

WorkSafeBC

Accessibility Plan

Progress Report: September 1, 2023 to August 31, 2024



September 2024

WORK SAFE BC

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Territorial Acknowledgement

We acknowledge and respect the Indigenous communities on whose territories our employees work and live. WorkSafeBC recognizes Indigenous Peoples as the original inhabitants and traditional stewards and caretakers of these lands and aims to build meaningful relationships with First Nations and Indigenous Peoples.

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About the Interim Progress Report

This report is the first of three annual updates on the WorkSafeBC Accessibility Plan 2023–2026. As part of our commitment to accessibility, this report highlights barriers that have been identified and outlines our plans to address or mitigate these barriers.

To learn more about our guiding principles, framework, and approach to accessibility, please review our [three-year Accessibility Plan](#), published in September 2023.

What we've heard

Barriers that have been identified

From September 1, 2023, to June 14, 2024, we received **48** reports of accessibility barriers, including:

- **39** barriers identified by our Accessibility Committee
- **3** barriers emailed to accessibility@worksafebc.com
- **6** barriers from our [online feedback mechanism](#)

All barriers are centrally recorded and shared with our Accessibility Committee to gather input on mitigating or addressing the barriers. The barriers are also shared with our Leadership Working Group to identify the department and people responsible for responding to or addressing the barriers. Details about these two groups are covered in the next section: What we've done.

Types of barriers

We categorized barriers based on descriptions in the *Accessible BC Act*:

1. **Systemic.** An organization's policies, practices, or procedures result in exclusion of people with disabilities. This can look like not providing sign language interpreters or requiring unnecessary certifications for jobs.
2. **Physical.** Obstacles in a built environment that make access difficult, such as inaccessible spaces or restrooms without automatic doors.

3. **Technology.** When technology can't be accessed by people with disabilities, such as websites, documents, or databases that are not accessible for screen readers.
4. **Information or communication.** When people with disabilities are excluded because they use other ways to communicate. For example, not providing large-print versions of material, or creating videos, events, or meetings without closed captions.
5. **Attitudinal.** Barriers from false assumptions about disabilities, like not involving people with disabilities in decisions or doubting their abilities.
6. **Sensory.** When sensory information such as lights, sounds, and smells prevent participation in the environment.

Of the 48 submissions there were:

- **14 systemic barriers**
 - These barriers focused on opportunities to improve processes within recruitment, the accommodation process and policy, and the onboarding and training of new hires.
- **9 physical barriers**
 - Most reports were about the accessibility of meeting and interview rooms in various offices.
 - Three reports were about the accessibility of workstations and offices.
 - Other reports highlighted very specific issues, e.g., recommendation for an automatic-door button where there isn't one.

- **8 technology barriers**

- Most of these barriers focused on the accessibility of our internal platforms and assistive technology such as screen readers and dictation software.

- **5 information and communication barriers**

- Four barriers revolved around meeting practices and presentations (e.g., accessible slides, speaking slowly, overloading information).
- One report was about using inclusive and plain language in our internal communications.

- **4 attitudinal barriers**

- These barriers were associated with reports of colleagues and managers who lacked awareness about how to support employees with disabilities.

- **4 sensory barriers**

- These reports centered around scents, office lighting, and the playing of loud music during virtual-meeting breaks and introductions.

- **4 uncategorized barriers**

- 4 comments were feedback on individual accommodations that could not be categorized in these barrier groups.

What we've done

How we've delivered on our priorities so far

Our inaugural WorkSafeBC [Accessibility Plan](#) outlines our commitments to accessibility. This section outlines how we have acted on the plan so far.

Accessibility Leaders Working Group

To support the implementation of our plan, we created the Accessibility Leaders Working Group, which includes representation from Facilities, Information Technology, Communications, Talent Acquisition, Psychological Health & Safety, and Equity Diversity & Inclusion.

The working group is responsible for:

- Bringing together key leaders in the organization to collaborate on enhancing accessibility in their operational areas.
- Reviewing barriers and determining actions to address them.
- Developing tailored accessibility-related plans and initiatives within their departments.

Accessibility Committee

In 2023, our disabilities-focused employee resource group became our interim Accessibility Committee. The committee meets quarterly to review new reports of barriers, make recommendations on removal, and provide input on our progress. The majority of our committee members have lived experience with a

variety of disabilities or are individuals who support persons with disabilities. Since the launch of our Accessibility Plan:

- Two new members have joined the committee:
 - Senior manager, Indigenous Relations
 - Representative from our Joint Equity Diversity Inclusion Committee
- Members of the committee participated in a barrier identification exercise in November 2023:
 - Members shared the barriers they've observed or experienced at WorkSafeBC and their impact on a person with a disability.
 - All barriers identified were brought to the Accessibility Leaders Working Group.

Pillar update: Organizational culture of inclusion and accessibility

Learning about equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI)

We continue to deliver education on equity, diversity, and inclusion:

- As of November 2023, all staff have completed EDI Foundations and all new hires are required to complete the course within their first six months at WorkSafeBC. Since launching the training, all 3,884 existing employees have completed EDI Foundations, including 139 new hires in 2024.

- Following a mandatory rollout to all directors and our executive team, we launched an EDI for Leaders course to all management as a professional-development option. To date, 175 management employees have taken EDI for Leaders.
- We partnered with the [Presidents Group of Accessible Employers](#) to launch two new e-modules on accessibility for staff. These modules look at:
 - How to support self-disclosure for people with disabilities.
 - How to lead culture change and evaluate the actions one can take to make the organization more inclusive and accessible.
- We also introduced Active Bystander Training to our professional development course catalogue. Participants learn to disrupt discriminatory behaviour and support those who experience exclusion. In 2024, we piloted the course and had three sessions with 55 participants.
- In partnership with Microsoft, we provided staff with on-demand, one-hour training on Microsoft Accessibility Solutions. The training covers how to customize Microsoft tools for hearing, sight, and neurodivergent needs. It includes setting up and using accessibility settings, creating accessible content, and best practices for inclusive presentations.

Role-specific training

We've provided the following tailored accessibility trainings facilitated by

Untapped Accessibility:

- Enterprise Development Operations, User Experience, and People Technology participated in core accessibility training and Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) training.

- Talent Acquisition, Business Engagement Services, and Communications participated in core accessibility training.

Building a culture of inclusion and accessibility through awareness

- We've developed an internal accessibility resource page on our intranet. This page houses all internal resources and supports related to accessibility, such as instructions on hosting accessible meetings and events, checklists for creating accessible documents and presentations, and instructions for requesting ergonomic support and individualized accommodation.
- Our disability employee resource group, Abilities Inclusion Evolution, held an internal awareness campaign on International Day of Persons with Disabilities in December 2023. We invited staff to learn more about accessibility at WorkSafeBC by highlighting our Accessibility Plan.
- Untapped Accessibility hosted a webinar in December 2023 on the importance and impact of the *Accessible British Columbia Act* on the disability community, organizations, and society.
- This May, we recognized National Accessibility Week. We highlighted WorkSafeBC's commitment to removing barriers and fostering greater inclusivity.
- In response to a report of strong scents in the workplace, our Scent-Free Workplace Policy was recommunicated to staff and all staff were reminded not to wear scents in the workplace.

Psychological health and safety

- We continue to deliver The Working Mind program, designed to promote mental health and reduce stigma around mental illness in the workplace. This training program is available to all staff.
- We've introduced a peer support group within our Alcohol and Drug Policy and Program. We trained the peer support group to act as a resource for employees with addiction issues.
- We delivered a seminar on mental health and addiction for all employees, led by a field expert in occupational and addiction medicine.

Pillar update: Employment

Recruitment

- We are exploring the modernization of our applicant tracking system (ATS) to foster a more accessible and supportive recruitment process for all candidates. Our goal is to create an inclusive experience by enhancing accessibility for applicants with disabilities and assistive technology users.
- We continue to improve our job testing requirements to ensure our pre-employment testing is inclusive and reduces bias and potential adverse effects. All team members involved in the process are participating in specialized training on accessibility throughout the employee lifecycle. This commitment reflects our dedication to fostering an equitable and supportive environment for all candidates.

What's next

Our plans for 2025 and 2026

These are new commitments we are working on, starting in September 2024.

Expanding the Accessibility Committee

- In the next year, we aim to expand the committee to include members of the larger WorkSafeBC community. The expansion of the committee will also seek to enhance representation to reflect the diversity of B.C.'s population.

Pillar update: Organizational culture of inclusion and accessibility

EDI role-specific training

- Our Talent Acquisition team will participate in additional accessibility training. This includes training on Accessibility for People Leaders, Accessibility in the Employee Life Cycle, and Plain Language training.
- Our Stakeholder Experience Marketing & Communications team will participate in a divisional training session on Engaging People with Disabilities.

Pillar update: Employment

Talent acquisition

- We are enhancing our communication to ensure candidates are aware of how to access accommodations from the outset of the recruitment process. By doing so, we aim to support candidates early on and ensure that reasonable

accommodations are provided to facilitate their recruitment journey. This proactive approach highlights our commitment to creating an inclusive and supportive environment for all applicants.

- We've started working with our online assessments vendor as they build compliance to WCAG 2.2.
- To respond to barriers in our pre-employment testing, we are implementing a strategy that focuses on reducing the number of touchpoints across the recruitment process.

New pillars

We created new pillars to support the barriers identified since our Plan was published in September 2023.

New Pillar: Information & Communication

Goals:

- Proactively integrate accessibility into our information resources and communications.
- Align communications with accessibility best practices.

Work to date and what to expect:

Our Experience, Communications, Marketing, and Insights (ECMI) department developed a robust departmental plan to proactively address accessibility in their operational areas. This proposed plan includes:

- A strategic plan implemented in three phases: raising awareness and building skills, conducting ongoing accessibility audits, and continuous learning and communication about progress.
- We updated our Microsoft Word and PowerPoint templates to ensure proper contrast, minimum font size, and appropriate headers. We also added tips for ensuring documents are accessible via screen readers; for example, by adding meaningful "alt text" for images and objects.
- We helped develop and implement email improvements to improve readability on a variety of devices. For example, we developed corporate email templates with user-friendly formatting for better readability.
- We added remediation into our production and publication process for PDFs, ensuring important online documents are accessible to those who use screen readers

New Pillar: Technology

Goals:

- Ensure availability of accessible tools and software, updating our systems to meet accessibility standards in technology.
- Eliminate barriers and empower employees with the technology they need to succeed.

Work to date and what to expect:

- Improved Microsoft Teams Room technology: Many meeting spaces are equipped with technology for hybrid meetings. This makes it easier for everyone to participate, whether they are attending in person or online.

- We've reminded managers to proactively arrange ergonomic assessments and order necessary equipment as soon as possible.
- To support new employees, we added information about accessibility resources and ergonomic requests in initial onboarding communications.
- We continue to update our internal Technology Support page with knowledge articles about accessibility. This includes a newly developed checklist for hiring managers with an accessibility lens.
- For ergonomic equipment with a long lead time, we provide loaner equipment to employees until orders are filled.
- We are committed to understanding how system updates can disrupt the functionality of our existing assistive technology and software.
- We are engaging with end users to better understand barriers to assistive technology, starting with our voice-dictation software that's been negatively impacted by technological updates.

New Pillar: Accessibility in Physical spaces

Goal:

- Continue to embed accessibility and universal design principles in planning, developing and upgrading our physical spaces.

Work to date and what to expect:

- Our buildings are built with accessibility in mind and adhere to the BC Codes to ensure barrier-free access to our entrances, washrooms, and parking spaces.

- We ensure employees who have specific needs, such as low lighting or sound reduction requirements, are accommodated and continue to receive support.
- We have included maps on our intranet site that share locations of accessible single-stall washrooms, sharp containers, and eye-wash stations for all offices at WorkSafeBC.
- We have intranet pages that highlight our ergonomics program as they relate to our workplaces.
- We ensure building materials are intentionally designed with accessibility in mind, such as our low-pile carpets that facilitate easier movement for wheelchair users.

How to provide feedback

We welcome your thoughts on our accessibility plan and any barriers you have seen or experienced when interacting with us.

Visit [this online form](#) for options to provide feedback on this plan and on accessibility at WorkSafeBC.

You can include photos and videos with your feedback.

All feedback will be summarized and shared with our Accessibility Committee and our leadership to inform our future accessibility planning.

Other requests:

- If you are a WorkSafeBC employee seeking accommodation in your work, please contact your manager or People & Culture partner.
- If you are a worker, employer, or member of the public, and wish to file a complaint about alleged unfairness in your dealings with WorkSafeBC, please contact the [Issue Resolution Office](#).