

Key Requirements for Manitoba Employers as of May 1, 2020 under The Accessibility for Manitobans Act

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What is The Accessibility for Manitobans Act?

The Accessibility for Manitobans Act (the "AMA") was created by the Government of Manitoba in an effort to prevent and remove barriers that affect individuals with disabilities.



The AMA has been in effect since December 5, 2013. Since the enactment of the AMA, the Government of Manitoba has been developing and implementing mandatory accessibility standards, which address barriers for Manitobans in 5 key areas of daily living.

The 5 key areas which the AMA is aimed at addressing to ensure accessibility standards for Manitobans are as follows:

1. The Customer Service Accessibility Standard. This standard is presently in effect under the AMA and places requirements on organizations to provide better customer service to people with disabilities.
2. The Employment Accessibility Standard. This standard is being phased in and its intent is to address practices related to employee recruitment, hiring and retention.
3. The Information and Communications Accessibility Standard. This standard will address barriers to accessing information in print, on websites and in other formats.
4. The Built Environment Accessibility Standard. This standard will deal with access to those areas outside the jurisdiction of *The Manitoba Building Code*, such as sidewalks, pathways, parks and other aspects of the environment that we design and construct.
5. The Transportation Accessibility Standard. This standard will apply to public transportation to address barriers Manitobans might encounter while getting to work or school, shopping, socializing and other aspects of daily life.^[1]

These requirements are being enacted in stages. The Government of Manitoba has currently enacted the first two of the five accessibility standards.

The Employment Accessibility Standard was enacted on May 1, 2019 under the AMA. Its purpose is to remove and prevent barriers that affect current and potential employees in

Manitoba. The requirements of this standard will be phased in over a three year period, which commenced on the date of enactment.

Requirements for Employers Effective May 1, 2020

Importantly, on May 1, 2020, to ensure the safety of employees, all workplaces must have:

- plans to provide individualized emergency response information to keep employees with disabilities safe during an emergency (for example, evacuation procedures); and
- permission from all employees who require assistance during an emergency to share that information with other individuals in the organization who have agreed to provide support.

All Manitoba employers are required to review the individualized emergency response information provided to employees with disabilities when changes are made to the employee's workplace, or if the employer makes changes to its general emergency response plans that may affect the employee's response to a workplace emergency.

This requirement applies to full and part-time employees, apprentices and seasonal employees and all employers with one or more employees.

The Accessibility Manitoba website contains a variety of useful resources for employers to better understand accommodation and to assist in emergency planning for their workplaces. More information can be found here: <http://accessibilitymb.ca/tools-resources.html>

If you require assistance in preparing an emergency response plan for your workplace that complies with the AMA, either I or another member of our Labour and Employment practice group would be happy to assist.

[1] <http://www.accessibilitymb.ca/accessibility-standards.html>

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