



**Ayr Farmers  
Mutual  
Insurance Company**

# Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

2014 – 2021

Reviewed and Updated  
January 15, 2018

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## **Statement of Commitment**

Ayr Farmers Mutual is committed to treating all people in a way that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence. We believe in integration and equal opportunity. We are committed to meeting the needs of people with disabilities in a timely manner, and will do so by preventing and removing barriers to accessibility and meeting accessibility requirements under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act.

## **Executive Summary**

This report has been prepared in order to meet the obligations of the Provincial accessibility legislation. It is the 2014-2021 Multi-year Accessibility Plan for Ayr Farmers Mutual Insurance Company and will be referred to as the AFMAP (Ayr Farmers Mutual Accessibility Plan) throughout this document.

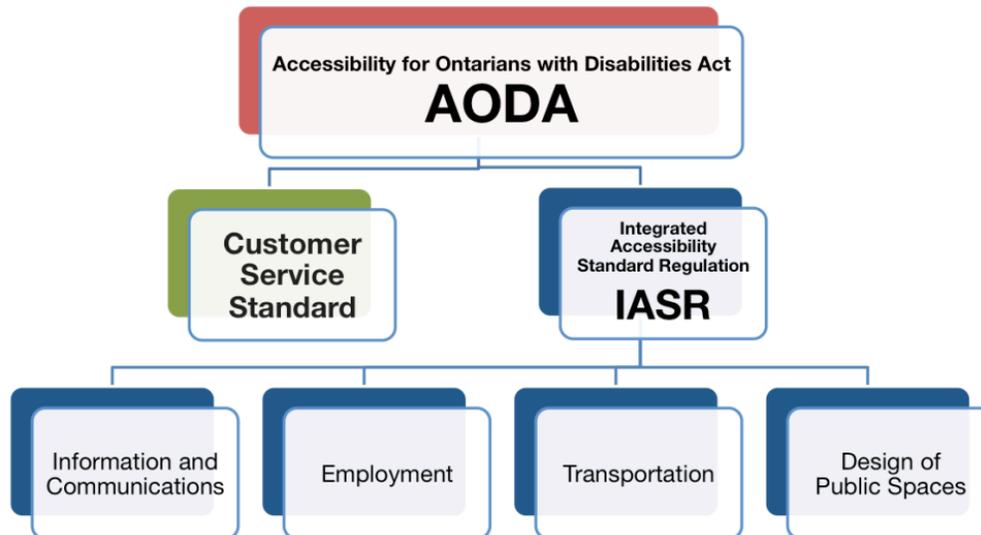
## **Introduction**

The AFMAP highlights accessibility initiatives that were undertaken since the Customer Service Standard was introduced as well as proposed initiatives for 2014 through to the end of 2021. The goal of the AFMAP is to identify practices, procedures, policies and other services that have been or are to be reviewed for compliance with required Provincial legislation.

## **Provincial Legislation**

### **Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 , S.O. 2005, c. 11**

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act is known as the “AODA”. It received Royal Assent in the Ontario Legislature in June 2005. The AODA focuses on improving accessibility in five key areas known as standards. These include customer service, communication, transportation, employment, and built environment. These standards affect the private, government and broader public sector equally.



The AODA recognizes that people with disabilities are a vibrant, important, and growing part of the Ontario population. By removing the barriers to participation that exist in Ontario, the AODA seeks to maximize both the inclusivity of our society and the value that people with disabilities contribute to our economy.

The goal of the AODA is:

- To achieve an accessible Ontario on or before January 1, 2025; and
- To establish and implement mandatory and enforceable accessibility standards to be achieved within five years or less; and

The AODA requires entities to create and update a multi-year accessibility plan outlining the practices and procedures to implement accessibility throughout the organization in a number of areas.

More information on the standards can be found on the Ministry of Community and Social Services website at

[http://www.mcscs.gov.on.ca/en/mcscs/programs/accessibility/understanding\\_accessibility/aoda.aspx](http://www.mcscs.gov.on.ca/en/mcscs/programs/accessibility/understanding_accessibility/aoda.aspx).

## Public Access to the AFMAP

Legislation requires that accessibility plans be made available to the public. The 2014-2021 Multi-year Accessibility Plan will be made available on the Ayr Farmers Mutual website at [www.ayrmutual.com](http://www.ayrmutual.com). It will also be provided to anyone upon request. Copies can also be requested in accessible formats and will be delivered in a timely manner.

## **Staff Contacts**

The following staff members co-ordinate and oversee AFM's accessibility efforts and may be contacted for additional information relating to the AFMAP.

### **Building Requirements**

Jeff Whiting  
President & CEO  
(519) 632-7414, Ext. 206

### **Information Requirements**

Tim Kerr  
Chief Information Officer  
(519) 632-7414, Ext. 229

### **Communication Requirements**

Jeff Holmes  
Manager of Marketing &  
Distribution  
(519) 632-7414, Ext. 239

### **Employment Standard**

Angela Johnston  
Manager of HR Services  
(519) 632-7414, Ext. 230

## **Report on Previous Activities**

### **Accessibility Policy**

Every obligated organization shall develop, implement and maintain policies governing how the organization achieves or will achieve accessibility through meeting its requirements under the accessibility standards.

### **Corporate Communications - Alternate Formats**

As required by the AODA, information is provided in alternative formats upon request. When the Company is unable to produce a document in an accessible format, a staff member of AFM will act as a communication support at no additional cost.

### **Accessible Emergency Information**

AFM will provide employees with disabilities with individualized emergency response information when necessary. AFM's Individualized Workplace Emergency Response process was created in 2012 and was reviewed in 2013 to ensure its accuracy and integrity of process.

New staff members are provided the opportunity to request an Individualized Emergency Response plan during the orientation process.

### **Website Accessibility**

The Company's website conforms to WCAG 2.0 Level AA (excluding live captioning and audio description).

### **Accessible Parking**

AFM maintains accessible parking spaces at its facility. These spots are located closest to the building and are repainted on an annual basis to ensure maximum visibility.

### **Accessible Building Features**

Automatic door openers are available on the doors in the main entrance. Barrier Free washrooms are located on both levels of our building and a lift is available to the upper floor. In the future, if building renovations were to be considered, a second accessible emergency exit would be planned for the West entrance of the building.

## **Staff Awareness Training**

Accessible customer service is not about ramps or automatic door openers. It's about understanding that people with disabilities may have different needs. It can be as easy as asking "How can I help?" and making small changes to how you serve customers with disabilities.

All new staff members continue to complete AODA Accessible Customer Service training that provides a Certificate of Completion once the training successfully concludes.

A copy of the AFM Accessibility Policy is located in the Employee Manual, on the website and is reviewed as part of employee orientation.

## **Design of Public Spaces**

AFM will meet the Accessibility Standards for the Design of Public Spaces when building or making major modifications to public spaces. Public spaces include:

1. Recreational trails/beach access routes
2. Outdoor public eating areas like rest stops or picnic areas
3. Outdoor play spaces, like playgrounds in provincial parks and local communities
4. Outdoor paths of travel, like sidewalks, ramps, stairs, curb ramps, rest areas and accessible pedestrian signals
5. Accessible off street parking
6. Service-related elements like service counters, fixed queuing lines and waiting areas

## **Identification of Accessibility Barriers**

In preparation in the creation of the AFMAP, AFM conducted an accessibility assessment which represents the first step of our multi-year accessibility plan. The assessment is designed to identify any existing barriers and will help determine the specific steps the organization needs to take to increase accessibility and how it can reach the goals in its accessibility policy.

The accessibility assessment considered:

- building design;
- information and communication;
- inclusive work environment;
- recruitment and selection practices;

- the accommodation and return to work process;
- employee retention; and
- individual emergency plans.

Staff members chosen to conduct the assessment were individuals directly responsible for the areas listed above.

## Current List of Accessible Initiatives

### Policies, Procedures, and Services

- An Accessible Customer Service Policy and feedback process was adopted by AFM and is located in the Employee Manual.
- New employees receive training on accessible customer service and information regarding accessibility upon hiring. This information is updated as required.
- Existing employees have received in-depth awareness training in 2013. In 2017, an AODA Customer Service Training refresher was completed by all staff.
- AFM receives and responds to accessibility feedback through its website as well as through forms available at Reception.
- An extensive accessibility assessment was completed with all associated processes available in order to recognize, understand, and remove accessibility barriers.
- This document represents the foundation of AFM's multi-year accessibility plan. This plan is required as per IAR 191/11 Section 4.

### Information & Communications

- AFM is committed to assisting persons with disabilities. When possible, we will provide information in an accessible format. In circumstances when we are unable to do so, AFM will provide a staff member to assist in reading documents.
- Our external web page ([www.ayrmutual.com](http://www.ayrmutual.com)) was reviewed for compliance and we are compliant with WCAG 2.0 Level AA (excluding live captioning and audio description). However, room for continuous improvement is recognized and incorporated into the AFMAP.
- Going forward we will make sure new or changing content meets accessibility guidelines.

## **2014 Accessibility Initiatives**

Formal awareness training is to be completed by all staff members in the fall of 2014. This training will cover the Human Rights Act, Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act and the Ontario Disabilities Act. This training is to ensure all areas of accessibility are covered in an effort to ensure employees recognize accessibility throughout their daily activities. Any updates to policies, processes, and legislation will be provided every two years or as needed. Records will be kept of all training provided, including the dates on which the training is provided and the number of individuals to whom it is provided.

The process for receiving and responding to feedback is available on the company website and shall be made accessible to persons with disabilities by providing or arranging for accessible formats and communications supports, upon request.

A formal process for recruitment and selection is in the development process. It ensures the availability of accommodation for applicants with disabilities. The recruitment process will outline the notification process to inform applicants that accommodations are available upon request as well as the process for accommodation when the request is made.

An accommodation policy to ensure any requests by employees with disabilities are addressed is available in a draft format. This includes alternate formats of all information that the employee requires to complete their duties as well as accessible work spaces, and other accommodations.

AFM will develop and have in place a return to work process for its employees who have been absent from work due to a disability and require disability-related accommodations in order to return to work.

AFM shall take into account the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities when using its performance management process. The management team will take into account the accessibility needs of its employees with disabilities when providing career development and advancement to its employees with disabilities.

AFM will file its required accessibility report by December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2014

Website was reviewed for WCAG 2.0 Level A compliancy.

Recruitment & Selection 2014 Practices include:

- Interviews are held in our accessible building
- Interview practices and evaluations are consistent for each candidate
- Skills assessments are not typically conducted at this time. If this changes in the future, AFM will consider the format and timing of the testing and weight it appropriately.
- Interviews are conducted in our Board room which is accessible.
- Support persons are welcome to attend the interview process

Initiatives AFM has employed to create an inclusive Work Environment include:

- Respect, dignity and equality are supported by the Company's commitment statements, core values and mission statement.
- The above are supported and driven by both Board and management
- Policies and procedures are in place to protect the rights, health, safety and wellness of employees
- Management will ensure a proper investigation occurs in the event of a deviation or infringement of an employee's rights
- Accommodation plans have been created and executed pre AODA legislation and will continue in the future
- Training on customer service for people with disabilities is provided to all new employees as part of orientation. This training is based on the same respect, dignity and equality practices employed when working with and for people with disabilities.

## 2015 Accessibility Initiatives

All new staff will be trained on the AFM Accessibility & Customer Service Policy.

Explore alternative website hosting companies that will provide AFM greater content control and design.

Annual review of the multi-year accessibility plan with status updates posted to the Company website.

All items listed above are complete. Review and revision of the AFMAP was completed on November 30, 2015.

## 2016 Accessibility Initiatives

Communication & Information – AFM launched its new website in 2016. The AFM website and content conforms to WCAG 2.0 Level AA (excluding live captioning and audio description)

Accessible employment practices include:

### Recruitment & Selection:

- Notifying job applicants, in our job postings and those who are invited to participate in an interview, that accommodations are available on request. In addition, we will consult with job applicants to identify the supports they might need.
- Ensuring new employees are aware of the company's policy for accommodation.
- Building the accessibility needs of employees into our human resources practices

Employee accommodation - AFM's accommodation process include specific elements, including how employees:

- can participate in the development of the individual accommodation plan;
- are assessed on an individual basis;
- can ask for a representative from the workplace to participate in the development of the accommodation plan.

Other elements stated in the written process include:

- the steps taken to protect the privacy of the employee's personal information;
- how often the individual accommodation plan will be reviewed and updated, and how this will be done;
- if an individual accommodation plan is denied, how the reasons for the denial will be communicated to the employee;
- how an employee will be provided with an individual accommodation plan in a format that takes into account accessibility needs due to disability.

The accommodation plan includes how employers can request an evaluation by an outside medical or other expert, at the employer's expense, to determine whether and how accommodation can be achieved.

The accommodation plan will also include informing all AFM employees of our process for accommodation support and providing accessible formats and communication supports.

#### Employee return to work

AFM works with our long term disability benefit carrier to coordinate an employee's return to work. We will collaborate with the employee health care provider to ensure a timely and safe return to work.

AFM has in place a return to work (RTW) process for employees returning to work following a disability-related absence that includes documenting an employee's RTW process and includes the details in the employee's individual accommodation plan.

#### Performance management, career development and redeployment

In order to meet this standard, AFM:

- considers the format and location of the performance management meeting to ensure meetings are accessible.
- consults with the employee to determine whether the challenge is a performance- or disability-related issue.
- will be wary of the possibility that a manager's opinions or attitudes may be influencing the performance assessment of all employees and/or an employee with a disability.

Existing employees have received in-depth awareness training and are scheduled for a training update in 2017.

Annual review of the multi-year accessibility plan with status updates posted to the Company website.

## **2017 Accessibility Initiatives**

AFM filed its required accessibility report by December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2017 – the report was filed in August 2017 and a copy is located in Docushare.

Annual review of the multi-year accessibility plan with status updates posted to the Company website.

## **2018 Accessibility Initiatives**

Annual review of the multi-year accessibility plan with status updates posted to the Company website.

## **2019 Accessibility Initiatives**

Start review of company website for WCAG 2.0 Level AA compliancy.

Annual review of the multi-year accessibility plan with status updates posted to the Company website. The review will include an adjustment extending the plan for a further 5 years.

## **2021 Accessibility Initiatives**

The AFM website and content will conform to WCAG 2.0 Level AA (excluding live captioning and audio description)

Annual review of the multi-year accessibility plan with status updates to be posted to the Company website.