document containing complex charts is provided in an accessible format. The organization can



convert the text in the document into an accessible format and provide it to the person; however they are unable to convert the information contained in the charts. The organization must let the person know why the charts couldn't be converted into an accessible format and then provide a summary of the information in the charts.

### **Meeting Requests in a Timely Manner**

Organizations are not required to have all types of formats or supports on hand or in stock. However, organizations must provide formats and supports in a timely manner.

In some cases, organizations will be able to provide the information or communications quickly. In other cases organizations may need more time for a variety of reasons, such as the availability of the format requested, the complexity and amount of information being provided, and the resources and internal capacity of the organization.

The regulation does not specify how quickly an organization should provide accessible formats or communication supports; however being prepared, where possible, will better enable organizations to respond to requests. Organizations have the flexibility to determine "timely manner" based on their ability to deliver the requested accessible format or communication support.

For example, when organizations have documents available in accessible electronic formats such as HTML or MS Word, it is easier to convert these documents to other formats such as Braille. These accessible electronic formats are also compatible with screen reading software. This means organizations can likely respond to requests quickly by emailing the documents to individuals with disabilities to use with their own assistive technology.

### **Providing Information at No Additional Cost**

If an organization charges the public fees for the documents, it cannot charge higher fees for the same documents provided in accessible formats. Similarly, if an organization does not charge fees for documents, then it cannot charge fees for accessible formats of the documents.

### **Public Notification**

Organizations are required to notify the public about the availability of accessible formats and communication supports. The information can be posted on their premises, such as on bulletin boards in public areas, on their website, or through other reasonable methods.



## Section 13

### Emergency Procedures, Plans or Public Safety Information

#### Requirement as Stated in the Regulation

13(1) In addition to its obligations under section 12, if an obligated organization prepares emergency procedures, plans or public safety information and makes the information available to the public, the obligated organization shall provide the information in an accessible format or with appropriate communication supports, as soon as practicable, upon request.

(2) Obligated organizations that prepare emergency procedures, plans or public safety information and make the information available to the public shall meet the requirements of this section by January 1, 2012.

#### **Intent of this Requirement**

The intent of this requirement is that publicly available emergency and public safety information is provided in an accessible format or with appropriate communication supports, on request.

Organizations are not required to develop or create new emergency or public safety information. Further, organizations are not required to convert this information into accessible formats or provide communication supports if they do not share the information publicly. Some organizations have confidential internal plans, such as those for security lockdowns that are not shared publicly.

However, organizations may have requirements under the Accessible Employment Standard to provide individualized emergency information to its employees. For more detailed information, go to the Employment Standard, [Section 27 “Workplace Emergency Response Information”](#).

**Table 3 - When do Organizations have to Comply**

<b>Affected Organizations</b>	<b>Compliance Dates</b>
Government of Ontario and Legislative Assembly	January 1, 2012
Designated public sector organizations with 50+ employees	January 1, 2012
Designated public sector organizations with 1-49	January 1, 2012



Affected Organizations	Compliance Dates
employees	
Private and not-for-profit organizations with 50+ employees	January 1, 2012
Private and not-for-profit organizations with 1-49 employees	January 1, 2012

This requirement applies to all organizations that prepare public emergency procedures, plans or public safety information and that make them available to the public.

### **Implementing this Requirement**

Providing emergency and public safety plans in accessible formats or with communications supports, should enable people with disabilities to be prepared in case there is an emergency situation.

### **What is Emergency and Public Safety Information?**

Prepared emergency and public safety information refers to the emergency plans and procedures that organizations develop before an emergency occurs.

This may include evacuation procedures and floor plans, information about alarms or information about other incidents that may threaten life, property, operations or the environment.

It does not include real-time emergency or real-time public safety information, e.g., a fire evacuation, or an emergency at a large public gathering.

Note: The Fire Code, a regulation made under the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, requires that evacuation procedures include provisions for people requiring assistance.

### **What is “As Soon As Practicable?”**

As soon as practicable means as soon as possible given all of the circumstances after a person with a disability asks for the information in an accessible format or with communication supports.

Although organizations are not required to have accessible formats on hand, they should recognize the critical nature of emergency and public safety information.



Some people with a disability may need more time to plan for emergency situations; organizations should respond promptly to requests for this type of information.

For example: When booking rooms at a hotel, several individuals with disabilities ask for its fire evacuation procedures in accessible formats. The hotel consults with these individuals to learn what they need and provides the information when they arrive at the hotel. By doing so, the hotel gives its guests with disabilities the information in a timely manner and in formats that allow them to understand the evacuation procedures.

When providing emergency and public safety information in an accessible format or with appropriate communication supports, organizations are required to meet the requirements of the Information and Communications Standard, Section 12 “Accessible Formats and Communications Supports”.

For more information on accessible formats and communication supports, please go to the [Glossary](#), which gives a general description. For more detailed information go to Information and Communications Standard, [Section 12 “Accessible Formats and Communications Supports”](#).

### **Current Practices for Emergency Plans**

Many organizations are legally required to share prepared emergency and public safety information with the public.

For example, the Fire Code requires some property owners to post their procedures for fire related emergencies in public places. These procedures are based on the types of buildings and the number of occupants permitted in them.

Many public sector organizations are required, under the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act, to have publicly shared emergency plans for a variety of events such as outbreaks of influenza and severe weather such as tornadoes and ice storms.

In some situations, organizations may not be legally required to share emergency and/or public safety information with the public but may choose to do so. For example, organizations may develop and implement emergency plans for blackouts and share the information with their customers or clients. Others may prepare emergency plans for chemical spills or natural disasters, such as earthquakes or floods.

Furthermore, the role of some organizations includes sharing public safety information. Police and fire departments share strategies for public safety and fire



prevention with members of their communities. Similarly, medical offices often share public health information with patients.



## Section 14

### Accessible Websites and Web Content

#### Requirement as Stated in the Regulation

14(1) The Government of Ontario and the Legislative Assembly shall make their internet and intranet websites and web content conform with the World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0, at Level AA, and shall do so in accordance with the schedule set out in this section.

(2) Designated public sector organizations and large organizations shall make their internet websites and web content conform with the World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0, initially at Level A and increasing to Level AA, and shall do so in accordance with the schedule set out in this section.

(3) The Government of Ontario and the Legislative Assembly, for both their internet and intranet sites, shall meet the requirements in this section in accordance with the following schedule:

By January 1, 2012, new internet and intranet websites and web content on those sites must conform with WCAG 2.0 Level AA, other than,

- i. success criteria 1.2.4 Captions (Live), and
- ii. success criteria 1.2.5 Audio Descriptions (Pre-recorded).

By January 1, 2016, all internet websites and web content must conform with WCAG 2.0 Level AA other than,

- i. success criteria 1.2.4 Captions (Live), and
- ii. success criteria 1.2.5 Audio Descriptions (Pre-recorded).

By January 1, 2020, all internet and intranet websites and web content must conform with WCAG 2.0 Level AA.

(4) Designated public sector organizations and large organizations for their internet websites shall meet the requirements of this section in accordance with the following schedule:

1. By January 1, 2014, new internet websites and web content on those sites must conform with WCAG 2.0 Level A.



2. By January 1, 2021, all internet websites and web content must conform with WCAG 2.0 Level AA, other than,
  - i. success criteria 1.2.4 Captions (Live), and
  - ii. success criteria 1.2.5 Audio Descriptions (Pre-recorded).

(5) Except where meeting the requirement is not practicable, this section applies, to websites and web content, including web-based applications, that an organization controls directly or through a contractual relationship that allows for modification of the product; and

to web content published on a website after January 1, 2012.

(6) In determining whether meeting the requirements of this section is not practicable, organizations referenced in subsections (1) and (2) may consider, among other things,

a) the availability of commercial software or tools or both; and

b) significant impact on an implementation timeline that is planned or initiated before January 1, 2012.

(7) In this section,

“extranet website” means a controlled extension of the intranet, or internal network of an organization to outside users over the Internet; (“French”)

“internet website” means a collection of related web pages, images, videos or other digital assets that are addressed relative to a common Uniform Resource Identifier (URI) and is accessible to the public; (“French”)

“intranet website” means an organization’s internal website that is used to privately and securely share any part of the organization’s information or operational systems within the organization and includes extranet websites; (“French”)

“new internet website” means either a website with a new domain name or a website with an existing domain name undergoing a significant refresh; (“French”)

“new intranet website” means either an intranet website with a new domain name or an intranet website with an existing domain name undergoing a significant refresh; (“French”)



“Web Content Accessibility Guidelines” means the World Wide Web Consortium Recommendation, dated December 2008, entitled “Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0”; (“French”)

“web page” means a non-embedded resource obtained from a single Uniform Resource Identifier (URI) using Hypertext Transfer Protocol (HTTP) and any other resources that are used in the rendering or intended to be rendered together with it by a user agent. (“French”)

### Intent of this Requirement

The intent of this requirement is that the Government of Ontario, the Legislative Assembly, designated public sector organizations, as well as private and not-for-profit organizations with more than 50 employees make their websites accessible to people with disabilities by conforming to international standards for website accessibility.

**Table 4 - When do Organizations have to Comply**

Affected Organizations	Compliance Dates
Private and not-for profit organizations with 49 or fewer employees do not have obligations under this requirement.	<b>January 1, 2012</b> New internet and intranet websites and web content on those sites must conform with WCAG 2.0 Level AA other than,
Government of Ontario and Legislative Assembly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• success criteria 1.2.4 Captions (Live)</li><li>• success criteria 1.2.5 Audio Descriptions (Pre-recorded).</li></ul>



### Affected Organizations

Private and not-for profit organizations with 49 or fewer employees do not have obligations under this requirement.

Government of Ontario and Legislative Assembly

Designated public sector organizations, as well as private and not-for-profit organizations with 50+ employees

### Compliance Dates

#### January 1, 2012

New internet and intranet websites and web content on those sites must conform with WCAG 2.0 Level AA other than,

- success criteria 1.2.4 Captions (Live)
- success criteria 1.2.5 Audio Descriptions (Pre-recorded).

#### January 1, 2016

All internet websites and web content must conform with WCAG 2.0 Level AA other than,

- success criteria 1.2.4 Captions (Live)
- success criteria 1.2.5 Audio Descriptions (Pre-recorded).

#### January 1, 2020

All internet and intranet websites and web content must conform with WCAG 2.0 Level AA.

#### January 1, 2014

New internet websites and web content on those sites must conform with WCAG 2.0 Level A.

#### January 1, 2021

All internet websites and web content



### Affected Organizations

Private and not-for profit organizations with 49 or fewer employees do not have obligations under this requirement.

Government of Ontario and Legislative Assembly

### Compliance Dates

#### January 1, 2012

New internet and intranet websites and web content on those sites must conform with WCAG 2.0 Level AA other than,

- success criteria 1.2.4 Captions (Live)
- success criteria 1.2.5 Audio Descriptions (Pre-recorded).

must conform with WCAG 2.0 Level AA, other than,

- success criteria 1.2.4 Captions (Live)
- success criteria 1.2.5 Audio Descriptions (Pre-recorded).

### Implementing the Requirement

All obligated organizations' websites, and the content on those websites, must conform with WCAG 2.0. This requirement applies to new websites first, and then over the next several years to all websites.

Many organizations control their websites and web content, including web-based applications, either directly or through a contractual relationship. That is, they may develop a website and web content in house or they may hire a consultant. In both cases, the organization has control of the functionality and the appearance of the website, as well as its content. Therefore, the organization has the responsibility and ability to incorporate accessibility.

### Terminology

Understanding the terminology is the first step to implementing this requirement successfully.



Organizations should refer to the definitions in [Section 14 \(7\)](#) in the Regulation for more information.

The following is an easy reference list of definitions for other key terms used in this section of the regulation.

### **What is WCAG?**

[Web Content Accessibility Guidelines \(WCAG\) 2.0](#) is an international standard for making websites and web content accessible to a broader range of users with disabilities.

WCAG was developed by a team of experts from around the world. The first version, WCAG 1.0, was released in 1999. WCAG 2.0 was released in 2008.

### **What does Level A and Level AA mean?**

WCAG 2.0 Level A and Level AA refer to a series of technical checkpoints that make websites and their content increasingly accessible to a broader range of users with disabilities.

Level AA builds on Level A's checkpoints.

### **What does new website and content mean?**

A new website refers to a site with a new domain name — a brand new web address. The term does not refer to a new page or new link on an existing site.

The term also refers to a site with an existing domain name that is undergoing a significant “refresh”. There is not an industry standard definition for significant refresh. In this context, “significant refresh” could include, but is not limited to, the following elements:

- a new look and feel to the website
- a change in how users navigate around it
- a major update and change to the content of the website.

Content may include any information that may be found on a web page or web application, including text, images, forms and sounds.

### **What does practicable mean?**

Organizations are required to meet their WCAG 2.0 requirements, unless it is not practicable to do so.

Under this requirement, practicability refers to the organization's ability given all of the circumstances to modify their websites and web content.



Section 14(6) of the regulation states that when organizations are determining whether meeting the requirement is practicable, they may consider the following factors, among others:

- the availability of commercial software or tools
- the affect that the deadline would have on the implementation timelines for projects that were planned or initiated before January 1, 2012.

Additionally, transactional applications may have significant refreshes that are on a different cycle than the rest of the website. Organizations may take this into account when considering what is practicable.

#### **Website Information Posted Prior to 2012**

Content published on a website before January 1, 2012 is not required to be compliant with WCAG 2.0. However, people with disabilities can still request information to be provided in an accessible format under the [Section 12, “Accessible Formats and Communication Supports”](#).

#### **Website Information Posted After 2012**

Web content, including documents such as Word and PDFs, posted after January 1, 2012 will need to be accessible as per the regulation.

#### **Availability of Commercial Software and Tools**

Some organizations may have used software, web applications and other tools that pre-date WCAG 2.0 to develop their websites and web content. These tools may have varying ability to create websites and web content that will conform with WCAG 2.0 requirements. As a result, organizations have until 2021 to comply as this will allow them to take advantage of emerging software, web applications and tools to make existing websites and web content accessible.

#### **Technological Capability**

Some organizations may be limited by technological capability. For example, there may be technological software limitations in making online maps and complex diagrams accessible to people with visual disabilities. In such cases, an accessible alternate version can be provided if requested.

#### **Projects Planned Prior to January 1, 2012**

In determining practicability, the regulation allows organizations to consider projects planned before January 1, 2012 that may be significantly affected by implementing WCAG 2.0 requirements.

However, once updated, websites and web content would need to meet the WCAG 2.0 compliance dates set out in the regulation.



Some of the WCAG 2.0 requirements can improve the accessibility of an application and would not significantly delay implementation. Organizations are required to think about and take reasonable steps to overcome barriers that people with disabilities might encounter when using their websites.

### **Staggered Timelines for Compliance**

The regulation has staggered timelines for designated public sector organizations, as well as private and not-for-profit organizations with 50 or more employees. These organizations must comply with WCAG 2.0, Level A and then with WCAG, 2.0 Level AA, excluding the requirements for live captioning and pre-recorded audio descriptions.

Staggered timelines allow organizations to build accessibility into their regular re-fresh cycles and to implement systematic approaches to increase their web accessibility and to meet the compliance dates. On average, organizations update their website every two or three years; the timelines will allow two or three opportunities for organizations to build accessibility into their regular website update.

By planning for accessibility in advance, organizations may be able to reduce their costs as well as to improve web-based experiences for people with disabilities.



## Section 15

### Educational and Training Resources and Materials

#### Requirement as Stated in the Regulation

15(1) Every obligated organization that is an educational or training institution shall do the following, if notification of need is given:

1. Provide educational or training resources or materials in an accessible format that takes into account the accessibility needs due to a disability of the person with a disability to whom the material is to be provided by,
  - i. procuring through purchase or obtaining by other means an accessible or conversion ready electronic format of educational or training resources or materials, where available, or
  - ii. arranging for the provision of a comparable resource in an accessible or conversion ready electronic format, if educational or training resources or materials cannot be procured, obtained by other means or converted into an accessible format.
2. Provide student records and information on program requirements, availability and descriptions in an accessible format to persons with disabilities.

(2) For purposes of this section and sections 16, 17 and 18, an obligated organization is an educational or training institution if it falls into one of the following categories:

1. It is governed by the Education Act or the Private Career Colleges Act, 2005.
2. It offers all or part of a post-secondary program leading to a degree pursuant to a consent granted under the Post-Secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act, 2000.
3. It is a designated public sector organization described in paragraph 3 or 4 of Schedule 1.
4. It is a public or private organization that provides courses or programs or both that result in the acquisition by students of a diploma or certificate named by the Minister of Education under paragraph 1 of subsection 8 (1) of the Education Act.
5. It is a private school within the meaning of the Education Act.



## Intent of the Requirement

The intent of this requirement is that all educational and training institutions, as defined in the Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulation, will provide students who have disabilities with the following in an accessible format:

- educational and training materials and/or resources
- student records
- course and program information.

For more detailed information, go to Information and Communications Standard, [Section 12, “Accessible Formats and Communication Supports”](#).

For more information on the definition of educational and training institutions, please go to Information and Communications Standard, [Section 15, “Educational and Training Resources and Materials”](#).

This requirement applies only to organizations that are educational or training institutions.

**Table 5 - When do Organizations have to Comply**

Affected Organizations	Compliance Dates
Designated public sector organizations with 50+ employees	January 1, 2013
Designated public sector organizations with 1-49 employees	January 1, 2015
Private and not-for-profit organizations with 50+ employees	January 1, 2013
Private and not-for-profit organizations with 1-49 employees	January 1, 2015

## Implementing the Requirement

### Notification of Need

Students can notify educational or training institutions of their need for information in accessible formats. In certain circumstances, parents or legal guardians can also notify the institutions.



It is important for educational and training institutions to be responsive once they know of a student's need and to work towards providing the appropriate accessible or conversion ready formats in a timely manner.

Educational and training institutions that use Individualized Education Plans (IEP), or similar plans, should indicate what types of formats and/or supports the student requires. This would be considered another form of notification of need. Similar plans dealing with the needs of students with disabilities may also constitute a notification of need.

### **Resources and Materials**

Institutions will need to provide materials or resources in accessible or conversion-ready formats that take into account the accessibility needs of the student, when notified. The institutions can buy this material in accessible or conversion ready formats, procure it by other means, or arrange for a comparable resource.

Ideally, institutions will be able to provide accessible or conversion-ready versions of the same materials and resources used in the classroom. When this is not possible, institutions are required to provide students with similar resources or materials that will, to the degree possible, allow for the same or a comparable learning opportunity.

Example: An accessible version of a globe for a person with a visual disability could be a tactile world map. Although a map is not the same resource as a globe, it would provide the student with a similar learning opportunity.

In many cases, the resources and materials used by educational and training institutions are developed and published by other organizations.

In such cases, the institutions do not have control over the content of the information or how it was published. Nevertheless, they are still required to provide all information used in the classroom to students who have disabilities in accessible or conversion-ready formats.

When it is not technically feasible to provide the information in an accessible or a conversion-ready format, the institution is required to provide a comparable resource. If an institution decides that the materials requested are unconvertible, then it must explain why and provide a summary of the information.

Example: An institution is asked to convert a medical textbook to an accessible format. Although converting the text poses no problem, the technology does not exist to convert the complex medical images. In this case, the institution is required to convert the text into an accessible or conversion-ready format, and where the images were found, to provide summaries or descriptions of them.



## Student Records and Program Information

When an educational or training institution is notified of an accessibility need, they are required to provide student records, program requirements, course descriptions, and information on the availability of courses in an accessible format. Institutions will need to be prepared for requests from current and former students, as well as potential students.

Educational and training institutions are required to work with the individual to determine which type of format will be provided. For example, a student with a visual disability may prefer accessible documents that can be used with their screen reader technology. In many cases, educational and training institutions will have the capacity in-house to provide this information in an accessible format.

There may be occasions when educational or training institutions are unable to create an accessible format of the student's records in-house. This may be because of the complexity of the record or the format requested. If an institution hires an external company to convert this information, then it should put in place measures to protect the privacy of the student's personal information.

For more information on:

- accessible formats
- conversion-ready formats
- the term unconvertible

please go to the [glossary](#), which gives a general description. For more detailed information, go to Information and Communication Standard, [Section 12, "Accessible Formats and Communication Supports"](#).



## Section 16

### Training to Educators

#### Requirement as Stated in the Regulation

16(1) In addition to the requirements under section 7, obligated organizations that are school boards or educational or training institutions shall provide educators with accessibility awareness training related to accessible program or course delivery and instruction.

(2) Obligated organizations that are school boards or educational or training institutions shall keep a record of the training provided under this section, including the dates on which the training is provided and the number of individuals to whom it is provided.

#### **Intent of this Requirement**

The intent of this requirement is that educators receive accessibility awareness training so they can create inclusive environments in their classrooms and increase the opportunities for learning for students with disabilities.

**Table 6 - When do Organizations have to comply**

<b>Affected Organizations</b>	<b>Compliance Dates</b>
Designated public sector organizations with 50+ employees	January 1, 2013
Designated public sector organizations with 1-49 employees	January 1, 2015
Private and not-for-profit organizations with 50+ employees	January 1, 2013
Private and not-for-profit organizations with 1-49 employees	January 1, 2015

This requirement only applies to organizations that are school boards or educational or training institutions.



For more information of the definition of educational and training institutions, please go to Information and Communications, [Section 15, “Educational and Training Resources and Materials”](#).

## **Implementing the Requirement**

School boards as well as education and training institutions are required to provide training to their educators. In the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation, the term ‘educator’ refers to any employee who is involved in designing, delivering or instructing courses. This includes teaching assistants, educational assistants, early childhood educators, and staff of school boards.

The requirement does not apply to parents who volunteer, students working in job placements, or other individuals who participate in classroom activities or act in a role of educator. However, when these persons are acting in an educator role, it may be helpful if the classroom educators passed on what they had learned during their accessibility training.

For example: A student teacher is developing a lesson plan. The classroom teacher can work with the student teacher to address the accessibility needs of students with disabilities in the plan.

## **Accessibility Awareness Training**

The purpose of the training is to increase educators’ awareness of accessibility needs in program or course delivery and instruction. Increasing accessibility in classrooms is important for student success and involvement.

Aspects of accessibility awareness training may include:

- different types of disabilities
- needs often associated with different types of disabilities
- barriers students with disabilities encounter in schools
- techniques that improve the learning environment for students with disabilities.

The training should encourage educators to consider a variety of learning resources and materials when developing their lesson plans and choosing their resources or materials.

Examples:

- Before using movies in classes, educators should consider if there are any students who are hard of hearing or deaf. If the movie has closed-captioning,



then it may be suitable to use. When movies are not accessible to all of the students, the educators should consider other resources.

- A student with a physical disability may not be able to participate in the dissection component of a biology class. The school could provide the student with a virtual program that would allow for a similar learning opportunity.

The regulation does not state how the accessibility awareness training should be provided. It is up to the institutions or school boards to decide on the best training methods for their educators. For example, it could be part of a larger training program, or it could be an individual course completed independently by educators. School boards or institutions could offer the training using handouts, on-line learning modules, or one-day workshops.

### **Training Record**

School boards and education and training institutions will need to keep records of the training. They must include the dates on which the training took place and the number of individuals who attended.

### **Relationship with General Training Requirement**

School boards and educational and training institutions still have to comply with the training requirements set out in Part 1 General Requirements, [Section 7, “Training”](#).



## Section 17

### Producers of Educational or Training Material

#### Requirement as Stated in the Regulation

17(1) Every obligated organization that is a producer of educational or training textbooks for educational or training institutions shall upon request, make accessible or conversion ready versions of the textbooks available to the institutions.

(2) Every obligated organization that is a producer of print-based educational or training supplementary learning resources for educational or training institutions shall upon request, make accessible or conversion ready versions of the printed materials available to the institutions

#### **Intent of this Requirement**

The intent of this requirement is that producers of textbooks and print-based supplementary educational and training resources provide educational and training institutions with accessible or conversion-ready versions of these materials, when requested.

If producers make textbooks and print-based supplementary resources available in accessible and conversion-ready formats, then institutions will be able to provide them to students with disabilities in a timely manner.

**Table 7 - When do Organizations have to Comply**

<b>Affected Organizations</b>	<b>Compliance Dates</b>
All organizations that produce textbooks	January 1, 2015
All organizations that produce printed educational or training supplementary learning resources	January 1, 2020

#### **Implementing the Requirement**

In the context of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation, producers are organizations that provide textbooks and other print-based supplementary learning resources to educational and training institutions. In Ontario, universities, university presses, private publishing companies, and school



boards, among others, produce these materials.

For more information of the definition of educational and training institutions, please go to Information and Communications Standard, [Section 15](#), [“Educational and Training Resources and Materials”](#).

### **Unconvertible Information**

In some cases, producers may be unable to convert part of the information in a textbook or supplementary learning resource to an accessible or conversion-ready format. If this happens, then the producer must explain the reason why and provide a summary of the information.

Example: A producer is asked to convert a medical textbook into an accessible format. Although converting the text poses no problem, the technology does not exist to convert the complex medical images. In this case, the producer is required to convert the text into an accessible or conversion-ready format, and where the images were found, to provide summaries or descriptions of them.

Producers should notify the requesting institution of any limitations that would slow them down or prevent them from providing conversion-ready or accessible formats. For example, the producer might not be able to convert a textbook because the organization does not control the content. If this happens, then the educational and training institutions are required to provide students with comparable learning resources or materials.

For more information on:

- accessible formats
- conversion-ready formats
- the term unconvertible

please go to the [glossary](#), which gives a general description. For more detailed information, go to Information and Communication Standard, [Section 12](#), [“Accessible Formats and Communication Supports”](#).



## Section 18

### Libraries of Educational and Training Institutions

#### Requirement as Stated in the Regulation

18(1) Subject to subsection (2) and where available, the libraries of educational and training institutions that are obligated organizations shall provide, procure or acquire by other means an accessible or conversion ready format of print, digital or multimedia resources or materials for a person with a disability, upon request.

(2) Special collections, archival materials, rare books and donations are exempt from the requirements of subsection (1).

#### **Intent of this Requirement**

The intent of this requirement is that, on request, libraries of educational and training institutions will provide accessible or conversion-ready formats of library materials when they are available. This requirement does not include rare books, special collections, archived materials, and donated books and other donated materials.

For more information about the definition of educational and training institutions, please go to Information and Communications Standard, [Section 15, “Educational and Training Resources and Materials”](#).

**Table 8 - When do Organizations have to Comply**

Affected Organizations	Compliance Dates
Libraries of educational and training institutions	<b>January 1, 2015</b> print resources and materials
	<b>January 1, 2020</b> digital or multimedia resources or materials



## Implementing the Requirement

When requested, and where available, libraries of educational and training institutions are required to provide accessible or conversion-ready formats of print, digital or multimedia resources or materials to students with disabilities.

Print resources can include, but are not limited to, books, magazines, posters, journals, newspapers and newspaper articles. Digital or multimedia resources are usually a combination of text and audio and include, but are not limited to, materials such as films, videos, CD-ROMS and DVDs.

Under the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation educational and training libraries are not required to provide accessible or conversion-ready formats of their special collections, archival materials, rare books and books or other materials that have been donated. However, these organizations do have requirements to accommodate students with disabilities under the [Ontario Human Rights Code](#).

## Availability of Information

Even if they do not control the information, libraries of educational and training institutions are required to provide accessible or conversion-ready formats of resources and materials, where available. In some cases, the libraries may need to take additional steps to find the requested materials in accessible or conversion ready formats including contacting the publishers or asking for inter-library loans.

Example: A college library in a small city does not have a 19<sup>th</sup> century novel written in another language in an accessible or conversion-ready format. However, after a search, the librarians discover that a university library in another city does have the novel in a conversion-ready format, and they put in a request for an inter-library loan.

## Unconvertible Information

There may be times when a library is unable to provide the material in accessible or conversion ready formats. If a library learns that the requested materials or resources are unconvertible, then it needs to explain the reason why and provide a summary of the information. The summary must take into account the accessibility needs of the person who made the request.

Example: A student who has a visual disability has requested a book on the history of art. After an extensive search, the librarians conclude that they cannot obtain the whole book in an accessible or conversion ready format. They can provide the student with an accessible version of the text; however it does not contain the images. In this case, the library is required to explain the reason why



and to provide the student with a summary of the images which could include the artists' names and time periods or a general description of the images.

For more information on conversion-ready formats and accessible formats, please go to the [glossary](#), which gives a general description. For more detailed information, go to the Information and Communication Standard, [Section 12, "Accessible Formats and Communication Supports"](#).



## Section 19

### Public Libraries

#### Requirement as Stated in the Regulation

19. (1) Every obligated organization that is a library board shall provide access to or arrange for the provision of access to accessible materials where they exist.

(2) Obligated organizations that are library boards shall make information about the availability of accessible materials publicly available and shall provide the information in accessible format or with appropriate communication supports, upon request.

(3) Obligated organizations that are library boards may provide accessible formats for archival materials, special collections, rare books and donations.

(4) Obligated organizations that are library boards shall meet the requirements of this section by January 1, 2013

(5) For the purposes of this section library board means a board as defined in the Public Libraries Act, a public library service established under the Northern Services Board Act or a county library established under the County of Lambton Act, 1944, being Chapter Pr31 of the Statutes of Ontario 1994, the County of Elgin Act, 1985, being chapter Pr16 of the Statutes of Ontario, 1985 of the County of Lennox and Addington Act, 1978, being chapter 126 of the Statutes of Ontario, 1978.

#### **Intent of this Requirement**

The intent of this requirement is that, when requested, public libraries provide access to accessible library materials, where they exist.

#### **When do Organizations have to Comply**

All public library boards, as [defined in the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation](#), are required to meet this requirement by January 1, 2013.

In the context of this requirement, “accessible materials” includes all works of literary, musical, artistic, dramatic nature, in accessible formats such as, but not limited to, print, electronic, video, DVD, audio, braille, etc.

Library boards are required to provide access to, or arrange for access to, accessible materials where they exist. Under the Public Libraries Act, library



boards are already accountable to their community in terms of provision of service, including access to works in the collection.

Some library boards will have extensive collections of accessible materials, while other library systems may have smaller collections. In some cases, library systems may want to consider using document-sharing systems such as the inter-library loan system in Ontario to provide accessible materials to their users.

When [procuring](#) new library materials, library boards are required to consider the accessibility needs of their users so that their collections are accessible to the widest range of people.

### **Special Collections, Rare Books and Archival Materials**

If possible, libraries may provide archival material, rare books and special collections in accessible formats.

Rare books, special collections and archival materials in public libraries are usually kept apart from the circulating collection. They may require special handling and treatment for conservation purposes, and may be in fragile condition and/or may be original works. The technology may not be available to convert some of these documents into accessible formats without damaging the documents or losing their meaning. In this case, libraries may choose to make the works accessible, if possible (e.g. technological solutions, or photocopying).

### **Notification**

Library boards are required to tell the public about the availability of accessible materials within their library systems.

For example, the boards may choose to tell the public by posting the information on their websites, or on bulletin boards in their libraries, or in the boards' publications that list events, classes and courses at the libraries.

When notifying the public, libraries may choose to explain what materials are available within the community's public library system, including identifying accessible materials in the library's on-line catalogue or what materials are available through the inter-library loan system. Library boards may also want to mention how long inter-library loans can take. They may also describe other materials that are available in accessible formats, e.g., information on community events.

Library boards are required to make sure that when they notify the public about the availability of accessible materials, they do so in accessible formats or with the appropriate communication supports, when requested.



This notification requirement only applies to information and communications that the library boards control directly or indirectly through a contractual relationship. This information includes pamphlets, newsletters, public library reports, etc.

For more information on accessible formats and communication supports please go to the [glossary](#), which gives a general description. For more detailed information, go to Information and Communication Standard, [Section 12](#), "[Accessible Formats and Communication Supports](#)".