



Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee
Wednesday, March 11, 2026 at 6:00 p.m.
Microsoft Teams

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10. Roundtable

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13. Date of Next Meeting: Citizen Working Group – April 8, 2026, Committee – June 10, 2026.

14. Adjournment

Accommodations are available for this meeting: please submit your request at www.countyofkings.ca/accommodationsrequest

Land Acknowledgement

The Municipality of the County of Kings is in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral, unceded, and current territory of the Mi'kmaq Peoples. The Municipality of the County of Kings is a neighbour to Annapolis Valley First Nation and Glooscap First Nation, as well as a diverse urban and rural Indigenous population. We are all treaty people and commit to upholding the Peace and Friendship Treaties and working towards reconciliation in all areas of the Municipality.

JOINT ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Wednesday, January 14, 2026

Draft Minutes

<p>Meeting, Date and Time</p>	<p>A meeting of the Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee (JAAC) was held on Wednesday, January 14, 2026, on Microsoft Teams at 6:00 pm</p>
<p>Attending</p> <p>JAAC Members</p>	<p>Mary Fox – Citizen Member (Chair) Crystal McCormack – Citizen Member: Central Jordan Waterbury – Citizen Member: East Andy Nette – Commissioner, Village of Port Williams Doug McLean – Commissioner, Village of Kings Square John DeCoste – Commissioner, Village of Aylesford Alan Price, Citizen Member (West) Ryan Hutt, Citizen Member Quentin Hill-Commissioner, Village of New Minas Doug Ralph-Citizen Member Suman Jha Muller – Citizen Member Amanda Baker – Citizen Member</p>
<p>Municipal Staff</p> <p>Village & KTA Staff</p> <p>Regrets</p> <p>Members of the Public</p>	<p>Katie MacArthur – Accessibility Coordinator Terry Brown – Manager of Inspection & Enforcement Division</p> <p>Peter Wenzell, Kings Transit Authority Lindsay Ahern, Village of Greenwood Amy Spurrell, Village of Kingston</p> <p>Clare Rivard, Commissioner, Village of Canning Councillor Bob Best</p> <p>None</p>

<p>1. Call to Order</p>	<p>Mary Fox, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.</p>
<p>2. Land Acknowledgement</p>	<p>Mary Fox, Chair, read the Land Acknowledgement</p>
<p>3. Roll Call</p>	<p>Committee members and guests introduced themselves and attendance was noted.</p>
<p>4. Amendments to the Agenda</p>	<p>There were no amendments to the agenda</p>
<p>5. Approval of the Agenda</p>	<p>On motion of Councillor DeCoste and Commissioner Hill, that the Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee approve the January 14, 2026 agenda.</p> <p>The question was called on the motion. Motion carried.</p>
<p>6. Disclosure of Conflict-of-Interest Issues</p>	<p>There were no conflict-of-interest issues disclosed.</p>
<p>7. Approval of Minutes a. Sept 10, 2025</p>	<p>On motion of Citizen Member Jha Muller and Citizen Member Alan Price, that the minutes of the Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting held on September 10, 2025, be approved as circulated.</p> <p>The question was called on the motion. Motion carried.</p>
<p>8. Business Arising from the Minutes</p>	<p>There was no business arising from the minutes.</p>
<p>9. Business</p>	
<p>a. Election of Chair and Vice Chair</p>	<p>Mr. Brown, Manager of Inspection and Enforcement, called for nominations for chair for a term to begin at the next meeting of the JAAC. Commissioner Hill</p>

	<p>nominated Ms. Fox who accepted the nomination. There were no other nominations. Ms. Fox was acclaimed as Chair.</p> <p>Ms. Fox called for nominations for Vice-Chair. Commissioner Hill nominated Mr. Ralph who accepted the nomination. There were no other nominations. Mr. Ralph was acclaimed as Vice Chair.</p>
<p>b. Presentation from MOK Diversity Specialist Charissa Kleine Deters, on Land Acknowledgement</p>	<p>Ms. Charissa Kleine Deters, MOK Diversity Specialist, gave a presentation on the Municipality of Kings new policy on Land Acknowledgement, how it was created, the history of Truth and Reconciliation, and how the Municipality will use them going forward.</p>
<p>c. Proposed Budget</p>	<p>Per section 12.13.2 of the Terms of Reference, the JAAC is required to review and recommend an annual budget for the upcoming fiscal year to Municipal Council and Village Commissions. Ms. MacArthur briefly outlined the suggested budget prepared by staff and included in the agenda package.</p> <p>On the motion of Commissioner DeCoste and Commissioner Nette, that the Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee accept the proposed budget as presented at the January 14, 2026 meeting and recommend to the Municipal CAO and the Village Clerks for final approval.</p> <p>The question was called on the motion. Motion carried.</p>
<p>d. Proposed Schedule</p>	<p>Per section 12.2.2 of the Terms of Reference, the JAAC is required to approve the meeting schedule for the upcoming calendar year at the meeting in December. A suggested meeting schedule was included in the agenda package.</p>

	<p>On motion of Commissioner Hill and Commissioner Nette, that for the 2026 calendar year, the Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee will meet quarterly (March, June, September and December) at 6p.m. on the second Wednesday of the month as outlined in the 2026 meeting schedule.</p> <p>The question was called on the motion. Motion carried.</p>
e. Other Updates	<p>Ms. MacArthur reviewed other updates including provincial grant funding, provincial feedback on an accessible outdoor spaces plan, upcoming recommendations for the Information and Communications and Public Transportation standards, and a reminder for Built environment standard plans.</p>
10. Other Business	<p>None.</p>
11. Roundtable	<p>A discussion occurred regarding who to speak to about non-functioning automatic door openers, the function of the citizen working group, support for non-profit organizations on grant funding, and the Remedy, on which Ms. Fox shared information, and Ms. MacArthur discussed that she would source some training on the subject. Ms. Fox agreed to share some information by email after the meeting.</p>
12. Correspondence	<p>There was no new correspondence.</p>
13. Public Comments	<p>None.</p>
14. Date of Next Meeting	<p>The next meeting of the JAAC will be held on March 11, 2026 at 6 PM virtually.</p>
15. Adjournment	<p>There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:20 p.m.</p>

Approved by:
Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee

Day/Month/Year

Draft Recommendations for an Accessibility Standard in Information and Communication

Information and Communication Standard
Development Committee

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Introduction

Nova Scotia's *Accessibility Act* lets the Nova Scotia Government make accessibility standards. Accessibility standards, once approved, are laws that help make Nova Scotia accessible.

The Accessibility Advisory Board is responsible for recommending accessibility standards to the Minister responsible for the *Accessibility Act*.

One of the standards will be about information and communication. It will prevent and remove barriers to finding, using, and understanding information.

This document shares the board's draft recommendations for that standard. We were asked to focus on recommendations for laws. We also included recommendations that are important but would not be appropriate as laws in Section 14. The Information and Communication Standard Development Committee is helping us make these recommendations.

We are now asking for opinions on our draft recommendations. We are asking persons with disabilities and employees at prescribed public sector bodies and other affected sectors. Prescribed public sector bodies are public sector organizations identified in the *Accessibility Act* General Regulations. They must have an Accessibility Advisory Committee and an accessibility plan that they update every 3 years.

We will use what we learn to make recommendations for an accessibility standard in information and communication to the Minister responsible for the *Accessibility Act*.

Recommendations for an accessibility standard in information and communication

1. Scope

Who the standard applies to

Recommendation 1: This standard applies to any organization that has at least 1 employee working in Nova Scotia. This includes the Government of Nova Scotia, prescribed public sector bodies (PPSBs), and any other business and not-for-profit organizations.

Some recommendations are only for specific groups of organizations. Each recommendation tells you if it only applies to certain groups of organizations.

When the standard applies

Recommendation 2: Different types of organizations must begin following this standard within different timeframes after it is approved. These timeframes are:

- The Government of Nova Scotia must follow the standard within 1 year.
- Prescribed public sector bodies must follow the standard within 2 years.
- All other organizations must follow the standard within 3 years.

2. Plain language

Recommendation 3: The Government of Nova Scotia and prescribed public sector bodies must communicate using plain language starting 1 year after the standard applies to them. This includes the following types of information:

- information about essential programs and services, especially those related to health, safety, security, or human rights
- information about emergencies
- information about justice and public safety
- policy documents the public will see

- new bylaws, laws, and regulations

The Government of Nova Scotia and prescribed public sector bodies must work with the intended audiences to make sure they can find, understand, and use the information. An intended audience is the people you are directing your communication to.

They must also follow the federal plain language standard called [CAN-ASC-3.1:2025 – Plain Language](#).

The Government of Nova Scotia and prescribed public sector bodies must use plain language when they communicate in Sign languages, English, French, Mi'kmaw, and any other languages.

The Government of Nova Scotia must provide resources to help prescribed public sector bodies meet this standard.

3. Requesting and providing accessible formats and accessible communication services

Providing accessible formats and accessible communication services proactively

Recommendation 4: The Government of Nova Scotia and prescribed public sector bodies must proactively provide accessible formats and communication services. They must do this whenever not doing so could risk harming people's

- health
- safety
- security
- justice
- human rights

Accessible communication services are services that make communication more effective. Examples of communication services include communication access real time translation (CART) and sign language.

They must start to proactively provide accessible formats and communication services 1 year after this standard applies.

They must work with the intended audiences to decide which accessible formats and communication services they need to make available.

If an accessible format or communication service is not provided, the government or PPSB must make it available if someone asks for it. This is covered in Recommendation 5.

The Government of Nova Scotia must provide resources to help prescribed public sector bodies meet this standard.

Providing accessible formats and communication services if asked

Recommendation 5: All organizations must share information in an accessible format or with an accessible communication service if someone asks for it.

If a person asks for an accessible format or an accessible communication service, the organization must work with them to understand what they need.

The organization must provide the accessible format or communication service as soon as reasonable, based on how urgent the person's request is and what is possible for the organization.

The organization must provide the accessible format or communication service at no extra cost to the person.

The Government of Nova Scotia must provide resources to help organizations meet the standard.

Timeline for providing accessible formats and accessible communication services

Recommendation 6: When a person asks an organization for an accessible format or communication service, the organization must confirm they received the request within 5 business days.

The organization must communicate with the person within 10 business days to agree on the accessible format or communication service that is needed and a timeline for providing it.

Using artificial intelligence for accessible formats and accessible communication services

Recommendation 7: If an organization uses generative artificial intelligence to make an accessible format or communication service, a person must review it to make sure the information is correct and appropriate for the intended audience.

Human-generated captions must be considered as a first choice before AI-generated captions.

An organization may use artificial intelligence tools for sign language interpretation and sign language–spoken language interpretation, only if the person who asked for the interpretation agrees.

Notes:

- The Government of Nova Scotia should consider [ASC-6.2:2025 Accessible and Equitable Artificial Intelligence Systems — Accessibility Standards Canada](#) when writing this standard.
- AI interpreting tools have exciting potential, but because there are concerns about how they are trained and how they might be misused, we still need human interpreters in important situations. You can learn more about [ASL and AI tools from Gallaudet University](#).

Letting the public know about accessible formats and accessible communication services

Recommendation 8: All organizations must tell the public they will provide accessible formats and accessible communication services if people ask for them. Organizations must also tell the public what accessible formats and communication services they already offer.

4. Assistive technology

Making sure people can get assistive technology

Recommendation 9: The Government of Nova Scotia must make sure people with disabilities, deaf people, and neurodivergent people can get the assistive technology they need to communicate. Neurodivergent means having a brain that functions differently from the societal standard of “normal.” It includes people who identify as autistic, having ADHD, Tourette’s syndrome, and dyslexia for example.

Everyone, no matter their age, income, education level, or employment status must have access to the assistive technologies they need. This includes people who are between programs, such as those leaving public school, graduating from post-secondary education, or not connected to an employment program.

The government must do the following things to make sure they fulfill this recommendation.

- They must fund assessments by qualified professionals to find out what assistive technology is right for the person.
- They must fund the assistive technology that works best for the person.
- They must train the person using the technology and the people who support them.

Qualified professionals include assistive technology specialists, augmentative and alternative communication specialists, speech-language pathologists, and occupational therapists.

Augmentative and alternative communication means the various ways of augmenting an individual's message that may be alternative to oral speech.

5. Digital accessibility

Digital accessibility means that websites, applications, online services, platforms, and products like text documents and multimedia are designed to be used by an audience that includes persons with disabilities and deaf and neurodivergent persons. Digital accessibility allows users to perceive, understand, navigate, and interact with digital content regardless of their hardware, software, or language. Digital accessibility involves people and processes that anticipate and remove barriers to information and communication and design for diversity.

Digital non-web documents

Recommendation 10: All organizations must follow section 10 of the federal accessibility standard for information and communication technology (ICT) products and services called [CAN/ASC - EN 301 549:2024](#) when they create digital non-web documents. This also applies if it is updated or replaced in the future.

Some examples of digital non-web documents are word documents, PDFs, emails, pictures, presentation slides, and videos.

The Government of Nova Scotia must provide resources to help organizations meet this standard.

Information and communication technology (ICT) means technology, equipment, or a system of equipment used to create, convert, duplicate,

gather, store, analyze, evaluate, manipulate, manage, move, control, display, switch, interchange, transmit, receive, or broadcast data or information.

Some examples of ICT include are:

- web pages
- electronic content
- mobile phones and tablets
- computers and computer equipment
- software including mobile applications
- information kiosks and transaction devices
- videos
- IT services

Web content, web applications, and mobile applications

Recommendation 11: All organizations must follow the federal accessibility standard for ICT products and services when they develop or update web content, web applications, and mobile applications. The federal standard is called CAN/ASC - EN 301 549:2024.

Organizations must use the federal standard when users will need the web content to find, use, and understand information about

- goods and services
- essential services, like healthcare
- emergencies
- justice and public safety
- human rights

These requirements apply to any website, web app, or mobile app the organization controls, either directly or through a contract that allows the organization to make changes.

Organizations cannot use web accessibility overlays to meet this requirement. Overlays are technologies that aim to improve the accessibility of a website. They apply third-party source code (typically JavaScript) to make improvements to the front-end code of the website.

Web accessibility statement

Recommendation 12: The Government of Nova Scotia, prescribed public sector bodies, and organizations with 20 or more employees must have a public statement about the accessibility of their website. The web accessibility statement must include the following content:

- a commitment to keep the website accessible and follow current best practices
- an explanation of how accessible the website is right now, based on the [CAN/ASC - EN 301 549](#) accessibility standard
- contact information for feedback on the website's accessibility

Testing and improving digital content

Recommendation 13: The Government of Nova Scotia, prescribed public sector bodies, and organizations with 20 or more employees must regularly review, test, and improve digital content that people need to access their programs and services. The review is to make sure people can easily find, understand, and use the information.

Testing must include people with different accessibility barriers, including people who use assistive technology every day, people with disabilities, deaf people, and neurodivergent people. Organizations must use the feedback to remove accessibility barriers.

Accessibility features

Recommendation 14: Organizations must make sure that the accessibility features in the technology they use or promote are turned on and can be used.

Organizations must train employees and volunteers to show people how to use these accessibility features.

Self-service devices

Recommendation 15: The Government of Nova Scotia, prescribed public sector bodies, and organizations with 20 or more employees must ensure that new self-service devices they offer to the public are accessible. This means the devices must meet the requirements of the federal standard [CSA/ASC B651.2:22](#). This recommendation doesn't apply to self-service devices that the federal government controls, like bank machines.

Organizations must also ensure that staff can help users where self-service devices are available.

Recommendation 16: The Government of Nova Scotia and prescribed public sector bodies must also make older self-service devices accessible. The devices must meet the federal standard for accessible design of self-service devices called [CSA/ASC B651.2:22](#) within 1 year after the standard applies.

6. Sign language and visual access to language

Providing sign language interpretation and captions

Recommendation 17: The Government of Nova Scotia and prescribed public sector bodies must provide sign language interpretation and captions proactively. They must do this in situations where not doing it could harm health, safety, security, justice, or human rights. This includes the following types of information:

- emergency communication
- press conferences broadcast to the public
- websites
- recorded videos
- public signage

This is similar to the [French-language Services Regulations](#).

Providing sign language interpretation or co-navigation if a person asks

Recommendation 18: If a person asks, the Government of Nova Scotia, prescribed public sector bodies, and organizations with 20 or more employees must provide sign language interpretation at no extra cost. Sign language interpretation includes co-navigators, sign language interpreters, or sign language–spoken language interpreters.

Co-navigators are trained professionals who provide communication services to deafblind people. They use visual and tactile American Sign Language, two-hand manual, voiceover, print-on-palm, large-print notes and other methods to share information.

Sign language interpreter (deaf interpreter) means a deaf specialist who provides communication access through sign language interpreting services and other visual and tactile communication forms. Deaf interpreters provide nuanced and culturally appropriate language access, due to their cultural knowledge, lived experience, and professional training. Deaf interpreters often work as a team with sign language–spoken language interpreters to provide sign language services.

A sign language–spoken language interpreter is a professional who works between the languages and cultures of a sign language and a spoken language to support communication between deaf and hard of hearing people and hearing people. A sign language–spoken language interpreter provides service for everyone involved in the communication, not only the deaf person.

Organizations must work with the person to understand exactly what they need. This means the organization must:

- understand the type of interpreting needed (for example, in-person or video remote)
- review the interpreter or co-navigator's qualifications
- find an alternative if the person doesn't want to work with a specific interpreter or co-navigator

Organizations must provide the service at a time that works for the person and that takes into account their situation and how urgent their request is.

The Government of Nova Scotia must make sure organizations have funding to provide these services.

Sign language interpreters and sign language–spoken language interpreters must be members of the [Canadian Association of Sign Language Interpreters \(CASLI\)](#).

Notes:

- Deaf and hearing people do not always need sign language interpreters. They can communicate using gestures or other methods.
- Hearing people should learn basic communication skills to interact respectfully and effectively with deaf, deafblind, and hard of hearing people.
- Deaf people can decide when an interpreter is needed and understand how long is needed to arrange one. Interpreter coordinators can also help book services.
- A person has the right to decline a specific interpreter. This may be because of the interpreter's skills, or because of trust, comfort, or safety. The Canadian Association of the Deaf recognizes this right.

Sign language interpretation and co-navigator policy

Recommendation 19: All organizations that serve the public must have a policy about sign language interpretation and co-navigators. The policy must explain how people can ask for co-navigator, sign language interpreter, and sign language–spoken language interpreter services.

The policy must include a commitment to providing equal access for deaf, deafblind, and hard of hearing people.

It must include a promise to review and update the policy every year. The policy must also explain

- how to ask for an interpreter or co-navigator
- what to do for urgent or emergency requests
- how much time it takes to arrange for services
- who handles the requests and schedules the services
- how everyone will learn about the arrangements
- how to give feedback about the interpreter or co-navigator services
- how privacy and confidentiality will be protected
- how complaints will be handled
- how conflicts of interest will be managed
- how safety will be ensured

Organizations must make sure all staff know about the policy and procedures.

The Government of Nova Scotia must provide resources to help organizations create these policies.

Sign language interpreter coordinator

Recommendation 20: The Government of Nova Scotia and prescribed public sector bodies must have access to sign language interpreter coordinators.

This can be someone who works in the organization or a shared service used by several organizations. In Nova Scotia, interpreter coordinators work in

nonprofit service organizations or in institutions like post-secondary schools.

The Government of Nova Scotia must make sure funding is available so public bodies can access an interpreter coordinator.

Interpreter coordinators must have strong sign language skills with an American Sign Language Proficiency Interview score of at least 3 and preferably 4. They must also have strong English or French skills, depending on the job.

Interpreter coordinators are responsible for the following kinds of work:

- providing qualified interpreters when needed
- helping staff and community members understand how to request and use interpreting services
- creating and maintaining policies and procedures for providing consistent, high-quality interpreting services
- training interpreters and people who work with interpreters
- ensuring interpreters follow codes of ethics from professional associations and the organizations they work for
- managing complaints and conflicts
- making sure interpreting and communication services fit the needs of the situation
- ensuring interpreters receive appropriate safety training
- overseeing quality assessments for each interpreter

This recommendation aligns with [Recommendations to the Minister of Justice on an Accessibility Standard in Education: Phase 2, Public Post-Secondary Recommendation 47](#).

7. Emergency information and communication

Emergency information

Recommendation 21: The Government of Nova Scotia and its Department of Emergency Management must do 4 things when it develops emergency information to make sure information is accessible.

- First, it must use plain language, as defined in this standard, in all emergency communications.
- Second, it must create accessible communication materials ahead of time for emergencies that can be expected. This includes sign language videos and templates for emergency announcements and social media. These materials must be shared with Regional Emergency Management Organizations.
- Third, it must make sure information and communication during an emergency response are accessible to everyone.
- Finally, it must review how accessible the communication was after every emergency response. The review must identify barriers that happened and make a plan to fix them for future emergencies.

Emergency procedures

Recommendation 22: All organizations with written emergency procedures must communicate the procedures in plain language, as defined in this standard. Emergency procedures must say how to communicate with persons with intellectual disabilities, deaf, deafblind, and hard of hearing persons during emergencies.

Emergency information and communication plan

Recommendation 23: Municipalities and Regional Emergency Management Organizations must create a plan for providing accessible emergency information and communication. The plan must include 2 key points:

- Who is responsible for making sure emergency information is accessible and in plain language.
- How they will review accessibility after an emergency. The review must include identifying barriers that happened and making a plan to fix them.

8. Wayfinding and signage

Appropriate language

Recommendation 24: All organizations must ensure the word “handicapped” is not used on any new signs in Nova Scotia once this standard applies.

One year after this standard applies, organizations must remove the word “handicapped” from all existing signs and replace it with the word “accessible” if it fits the meaning of the sign.

This applies to all organizations in Nova Scotia. All organizations are strongly encouraged to make this change immediately.

Recommendation 25: The Government of Nova Scotia, prescribed public sector bodies, and all organizations with 20 or more employees must use plain language on any new signs that communicate rules or wayfinding signs in public buildings. Plain language is defined in this standard. This must begin 1 year after the standard applies.

Symbols of accessibility

Standard accessibility symbols

Recommendation 26: The Government of Nova Scotia must adopt a set of standard accessibility symbols to use on signs in the province. These symbols must have a consistent look and style, and they must be available in vector formats.

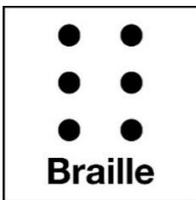
Government of Nova Scotia and prescribed public sector bodies must start using graphic equivalents of these symbols starting 1 year after this standard applies. Other organizations are encouraged to use the symbols as well.

The symbols must be based on the examples provided in this standard and the government must test them to make sure that the intended users can easily understand and use them.

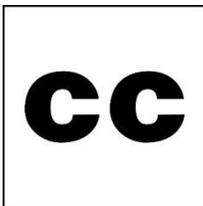
a. Assistive listening system



b. Braille



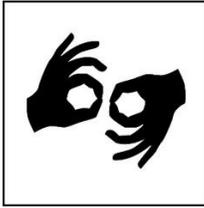
c. Closed captioning



d. *Dynamic symbol of access*



e. Sign language interpretation



f. White cane (blind or partially sighted)



g. Information Symbol



These symbols (except a. and d.) are Disability Access Symbols from the [Graphic Artists Guild](#).

Gender-neutral symbols

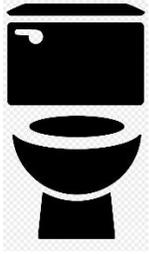
Recommendation 27: Organizations must use gender-neutral symbols on signs for accessible, gender-neutral facilities. These signs must also show both the symbol for the type of facility and the accessibility symbol.

Gender-specific symbols can still be used for gender-specific spaces.

Any new signs for these facilities must use gender-neutral symbols starting 1 year after this standard begins.

Examples of gender-neutral symbols are provided below.

a. Washroom (non-gendered)



b. Change facility



c. Showers



Types of signs

New or updated signs

Recommendation 28: All new or updated signs inside public buildings must follow the accessibility rules in this standard. This includes signs that give directions, provide information, identify rooms, or communicate warnings or rules.

Design needs to be flexible because different buildings may have different needs. This standard provides minimum accessibility requirements for signs so people can find, use, and understand information in public spaces.

Types of signs the standard applies to

Recommendation 29: In public buildings, the following types of signs must follow the accessibility requirements in this standard:

- warning signs
- regulatory signs
- directional signs at decision points, for example, hallway intersections and stair entrances
- floor and building directories
- signs for stairs, elevators, and escalators
- room number signs
- washroom signs

These requirements do not apply to signs that are already covered by the Building Code.

Design

Same shape, colour, and placement

Recommendation 30: If signs in a building give the same kind of information, they must all use the same shape, colour, and placement.

Adapted from [CSA/ASC B651 Accessible design for the built environment](#)
Section 4.6.2

Letters and numbers

Recommendation 31: Letters and numbers on signs must meet the following requirements:

- **Typeface and size:** Use a typeface and font size that your intended audience can easily read from a comfortable distance within the context of the situation.
- **Font:** Use a font where characters are easy to tell apart (for example, where **I**, **l**, and **1** do not look the same).
- **Numbers:** Use Arabic numerals (0–9).

- **Character height:** Match the height of the letters and numbers to the viewing distance. Use at least:
 - **25 mm** for a viewing distance of **750 mm**
 - **50 mm** for a viewing distance of **1500 mm**
 - **75 mm** for a viewing distance of **2250 mm**
 - **100 mm** for a viewing distance of **3000 mm**
 - **150 mm** for a viewing distance of **4500 mm**
 - **200 mm** for a viewing distance of **6000 mm**
 - **250 mm** for a viewing distance of **7500 mm**
 - **300 mm** for a viewing distance of **9000 mm**
- **Measurement:** Character height is the height of a capital X in the font.
- **Contrast:** Letters and numbers must have at least 70% contrast with the background.

This recommendation is adapted from:

- CSA/ASC B651 Accessible Design for the Built Environment, Section 4.6.3
- CAN-ASC-3.1:2025 – Plain Language, Section 14.4(f) Typography

Types of tactile signs

Tactile signs are signs you can read by touch.

Recommendation 32: Organizations must use the following types of tactile signs:

- signs that tell people what they must or must not do, called regulatory signs
- signs that warn about danger or hazards
- signs that identify things, like room numbers, room names, and titles.

This recommendation is adapted from [CSA/ASC B651 Accessible design for the built environment](#) Section 4.6.6.1.

Design of tactile signs

Recommendation 33: Tactile signs must use Braille and raised characters. Braille must be placed near the bottom edge of the sign.

Use uncontracted braille if the sign has 10 words or fewer, and contracted braille if the sign has more than 10 words. Uncontracted Braille means every letter in a word is expressed in braille instead of using shorthand.

Letters and numbers must be raised 0.8 to 1.5 mm above the surface. They must be 16 to 50 mm high. They must have at least 70% colour contrast with the background.

This recommendation is adapted from [CSA/ASC B651 Accessible design for the built environment](#) Section 4.6.6.2

Text with symbols

Recommendation 34: If a symbol is not part of the Government of Nova Scotia's standard accessibility symbols, it must also include written text. When needed, this text must include raised letters and braille.

Design of symbols

Recommendation 35: Symbols must use the following design features:

- at least 70% colour contrast with their background
- raised surfaces between 0.8 mm and 1.5 mm
- Braille placed below the symbol

This recommendation is adapted from [CSA/ASC B651 Accessible design for the built environment](#) Sections 4.6.4 and 4.6.6.3

Design of interpretive and commemorative signs

Recommendation 36: Interpretive and commemorative signs are strongly encouraged to use the following design features:

- at least 70% colour contrast between the text and background
- body text using a font that is at least 8 mm high
- short line lengths

- low-glare surfaces

Electronic signs

Recommendation 37: Electronic signs must follow the design and technical requirements in this standard.

The information shown on electronic signs must also be available in another accessible format, such as audio or tactile.

Installation of signs

Illumination

Recommendation 38: Sign must be illuminated to at least 200 lux. The recommendation comes from [CSA/ASC B651 Accessible design for the built environment](#) Section 4.6.5.

Tactile sign installation

Recommendation 39: Where needed, tactile signs must be installed so that they meet the following specifications:

- If used to identify a door, the sign must be mounted on the wall beside the latch edge of the door.
- The leading vertical edge must be 150 mm from the door jamb, plus or minus 10 mm.
- At double-leaf doors or there is no wall space next to the door's latch edge, the sign must be mounted on the nearest wall.
- A person must be able to approach the sign without dealing with objects or being within a door swing. They should be able to get within 100 mm of the sign.
- The sign must be mounted so that the horizontal centre is 1500 mm from the floor, plus or minus 25 mm.
- The wall area around the sign must be clear for at least 75 mm.

This recommendation is adapted from [CSA/ASC B651 Accessible design for the built environment](#), Section 4.6.6.4.

Accessible signage guidelines

Recommendation 40: The Government of Nova Scotia must create guidelines for accessible signage. These guidelines must be developed within 1 year after this standard applies. The guidelines must be created with input from people who face accessibility barriers.

The guidelines must be based on:

- CSA/ASC B651 Accessible Design for the Built Environment
- CNIB’s Clearing Our Path
- CNIB’s Clear Print Accessibility Guidelines
- Braille Literacy Canada’s Accessible Signage Guidelines

The government must update the guidelines when CSA/ASC B651 is updated.

The guidelines must be written in plain language, as defined in this standard.

The guidelines must be available to the public.

Accessible wayfinding and signage plans

Wayfinding and signage in accessibility plans

Recommendation 41: The Government of Nova Scotia and prescribed public sector bodies must include wayfinding and signage accessibility in their accessibility plans.

They must consult with their accessibility advisory committee about the accessibility of their wayfinding and signage and include what they learn in the plan.

They must describe the steps they have taken, and plan to take, to identify, remove, and prevent barriers related to accessible wayfinding and signage.

When creating their accessible wayfinding plan, they should consider the following:

- colour contrast
- glare
- lighting
- tactile indicators
- sensory cues
- signage
- sounds (for example, acoustics)

Built environment

Recommendation 42: The government must use the upcoming CAN-ASC-2.4 Wayfinding and Signage standard for wayfinding signage in built environments. The standard is expected to be available in summer 2027.

9. Procurement

Supporting accessibility

Recommendation 43: The Government of Nova Scotia and prescribed public sector bodies (PPSBs) must ensure that their procurement processes support accessibility. For this standard recommendation, this means procuring communication products, design products, and technology products and services that are accessible.

All requests for proposals (RFPs) from the Government of Nova Scotia and PPSBs must be written in plain language. Accessibility must be a priority in the evaluation criteria and in the way proposals are scored.

When procuring, or buying, ICT products or services, the Government of Nova Scotia and PPSBs must consider the accessibility needs of the people who will use them. They must choose ICT products that meet the requirements in [CAN/ASC-EN 301 549:2024 – Accessibility requirements for ICT products and services](#).

When government hires consultants for information and communication work, the consultants must demonstrate knowledge and experience of

relevant accessible information and communication standards. Examples are the federal standards for plain language and for accessible ICT products and services.

Consultants who provide plain-language services must show that they have experience writing and editing in plain language. They must be familiar with the definition from the International Plain Language Federation and with 1 or more of the following standards:

- ISO 24495-1:2023 – Plain language, Part 1: Governing principles and guidelines
- ISO 24495-2:2025 – Plain language, Part 2: Legal communication
- CAN-ASC-3.1:2025 – Plain Language

Consultants who provide digital communication services must demonstrate knowledge and experience in providing accessible digital communication services. They must be familiar with [CAN/ASC - EN 301 549:2024 Accessibility requirements for ICT products and services](#).

10. Receiving and responding to feedback regarding the accessibility of information and communication

Feedback process

Recommendation 44: All organizations must ask the public for feedback about how accessible their information and communication are. They must have a process for receiving and responding to the feedback and make sure the process is easy for the public to find.

Organizations must also make sure their feedback process is accessible to people who may face barriers to finding, understanding, or using information.

As part of their feedback process, all organizations must do the following things.

- They must share information about the feedback process in plain language and make the information available in accessible formats.
- They must offer several ways for people to give feedback, such as by phone, video, in person, or online. They must also allow feedback by email. If a person needs another way to communicate, the organization must provide it.
- They must confirm they received feedback within 5 business days. They must also give an initial estimate of when they will respond.
- They must work with the person to create a plan to address their concerns. The plan must consider the person's needs and how urgent their request is.
- They must give regular updates to the person, especially when the issue may take longer to fix. They must make sure they provide a final response in a reasonable time based on the issue.
- They must keep records of the feedback they receive, the actions they take, and how long it took to resolve each issue.
- They must offer a way for the public to share concerns or suggestions about any barriers to the feedback process.

Government must consider making the feedback process the same for all of the accessibility standards in Nova Scotia.

Adapted from: [Recommendations to the Minister of Justice on an Accessibility Standard in Goods and Services](#)

11. Accessible information and communication training

Training for staff and volunteers

Recommendation 45: All organizations must ensure people receive training in plain language and accessible information and communication. That training must be appropriate to their role. This applies to employees and volunteers who do the following work.

- They communicate directly to the public or another organization.
- They develop or maintain the organization's web content and social media.
- They develop or maintain public facing documents or forms.
- They procure information technology or communication tools.
- They procure communication work such as graphic design, copywriting, or editing.
- They help develop or carry out the organization's policies on accessible communication.

Training must cover the following topics.

- What the *Accessibility Act* requires and what this standard requires
- How to identify, prevent, and remove barriers to finding, understanding, and using information. This includes barriers experienced by people who are blind, deafblind, deaf, and have intellectual or mobility disabilities, among others.
- How to provide information in accessible formats and with accessible communication services, as defined in this standard
- How to work with sign language and sign language–spoken language interpreters, and co-navigators
- How to communicate in plain language, as defined in this standard
- An introduction to Deaf culture
- Basic communication skills for interacting with people who are deaf, deafblind, and hard of hearing
- The organization's policies on accessible information and communication, as required by this standard.

The training must also cover the following topics when they are relevant to the volunteer or employee's role:

- How to use accessibility features of technology and assistive technology that the organization provides

- Principles of accessible graphic design, such as contrast, font, colour, and organization of visual content
- Principles of universal design
- Digital accessibility.

Universal design for this standard applies to websites, applications, online services, and digital products like text documents and multimedia. It means that these products are proactively designed so anyone can access, understand, and use them regardless of their ability, language, age, or background.

An organization must begin training a person 3 months after they start duties that require it. Training must be available both in-person and online. Refresher training must happen at least every 2 years, so everyone stays up to date on accessibility standards, policies, and best practices.

People who have experienced communication barriers must help to create and deliver the training. Their involvement can include:

- helping design and deliver the training
- giving advice to make sure the training is effective and inclusive.

Training must match the duties of the people taking it.

12. Policies

Policies on providing accessible information and communication

Recommendation 46: All organizations must create and follow policies on how they will provide the accessible information and communication this standard requires. Policies must be in plain language, as defined in this standard, and must cover the following topics:

- requesting and providing accessible formats and accessible communication services
- digital accessibility
- plain language

- sign language and visual access to language
- wayfinding and signage
- emergency information and communication
- receiving and responding to feedback
- accessible communication training
- procuring accessible information and communication products and services

Policies must follow the duty to accommodate under the *Nova Scotia Human Rights Act*. They must include a commitment to meet the accessibility needs for finding, understanding, and using information quickly and at no extra cost. Policies must also address access for people who are deaf, deafblind, or hard of hearing.

Policies must be reviewed and updated at least every 3 years to reflect changes in standards, best practices, or organizational needs. They must be publicly available in plain language and accessible formats.

13. Accessible information and communication resources

Central resource hub

Recommendation 47: The Government of Nova Scotia must gather or develop resources to help organizations meet the requirements of this standard.

The resources, such as training materials and templates, must be available through a central resource hub. They must be available in accessible formats and hard copies.

The resources must be available within 1 year after the standard applies and updated regularly.

The central resource hub must include resources on the following topics:

- how to provide accessible formats and accessible communication services, including sign language interpretation and sign language–spoken language interpretation
- digital accessibility
- plain language
- accessible design of communication materials
- policies and procedures for this standard
- training on accessible information and communication

14. Other recommendations not for regulations

Oversight and coordination

Recommendation 48: The Government of Nova Scotia must choose a director to make sure information and communication across government are accessible.

The director must advise government and help make information and communication accessible, as required by this standard.

They must organize and manage the resources government needs to provide to help organizations meet this standard.

They must also have an American Sign Language (ASL) Proficiency Interview score of 3 or higher.

The director must report to the Deputy Head of the Executive Council Office to make sure all parts of government work together on this.

Digital inclusion

When people are left out of the digital world, it makes other accessibility barriers worse. It also limits their independence and ability to connect with others.

Digital inclusion means people have the following:

- affordable and reliable internet
- devices that connect to the internet
- support to learn basic digital skills and feel confident using these tools

Digital inclusion is essential for accessible information and communication. It means people can use their devices to remove barriers when sharing, receiving, finding, understanding, and using information.

Recommendation 49: The Government of Nova Scotia must make sure people with disabilities and deaf and neurodivergent people have equal access to the digital world. This applies no matter their age, education, income, location, or job status.

To do this, the government must provide funding so everyone can access affordable and reliable internet, have devices that connect to the internet, and learn basic digital skills and feel confident using these tools.

Learn [more about digital inclusion from GEO Nova Scotia](#).

Sign language

Deaf representation and access to sign language

Sign language is an important part of Deaf culture and identity. It is essential for communication between deaf and hearing people. Access to sign language in daily life and in emergencies is critical for the dignity, health, justice, safety, security, and human rights of deaf and deafblind Nova Scotians.

Attitudinal barriers such as audism and ableism must be addressed.

Audism is practices, attitudes, systems, and structures in a society that prioritize hearing individuals. It stigmatizes, devalues, or limits the participation, inclusion, and potential of deaf and hard of hearing persons.

Ableism is the practices, attitudes, systems, and structures in a society that prioritize “normalcy”. It stigmatizes, devalues, or limits the participation, inclusion, and potential of all people with disabilities and deaf people.

This means:

- raising awareness about Deaf culture
- increasing access to sign language
- increasing Deaf representation in leadership roles

The *Accessible Canada Act* recognizes American Sign Language (ASL), Langue des Signes Québécoise (LSQ), and Indigenous Sign Languages as the main languages of deaf people in Canada. For many deaf people, sign language is their first language.

Recognizing sign language as a minority language would greatly improve access to information and communication for deaf, deafblind, and hard of hearing Nova Scotians.

Recommendation 50: Action items to increase sign language access and deaf representation include hiring more deaf people and sign language interpreters and more full-time staff interpreters and increasing sign language training.

a. Hiring more deaf people and sign language users

Government and prescribed public sector bodies (PPSBs) should hire more deaf people and those fluent in sign language full-time. This allows services to be provided directly in sign language without needing an interpreter. This is called language-concordant service.

b. Hiring full-time staff interpreters

Government and PPSBs should have interpreters on staff to ensure consistent service, subject knowledge, and quick access to qualified interpreters.

c. Increasing sign language training

Government and PPSBs should offer sign language training similar to current French language training. Training should include beginner, intermediate, and advanced levels and specialized training for frontline services such as healthcare.

Shortage of sign language and sign language–spoken language interpreters and co-navigators

Recommendation 51: Access to sign language and the availability and qualifications of sign language interpreters, sign language–spoken language, and co-navigators are barriers to accessible information and communication in Nova Scotia.

Government must work with deaf, deafblind, and hard of hearing persons, as well as co-navigators, sign language interpreters, and sign language–spoken language interpreters to make an action plan to address the shortage of services in Nova Scotia. The plan must be developed together with Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC) and Nova Scotia universities.

Actions must include:

- a. Recruit Indigenous people, people of African descent, newcomers, persons with disabilities, and other underrepresented groups for interpreter and co-navigator training programs.
- b. Grow the American Sign Language and English Interpretation diploma program at Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC). Include advanced courses and options for specialization.
- c. Develop a training program for co-navigators at NSCC.
- d. Develop undergraduate and graduate programs for sign language interpretation, sign language–spoken language interpretation, and co-navigators at Nova Scotia universities.
- e. Support mentorship and training. Offer economic, cultural, and social supports to deaf, deafblind, and hard of hearing community members who can mentor, teach, and work alongside interpreters in different settings.

This aligns with Recommendations to the [Minister of Justice on an Accessibility Standard in Education](#) Public Post-Secondary Recommendation 49.

Province-wide co-navigator program

Recommendation 52: Co-navigators, also called intervenors, are trained professionals who help people who are deafblind to communicate and access information. They provide visual, situational, and environmental details so people who are deafblind can fully participate.

Right now, Nova Scotia does not have a comprehensive co-navigator program, and there are very few programs across Canada. This creates a serious barrier to accessible information and communication for people who are deafblind.

The government must work with Deafblind community members and co-navigators to create a co-navigator services program in Nova Scotia. The program must include emergency co-navigator services available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Regulation of the sign language and sign language–spoken language interpreter profession

Recommendation 53: In Nova Scotia and across Canada, sign language interpreters and sign language–spoken language interpreters are not regulated. This means there is no system to ensure consistent qualifications or oversight of professional standards.

The Maritime Association of Professional Sign Language Interpreters (MAPSLI) represents interpreters who live and work in Nova Scotia. MAPSLI is an affiliate of the Canadian Association of Sign Language Interpreters (CASLI). MAPSLI members follow CASLI’s Code of Ethics and Guidelines for Professional Conduct. However, there is currently no formal complaints process to enforce these standards in Nova Scotia or nationally through CASLI.

The government must create a regulatory body for sign language interpreters and sign language–spoken language interpreters in Nova Scotia. This body will set requirements for:

- training
- ongoing professional development

- a code of ethics
- privacy and confidentiality
- protection of occupational titles
- professional standards
- complaints and resolution if professional standards are not met

The Westcoast Association of Visual Language Interpreters (WAVLI) in British Columbia has secured [title protection](#) for Registered ASL-English Interpreter, Registered Sign Language Interpreter, and Registered Visual Language Interpreter. Because these titles are registered with the province of BC, interpreters in BC who use them must be members of WAVLI. This approach could be a useful model for Nova Scotia.

Regulating the sign language and sign language–spoken language interpreter profession would give Nova Scotia an opportunity to lead the way in accessible information and communication.

Working definitions

Ableism means the practices, attitudes, systems, and structures in a society that prioritize “normalcy” and stigmatize, devalue, or limit the participation, inclusion, and potential of all people with disabilities and deaf people. Such practices discriminate against and devalue people with disabilities and deaf and neurodivergent people. They often rest on the assumption that they need to be “fixed” to be included or to be considered successful.

Source: [Recommendations to the Minister of Justice on an Accessibility Standard in Education: Phase 2](#)

Accessible communication means communication of information in a manner that is free from barriers that prevent or hinder a person from obtaining, using or benefiting from the information.

Source: [Manitoba Accessible Information and Communication Standard Regulation](#)

Accessible communication service means a service that facilitates effective communication. Accessible communication services include 1 or more of the following:

- accessible formats
- augmentative and alternative communication
- assistive technology
- sign language interpretation and sign language–spoken language interpretation

Adapted from:

- [Manitoba Accessible Information and Communication Standard Regulation](#)
- [Recommendations to the Minister of Justice on an Accessibility Standard in Education: Phase 2](#)

Accessible format means print, electronic, audio, or visual material that is formatted to remove barriers so that people can effectively and meaningfully find, use, and understand the information presented. This may include 1 or more of the following:

- ensuring compatibility with appropriate assistive technology
- closed captioning
- described video
- large print
- braille
- Easy Read
- video transcripts
- hard copies

Adapted from: [Recommendations to the Minister of Justice on an Accessibility Standard in Education: Phase 2](#)

Artificial intelligence (AI) means using computer systems to do things that usually require human intelligence.

Assistive technology in the context of this standard, means equipment, hardware, software, applications, and services used to enhance the functional capabilities of persons with disabilities, deaf, and neurodivergent persons for the purposes of effective communication. Examples of assistive technology for communication include, but are not limited to, screen readers, magnifiers, keyboard navigation, assistive listening devices like hearing aids, etc. Assistive technology for communications can be low tech, medium tech or high tech.

Audism means practices, attitudes, systems, and structures in a society that prioritize hearing individuals and stigmatize, devalue, or limit the participation, inclusion, and potential of deaf and hard of hearing persons. Such practices discriminate against and devalue persons who are deaf and hard of hearing. They often rest on the assumption that they need to be “fixed” and become hearing in order to be included or to be considered successful.

Source: [Recommendations to the Minister of Justice on an Accessibility Standard in Education: Phase 2](#)

Augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) means the various ways of augmenting an individual’s message that may be alternative to oral speech. AAC is augmentative when used to supplement existing speech, and alternative when used instead of speech.

Adapted from: [American Speech-Language-Hearing Association](#)

Examples of AAC include but are not limited to the following:

- communication boards and books
- alphabet and letter boards
- picture-based communication

- gesture
- written output
- speech generating devices

Barrier means anything that hinders or challenges the full and effective participation in society of persons with disabilities including a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, an information or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy, or a practice.

Source: [Nova Scotia Accessibility Act](#)

Co-navigator (intervenor) means a trained professional who provides communication services to deafblind people. Co-navigators are different from support persons, as co-navigators facilitate access to visual, situational, and environmental information. Co-navigators use a variety of communication methods, including American Sign Language (both visual and tactile), two-hand manual, voiceover, print-on-palm, large-print notes and more.

Adapted from: [What is an Intervenor | DBCS](#)

Colour contrast means a 70% or greater difference in colour between the content and background of a sign.

Adapted from [Built Environment Accessibility Standard Regulations](#)

Deaf (with a capital D) is a sociological term referring to people who are medically deaf or hard of hearing and who identify with and participate in Deaf culture, society, and language, which is based on sign language.

Source: Canadian Association of the Deaf via Employment Standard Recommendations

deaf (with a lower-case d) is a medical and audiological term referring to people who have little or no functional hearing. It may also refer to people who are medically deaf but who do not necessarily identify with the Deaf community. In this document, the term “deaf” is used to be inclusive of people who do and do not identify with the Deaf community.

Source: [Recommendations to the Minister of Justice on an Accessibility Standard in Education: Phase 2](#)

Deafblind refers to people who have combined hearing loss and sight loss. The degree of hearing loss and sight loss is different from person to person. Most people who are deafblind usually have some degree of sight or hearing.

Adapted from CNIB Deafblind Community Service [What is Deafblindness?](#)

Digital accessibility means that websites, applications, online services, technologies, products (including text documents, multimedia etc.), and platforms are designed to be used meaningfully and independently by a wide audience – including persons with disabilities, deaf, and neurodivergent persons – regardless of their hardware, software, or language. Digital accessibility allows users to perceive, understand, navigate, and interact with digital content. Digital accessibility involves people and processes that anticipate and remove barriers to information and communication and design for diversity.

Digital inclusion means that people have access to affordable devices that can connect to the Internet, have access to reliable Internet, and support to develop the basic digital skills to use these effectively.

Adapted from: [GEO Nova Scotia](#)

Disability includes a physical, mental, intellectual, learning or sensory impairment, including an episodic disability, which, when in interaction with a barrier, hinders an individual's full and effective participation in society.

Source: [Nova Scotia Accessibility Act](#)

Note: this document uses the term persons with disabilities to align with the language of the Nova Scotia *Accessibility Act*. This is called person-first language because it emphasizes the person before a characteristic or disability. Some persons with disabilities prefer identity-first language, which emphasizes a disability or characteristic first. Many deaf and neurodivergent people prefer identity-first language, which have also been included in this document.

Adapted from: [CAN-ASC-3.1:2025 - Plain Language](#)

Essential service means a service necessary for the health, safety, security, or human rights of the public, or a segment of the public, at any time.

Note: Examples of essential services include, but are not limited to:

- hospitals
- pharmacies
- law enforcement

Adapted from: [Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat](#)

Hard of hearing means people with hearing loss ranging from mild to severe, who still have some useful hearing, and may communicate through sign language, spoken language, or both, understand spoken language in some situations, with or without amplification. Many hard of hearing people can make and receive phone calls and use hearing aids.

Adapted from: [Auditory Disabilities — Digital Accessibility Toolkit](#)

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) means technology, equipment, or interconnected system or subsystem of equipment for which the principal function is the creation, conversion, duplication, automatic acquisition, storage, analysis, evaluation, manipulation, management, movement, control, display, switching, interchange, transmission, reception, or broadcast of data or information

Examples of ICT include but are not limited to:

- web pages
- electronic content
- mobile phones and tablets
- computers and computer equipment
- software including mobile applications
- information kiosks and transaction devices

- videos
- IT services

Adapted from: [CAN/ASC - EN 301 549:2024 Accessibility requirements for ICT products and services](#)

Intended audience means the people to whom you are directing your communication and the people you expect to receive your communication. The intended audience includes people with different information and accessibility needs and who face different barriers. You could have more than 1 intended audience for your information. You might have to develop more than 1 communication to provide plain language to each intended audience. As well, a single communication might have a primary audience and a secondary audience.

- A primary audience is the main group of people to whom you are directing your communication.
- A secondary audience consists of other people who will also receive or interact with the communication.

“Intended audience” is the wording used in the definition of plain language, and is broader than “readers.” The word “intended” is meant to prompt organizations to deliberately consider their audiences’ needs.

Source: [CAN-ASC-3.1:2025 - Plain Language](#)

Interpretation means the process of a person conveying information immediately from 1 language to another in real time by speaking or signing. Interpretation includes nuances related to the cultural context and setting of the communication that can be influenced by the interpreter and their surroundings.

Interpreter coordinator means a coordinator who oversees sign language and sign language–spoken language interpreter services, including scheduling and coordinating interpreters, monitoring quality of interpretation and evaluating interpreter qualifications, and providing training and support to interpreters. This work may or may not be done in conjunction with a hiring agency.

Mobile application, also app, means a digital product that is used on a mobile device.

Neurodivergent means having a brain that functions in ways that diverge significantly from the dominant societal standards of “normal”. It recognizes diverse neurologies and ways of being, as variation of human experience, rather than deficiency in need of remediation or cure. It includes those who identify as autistic, having ADHD, Tourette’s syndrome, and dyslexia, to name a few.

Source: [Neurodiversity: some basic terms and definitions](#) as cited in [Recommendations to the Minister of Justice on an Accessibility Standard in Education: Phase 2](#)

Plain language means the wording, structure, and design of communication are so clear that the intended audience can easily do the following:

- find what they need
- understand what they find
- use the information

Only the intended audience can say whether a communication is in plain language for them.

Adapted from: [CAN-ASC-3.1:2025 - Plain Language](#)

Prescribed public sector body means a public sector organization that is identified in the *Accessibility Act* General Regulations. Once a public sector body is prescribed, they need to have the following:

- an Accessibility Advisory Committee
- an accessibility plan (updated every 3 years)

Prescribed public sector bodies can also be required to do other things under the *Accessibility Act*, like comply with accessibility standards.

Proactive means an accessible format or accessible communication service is ready to be provided, without a person needing to request it in advance before it is prepared.

Self-service device means a device where the user might need to enter data, read presented information, respond to prompts, or select from a number of choices for the service to be performed.

Examples include retail self-checkout, self check-in devices, ticket vending kiosks, etc.

Source: [CSA/ASC B651.2:22 - Accessible design for self-service interactive devices including automated banking machines](#)

Signage means information provided in the form of visual and tactile communication that incorporates 1 or more of the following elements:

- alphanumeric characters
- pictograms
- logos
- illustrations (for example, plans)
- colours
- braille

Signage can provide directions, information, identification, warnings, or rules. Signage does not include product labels.

Adapted from [CSA/ASC B651:23 Accessible design for the built environment](#)

Significant update means an update to an existing web application that changes the web application's functionality, user base or purpose.

Source: [Manitoba Accessible Information and Communication Standard Regulation](#)

Sign language means a formal language that uses a system of hand gestures and their placement relative to the upper body, facial expressions, body postures, and finger spelling. There are multiple sign languages around the world, each of which has their distinctive grammar, syntax, and vocabulary.

American Sign Language (ASL), Langue des Signes Québécoise (LSQ), and Indigenous Sign Languages are recognized by the *Accessible Canada Act* as the primary languages of deaf people in Canada. Maritime Sign Language (MSL) is an endangered sign language used in the Atlantic provinces.

Note: For more information visit the [Canadian Association of the Deaf](#) website.

Adapted from: [Merriam-Webster Dictionary](#)

Sign language–spoken language interpreter means a skilled professional who works between the languages and cultures of a sign language and a spoken language to facilitate communication between deaf and hard of hearing people and hearing people. A sign language–spoken language interpreter provides service for everyone involved in the communication, not only the deaf person.

Adapted from Maritime Association of Professional Sign Language Interpreters

Sign language interpreter (deaf interpreter) means a deaf specialist who provides communication access through sign language interpreting services and other visual and tactile communication forms used by deaf, deafblind, and hard of hearing people. Deaf interpreters provide more nuanced and culturally appropriate language access than sign language–spoken language interpreters alone, due to their cultural knowledge and lived experience, combined with their professional training. Deaf interpreters often work as a team with sign language–spoken language interpreters to provide sign language services.

Adapted from: [What is a Deaf Interpreter? — Deaf Interpreter Institute](#)

Translation means the process of converting information from 1 language to another language to accurately convey the meaning of the original content. Translation does not take place immediately in real time. Instead, there is time to take a message away, carefully consider the wording, make revisions as needed before producing a final version.

Uncontracted braille means every letter in a word is expressed in braille instead of using shorthand. Braille is a system of raised dots that people who are blind can read with their fingers.

Source: [CNIB](#)

Universal design in the context of this standard means that websites, applications, online services, and digital products like text documents and multimedia, are proactively designed for diverse users to be easily accessible, understandable, adaptable, flexible and usable by all people, regardless of ability, language, age, or background, without the need for adaptation or specialized design.

Video remote interpreting means a way to access sign language interpreters and sign language–spoken language interpreters in real time using video conferencing.

Wayfinding means a spatial problem-solving process using sensory information systems in a physical environment to enhance their understanding and experience of the space, including where they are in the space. This can include words, pictures, visuals, lighting, auditory, and tactile indicators.

Adapted from [Recommendations on Accessibility Standard in the Built Environment: Phase 2](#)

Web application, also app, means software that is run on a web server and accessed by a user through a web browser.

Source: [Manitoba Accessible Information and Communication Standard Regulation](#)

Web content means information that is published on an organization’s web pages, web applications, intranet, or social media and accessed on any kind of device, including but not limited to desktops, laptops, kiosks, and mobile devices, and includes social media.

Adapted from: [Manitoba Accessible Information and Communication Standard Regulation](#)

Draft Recommendations for an Accessibility Standard in Public Transportation

Public Transportation

Standard Development Committee

Nova Scotia Accessibility Advisory Board

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Introduction

Accessible public transportation

Nova Scotia has a law called the Accessibility Act. This law helps the government make rules about how to make life easier for people with disabilities. One of the areas where people's lives could be easier is public transportation.

What is public transportation?

Public transportation is a way for people to move around from one place to another. This includes local buses and Access-A-Bus, or "paratransit." It includes services that can be booked a few days before a trip. These are called "door-to-door." It also includes ferries, taxis and trains.

This definition of public transportation does not include private cars. It does not include buses, trains or ferries that go from one province to another. It does not include airplanes.

Barriers in public transportation

It is often harder for people with disabilities to get around. It can be harder to find a bus stop or use a local bus. It can be harder to find a ride in the country or rural areas. It can be harder to make a trip on the weekend. It can be harder to travel to a doctor's appointment or the hospital. If there is an emergency, it can be harder to travel to a safe place.

About this document

Government and municipalities make rules about transportation. The Government asked the Nova Scotia Accessibility Advisory Board to help them make rules that make it easier for people with disabilities to get around.

The Accessibility Advisory Board recommended some rules. Now we want to know if people think these are good recommendations.

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This document has the draft rules. The board will probably make changes to these recommended standards after we hear from you.

Many of these draft recommendations refer to “fixed-route bus services,” which are local transportation services that only stop at specific stops. The recommendations would also apply to any future fixed-route train or light rail services operating in Nova Scotia. They don’t apply to federal services, like VIA Rail trains. The board didn’t use the words “train” or “light rail” here because they wanted the recommendations to reflect transportation options when this document is published.

Definitions

Public transportation services: transportation services that are available to the public regardless of who operates or provides them.

Public transportation service provider: a public sector or non-profit organization, or a business that offers transportation services for people.

Types of public transportation services

Fixed-route: Local transportation services that only stop at specific stops. The route is always the same. Some buses in the country can often be waved at to stop and pick someone up. This is called “flag stopping.”

For standard implementation purposes, fixed-route services can be separated by size:

Large	More than 21 routes	Halifax Transit
Medium	3 - 20 routes	- Transit Cape Breton - Kings Transit
Small	1 - 2 routes	- Bridgewater Transit

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Yarmouth Transit- Antigonish Community Transit- Pictou County Transit
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Long-distance: Large buses that move people over long distances. An example would be a bus trip from Sydney to Truro. Buses carry 10 or more people. Maritime Bus provides this kind of service.

Door-to-door: Shared travel transportation services that are pre-booked, usually a day or more in advance. Passengers are picked up at one place and brought to where they want to go. Door-to-door transportation is different from taxis or Uber and Lyft.

Integrated school transportation: A transportation service that allows all students, including students with disabilities, to travel on the same vehicle.

Paratransit: A door-to-door passenger transportation service for people with disabilities who cannot use fixed-route transportation service because of barriers. In Nova Scotia, 2 regional municipalities have paratransit services: Halifax and Cape Breton. The service is called Access-A-Bus.

Taxis and other ride-hailing services: Privately owned and operated services that take people from one place to another. In Nova Scotia, this includes taxis, Uber, and Lyft. Accessible ride-hailing vehicles can safely carry wheelchairs or many other mobility aids.

Recommendations for an accessibility standard in public transportation

1. Minimum public transportation service standard

Availability of service

Recommendation 1: Every municipality must offer door-to-door accessible transportation. This service must be available everywhere in the municipality. The municipality can run it themselves, hire a company, or partner with other municipalities to run it.

The door-to-door service must have at least 2 vehicles. At least 1 vehicle must be wheelchair accessible. This means it has a ramp, bridge plate, or lift. If the service has 3 or more vehicles, at least 2 must be wheelchair accessible.

Definition: A municipality includes a regional municipality, a municipality of a county or district, a town, or a village. Nova Scotia's Municipal Government Act describes municipalities.

Service times

Recommendation 2: Accessible door-to-door service must run every day and at least 78 hours total each week.

Accessible fixed-route transportation services must run every day and at least 78 hours total each week.

Municipalities must ask for input from people with disabilities and local service providers to help decide when the services should run.

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Accessible taxi service can be part of the 78 total service hours for door-to-door services, but only after people with disabilities are consulted.

Access-A-Bus services, where offered, must run for the same number of days, and the same or more hours, as the fixed-route service.

Healthcare transportation

Recommendation 3: Every health care zone must have at least 2 emergency ambulances that can safely transport a person while they stay in their own wheelchair or power wheelchair.

The Government of Nova Scotia must make sure people with disabilities can get transportation services for non-urgent health care.

Hospital, college or university transportation

Recommendation 4: If a hospital, college or university provides transportation services, like shuttle vans, they must provide accessible service when someone asks.

2. Fares or prices

Recommendation 5: People with disabilities must not be charged more than other riders for the same transportation service.

Transportation providers cannot charge extra fees for:

- a support person travelling with a person with a disability
- a service dog
- storing or transporting mobility aids or medical devices if the vehicle can accommodate them.

This rule also applies to taxis and other ride-hailing services like Uber and Lyft.

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Paratransit fares cannot be higher than the highest fare charged on the fixed-route system in the same area.

Public transportation providers may offer reduced or no fares to riders with disabilities.

Definitions: A service dog is a dog that is trained to perform specific tasks to help a person with a disability. It is certified as a service dog according to Nova Scotia's Service Dog Act.

A mobility aid helps people with lower mobility or physical disabilities. It can be a wheelchair, scooter, cane or crutch.

3. Trip planning

Fixed-route service websites

Recommendation 6: Fixed-route and long-distance service providers (like Maritime Bus) must have an accessible website with up-to-date information in plain language.

The website must describe:

- bus routes, schedules, fares and fare options
- accessibility of bus stops, shelters, and terminals
- whether flag stopping is allowed. Flag stopping allows people to wave at a bus from the side of the road on some rural fixed-route services.
- type of vehicles, like light- or medium-class vehicle, bus, motor coach, etc.
- vehicle accessibility features like lifts, ramps, wheelchair spaces, etc.
- planned service changes

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- how to give feedback

The website must have a digital map that shows

- bus routes, stops, shelters and terminals
- accessible bus stops, shelters and terminals
- where flag stopping is allowed

There must be real-time updates in accessible formats about where vehicles are when they are in service. Real-time updates happen immediately.

Definition: Plain language information is words, organization and design that allows the intended audience to easily

- find what they need
- understand what they find
- use the information

Booking door-to-door services

Recommendation 7: Door-to-door transportation service providers must offer riders the same ways to book and pay for a trip.

They must also have the same rules about advance booking, response times, and how seats are confirmed.

Websites for door-to-door services

Recommendation 8: Door-to-door service providers must have an accessible website with up-to-date information.

The website information must include:

- the service area

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- when the service runs
- the cost of the service and available subsidies
- vehicle types, like minivan
- accessibility features, like wheelchair spaces, lift, etc.
- planned service changes
- how to give feedback

4. Paratransit and door-to-door services

Service availability

Recommendation 9: Paratransit and door-to-door service providers must accept same-day ride requests. They can say no if there is not enough capacity, such as not having enough vehicles or drivers available at that time.

If a service provider books a ride request, it must deliver the service unless something unexpected happens, such as poor weather or a vehicle breakdown.

Limiting access to rides

Recommendation 10: Paratransit and door-to-door service providers must not limit access to rides.

They cannot:

- limit how many trips a person can request
- prioritize some types of trips
- have policies and practices that unfairly limit access to the services

For example, a provider cannot say “you can only ask for 3 rides each week” or “medical trips are the most important.”

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Communication about delays

Recommendation 11: Paratransit and door-to-door providers must tell scheduled riders if their pick-up time will be outside of a set pick-up window. Pick-up windows must be 30 minutes or less when possible.

The service must contact the rider using the method the rider used to apply for paratransit or book the service. That contact method could be phone, text, or email.

The service provider must tell the rider as soon as possible about any planned service change or delay that will affect the rider's trip.

Riders' supports and children

Recommendation 12: Paratransit and door-to-door service providers must let riders travel with:

- a service dog
- at least one support person
- mobility aids or medical devices that are not a safety risk and that can be safely stowed
- one or more children, if the rider has and installs a child seat for each child that needs one

The driver must take reasonable steps to help install the child seat and the person with boarding or deboarding if the rider asks for this help.

Guideline

Paratransit providers should have a clear policy about letting riders travel with companions. Companions should be allowed to travel with a rider whenever possible.

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Service to short-term visitors

Recommendation 13: Paratransit and door-to-door service providers must allow eligible visitors to use services if the visit is 21 days or less. If the visit is more than 21 days, the person must apply for paratransit as Nova Scotia residents must apply.

Paratransit application

Recommendation 14: Service providers must make the steps and forms for applying for paratransit publicly available. They must say who is eligible to apply and how to appeal a decision.

Anyone who applies for paratransit must be told if they are eligible within 14 days. If this does not happen, the person is eligible to receive paratransit until they receive the decision. If the person is not accepted, the service provider must explain why in writing.

Paratransit may be needed for emergency situations or for compassionate reasons. Procedures must be developed for someone to access paratransit within 14 days in these cases if no other accessible options exist.

5. Vehicle operation

Broken equipment

Recommendation 15: Public transportation service providers must take steps to make sure the accessibility equipment on their vehicles works. If equipment is not working, the provider must tell the public which equipment is broken, fix it as soon as possible, and take reasonable steps to help the rider in another way.

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Riders' supports

Recommendation 16: Fixed-route and long-distance service operators (like Maritime Bus) must let riders take a trip with:

- a service dog
- at least one support person
- mobility aids or medical devices that are not a safety risk to the rider, other passengers, the driver, and the operation of the vehicle

Picking up passengers

Recommendation 17: Drivers of fixed-route buses must do the following things:

- stop and pause at designated bus stop signs for the route they are serving — even if another bus is already there when they arrive
- lower the bus floor (kneel), when asked, and if the bus stop is built to allow this to safely happen.

Transfers must be time-based, i.e., usable for a set amount of time.

Drivers must give a rider a transfer without asking where they are going. The driver cannot refuse to give a transfer based on the rider's travel direction, the route they are taking, or the stop where they were picked up.

Planned service changes

Recommendation 18: Public transportation service providers must tell riders about expected or planned service changes or disruptions. They must share information in accessible formats at least 72 hours before the changes start.

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If a planned service change will last more than 7 days, the provider must share the information in American Sign Language (ASL) and post the ASL message on their website where it is easy to find.

The information must include other accessible ways a rider can travel.

The same information must be shared on all public channels the provider uses like their website, social media, and transit apps. This also applies to service disruptions caused by storms, a weather event.

For fixed-route services, if other ways to travel are not accessible, the service provider must help riders with disabilities reach their destination if they ask for help. Help could be arranging paratransit or giving accessible taxi vouchers.

If a planned service change, like road construction, happens on provincial roads, the Government of Nova Scotia must tell municipalities and transportation providers at least 7 days before the service change begins.

Unplanned service changes

In Recommendation 12.3, municipalities must make plans to remove snow or rain from transit stops within a set amount of time.

Recommendation 19: If a transit stop is not accessible after the set clearing time, a driver must report it right away to the authority responsible for the stop.

After the authority receives a report, it must tell the public that the bus stop is not accessible and where to find the closest accessible stop. It must also make the bus stop accessible within a reasonable time.

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If a rider cannot get off at a stop they want, the driver must talk to the rider to find the next accessible stop along the route. They must offer to let the rider off at that location.

6. Vehicle design

Standards for Nova Scotia fixed-route buses

Recommendation 20: Fixed-route buses must meet the [Canadian Standards Association accessible transit buses standard D435](#).

Buses must also have the following features.

- a kneeling function
- stop request controls and other rider controls that can be easily used with one hand, and without tight grasping, pinching, or twisting. These controls must be easy for all riders to reach.
- where systems have more than one route, buses must have a digital display panel and an audible announcement at the front door to tell riders the route number and destination
- a digital display panel and a sound that tells riders that someone wants to stop at the next stop
- a digital display and sound that tells riders the name of the next stop. The stop request and the sound device must be in separate displays.
- floors, ramps, and lift surfaces that cut down on glare and slipping
- systems that stop a wheeled mobility device from tipping or sliding during travel (as in [CSA D435, Accessible transit buses](#)). One-point tie-down systems that are rear-facing are not permitted.

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Signage

Recommendation 21: Fixed-route bus signage must clearly tell passengers

- where mobility and priority seats are
- how to report problems
- how to leave the bus in an emergency

Bus signage must meet the signage standards in [CSA B651, Accessible design for the built environment](#).

Bus ads

Recommendation 22: Bus ads must not cover the windows on the sidewalk side of the vehicle. This includes ads that wrap over the bus or large decals.

7. Fixed-route bus stops, shelters and terminals, and bike lanes

Transit infrastructure

The following recommendations are based on 4 levels of transit infrastructure, Levels A, B, C and D. Each level is built upon others. All transit stops must meet Level D, where applicable. Only some will have to meet Level A.

Places where a passenger can flag down a bus from the road (called “flag-stopping”) would not have to follow these rules.

All recommendations for transit stop identification at bus stops, shelters and terminals must meet relevant standards in [CSA B651 Accessible design for the built environment](#). The recommendations

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must also meet the Information and Communication standards when they are enacted.

Level D features

All transportation infrastructure must meet this standard level.

Transit stop identification

Recommendation 23: Every bus stop must be identified with the following:

- a transit stop pole next to the boarding area
- tactile features on the pole (things you can read by touch)
- tactile directional and attention indicators
- overhead lighting near the stop but not in a walking path

If there isn't space for a separate transit stop pole, transit signage can go on an existing pole.

The bottom of a transit stop sign must be mounted as close as possible to 2050 mm above the ground, but not below.

The elements above must meet relevant Transit stops standards in [CSA B651, Accessible design for the built environment](#), section 8.5.

Accessible signage

Recommendation 24: Transit stop signs must have these features:

- a consistent design (shape, colour, placement)
- high colour contrast (70%) between any pictogram, letter and number and the background
- a glare-free surface

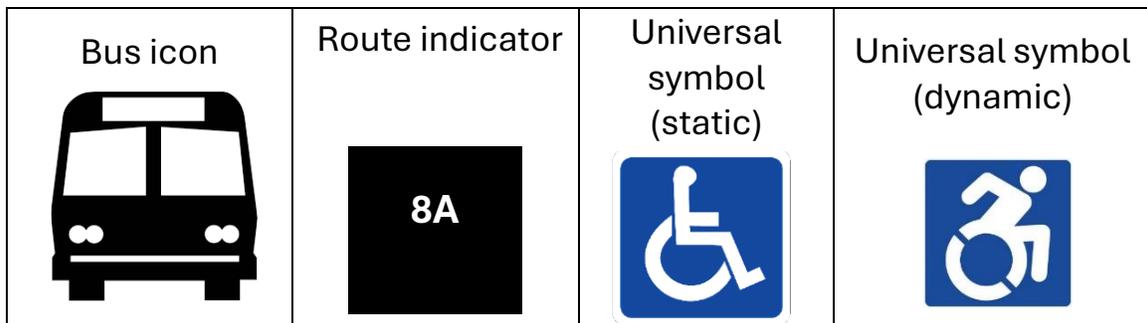
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Text and number font must be easy to read. This means they must meet the minimum viewing distance standards in [CSA B651, Accessible design for the built environment](#), section 4.6.3.

The signs must clearly show:

- the type of transit, like “bus”
- a transit icon
- for systems with multiple routes, the route numbers or letters
- the universal accessibility symbol if applicable
- the accessibility level of the stop

The images below show what these could look like.



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Example of 3 bus stop signs that show different levels of stop accessibility (source: Halifax Transit)



Sign 1: Accessible stop (ramp can be deployed, concrete pad with access to sidewalk)

Sign 2: Cannot deploy accessibility ramp

Sign 3: Ramp can be deployed but other accessibility standards not available

Level C features

Transit stop pads

Recommendation 25: A transit stop pad meets Level C if it meets Level D and includes the features below.

These features are requirements in [CSA B651, Accessible design for the built environment](#), section 8.5.3. This means the pad has:

- a firm, even surface and enough space to move and turn a wheeled mobility device)
- tactile attention indicators (bumpy tiles) where needed
- a gentle, safe slope

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If the transit stop pad is between the back of a curb and a sidewalk, it must fill the space from the curb to the sidewalk, so riders have a continuous level area for boarding.

On streets that have a curb but no sidewalk, the transit stop must have a concrete pad. That pad must meet the same rules above and include a curb ramp that meets [CSA B651, Accessible design for the built environment](#), section 8.3.3.

The photo below shows an example of this type of pad.



Level B features

Transit shelter features

A transit shelter meets Level B if it already meets Levels C and D, and it has the features below.

Recommendation 26: Shelters must follow the [CSA B651 standard](#) for bus shelters, section 8.5.4.

This means these things:

- You can get to the shelter on an accessible route.
- The entrance is wide enough for a wheelchair and there is enough space inside to turn a wheelchair around.

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- Signage is clear and accessible.
- There is enough headroom, and no hazards stick out.
- Tactile attention indicators warn people of possible dangers.
- Glass walls have 2 solid, high-contrast strips running parallel to the street surface.

Recommendation 27: Level B shelters must have seats.

Guideline

On fixed bus routes, accessible shelters should be placed near important public places. This helps people get to services easily and safely.

Shelters should be near:

- government service hubs, like Access NS
- hospitals and major health care places
- schools, colleges, and universities
- community recreation centres
- multi-unit seniors' residences, like assisted living and long-term care
- public libraries
- grocery stores
- cultural centres

A transit stop should have benches if a shelter cannot be installed.

Level A features

Level A is for big transit stops where 3 or more routes meet at the same time and come from more than one direction. They are called “transit terminals” or “hubs.”

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A transit terminal is Level A if it already meets Levels B, C, and D, and it has the features below:

- Accessible directional signs are consistently located riders must decide which way to go. The signs show where to get on and get off a bus for each route, and where to find services like washrooms.
- Fixed visual displays show the schedule and route maps for all routes at the stop.
- Tactile or audio information supports the fixed visual displays. This could include braille, tactile maps, or audio announcements.
- Real-time bus arrival information is available in audio and visual formats.
- All signs follow the accessible transit stop signage rules in Recommendation 24.

Bike lanes and micromobility parking

Recommendation 28: When planning a new bike lane, municipalities must talk with people with disabilities about the design. They must include people who are blind or who have low vision.

Bike lane design must follow the minimum bike lane standard in [CSA B651, Accessible design for the built environment](#), section 8.5.3 (f-g).

This means the following things:

- The bike lane is level with the pedestrian path.
- Tactile attention indicators tell users that something changes.
- Accessible signage on a single post tells cyclists to stop or yield when a bus is present.

If the far-right lane of a street is a bike lane, buses must fully occupy that lane when stopping.

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“Micromobility” describes bikes and e-scooters. Parking areas for bikes and other micromobility devices must not allow them to stick out into the route people use to walk or roll.

Guideline

Bike lanes should look and work the same way everywhere in a municipality so that people using sidewalks and bus stops know what to expect. If a bike lane needs a different design, a municipality should explain the new design and show why the change is needed. Reasons might include safety or space limits.

8. Training and education

Who gets training

Recommendation 29: Every public transportation provider must make sure people get accessibility training for their jobs. This includes:

- people who drive or operate vehicles
- people who talk with the public to book or schedule rides, like dispatchers
- people who plan, run, or support transportation services
- people who buy vehicles and vehicle equipment for the transportation provider

When staff get training

Recommendation 30: People who drive vehicles must receive training about their duties before they transport people with disabilities or when the standard takes effect.

Other employees listed above must be trained within 60 days of starting, or when the standard takes effect.

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Supervisors who oversee drivers and dispatchers must receive accessibility training related to the requirements of their job and to the duties of the people they supervise. They must receive this training at least every 3 years.

Training topics

Recommendation 31: Everyone who needs training must get training that includes these topics:

- an overview of the laws: Nova Scotia Human Rights Act, Accessibility Act, the Accessible Public Transportation Standard Also, the idea that everyone must have barrier-free access to full and equal participation in society, regardless of their disabilities.
- barriers that can limit access to transportation. These include barriers for people with visible and invisible, episodic and temporary disabilities
- how to communicate with people with disabilities in ways that respect autonomy and dignity
- the accessibility features on transportation vehicles. These include ramps, lifts, mobility securement, announcements, and displays
- the role of a support person
- the role and needs of a service dog
- the types of help riders may need and what drivers must do

Drivers must know how to help riders get on and off a vehicle and about common assistive devices, like wheelchairs, walkers, mobility canes, and communication devices

Drivers must know about ways to make communication with riders easier. These can include methods that replace speech (alternative communication) and methods that support speech (augmentative communication), sign language, and plain language.

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Drivers and their supervisors need extra training about:

- how to safely use accessibility equipment, including how to secure wheeled mobility devices on vehicles
- what to do when there are temporary barriers or when accessibility equipment fails (safe, acceptable changes to procedures)
- how to prepare for and act in emergencies to keep people with disabilities safe

People with disabilities must be involved in creating training content.

Public transportation service providers must keep a record of and report to the municipality on the training provided, including dates and the number of people trained.

9. Taxis and other ride-hailing services

Recommendation 32: Taxi and other ride-hailing services (like Uber and Lyft) and their drivers must treat riders with disabilities fairly. They cannot:

- charge more because a rider has a disability
- charge more to carry a mobility aids or medical devices (like a wheelchair, walker, cane, or oxygen tank) when the vehicle can accommodate it

They must provide service to someone with a disability who requires reasonable assistance, or that has a service dog, or both.

10. School transportation

The Board Public Passenger Motor Carrier Act Regulation, section 19(2), made under the Motor Carrier Act, sets design standards for school buses operated by a regional centre for education.

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Appropriate transportation

Recommendation 33: Every regional centre for education must provide accessible school transportation that lets students with disabilities ride with students that do not have disabilities. This is integrated accessible transportation.

If this is not possible for safety reasons or because of the student's barrier, the regional centre for education must arrange another accessible way for the student to travel. This is alternative accessible transportation.

Transportation plan

Recommendation 34: When a student needs integrated or alternative accessible school transportation, the regional centre for education must work with the student and their parents or guardians to make a written plan. The plan must:

- describe the student's accessibility needs
- explain how the student will get on and off the vehicle and be secured in the vehicle

The plan must also list the duties of

- the regional centre for education
- the parents or guardians
- the student
- the service provider (if an outside company provides the service)
- the vehicle driver
- school staff

Private schools

The Education Act describes what is a private school.

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Recommendation 35: If a private school provides school transportation, that transportation must allow students with disabilities to ride with their peers whenever it is safe and reasonable. This is called “integrated transportation.”

The private school must work with the with the student and their parents or guardians to make a written plan. The plan must:

- describe the student’s accessibility needs
- explain how the student will get on and off the vehicle and be secured in the vehicle
- the duties of the school, parent or guardian, student, service provider, driver, and school staff

The bus must meet the standards in [CSA Standard D250, School buses](#); or [CSA Standard D409, Motor vehicles for the transportation of persons with physical disabilities](#).

11. Emergency transportation

Vulnerable persons registry

Recommendation 36: The Government of Nova Scotia must set up and maintain a voluntary provincial vulnerable persons registry that allows people to give government information about their transportation needs. Municipalities must take part in creating and maintaining this registry.

Emergency evacuation plans

Recommendation 37: The Government of Nova Scotia and all municipalities must include in emergency plans how people with disabilities will be assisted to leave safely (evacuate) when they have to. They must also keep an up-to-date list of accessible vehicles to transport people with disabilities in an emergency.

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Emergency policies for people with disabilities

Recommendation 38: All public transportation service providers must have written operational policies that protect the safety of people with disabilities. They must be available to the public in accessible formats.

12. Recommendations for municipalities

Municipal accessibility plans

The Nova Scotia Accessibility Act requires municipalities to have accessibility plans, consult with people with disabilities, and update and publish the plans every 3 years.

Recommendation 39: A municipal accessibility plan must include actions to prevent and remove barriers in public transportation. The plan must explain how the municipality will deal with the following issues:

- changes in supply and demand for accessible transportation
- changes in the availability of accessible transportation such as days and hours of operation
- access to accessible public transportation in planned developments

Input from people with disabilities

Recommendation 40: The municipality must seek input from people with disabilities and other subject-matter experts when making the accessibility plan. Their input must cover whether the municipality provides enough accessible transportation service.

They should also comment on

- whether bus routes cover enough of the municipality
- whether the routes are the most useful ones

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- if the system runs for enough days and hours each day
- whether the location of stops and shelters are useful
- whether the quality of service meets the needs of people with disabilities

If the municipality includes both urban and rural areas, it must talk with urban and rural residents.

The accessibility plan must be made publicly available and in accessible formats.

Municipal policies and practices

Recommendation 41: Municipalities must establish and implement measures, policies and practices for:

- estimating the need for accessible transportation
- reducing wait times for accessible door-to-door and paratransit transportation
- removing snow, ice or other material, with appropriate timeframes for removal
- receiving and responding to feedback from people with disabilities

The policies must be made available to the public in accessible formats.

13. Recommendations for Government of Nova Scotia

Provincial funding

Recommendation 42: The Government of Nova Scotia must provide enough funding for oversight and resources to support the connectivity and standardization of the public transportation sector. This includes

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the development and implementation of standardized provincial processes and systems for:

- transportation communications
- passenger booking and payment options
- fare payment technology

The province must also fund transportation service providers so they can:

- meet the requirement to use standardized communications; passenger reservation, booking and payment options; and fare payment technology
- support the standardization of communications for door-to-door and fixed-route services
- recruit, train, and keep qualified drivers
- provide accessibility training to service providers and drivers
- buy accessible vehicles and equipment that meet the standards

Review of Public Passenger Regulations

Recommendation 43: The province must conduct a regulatory review of the Motor Carrier Act, Public Passenger Regulations. The purpose is to remove barriers to route connectivity and fare setting.

Accessible transportation to health care

Recommendation 44: The province must make sure Nova Scotians with disabilities have accessible transportation to travel to health care appointments. Health care transportation options must not reduce transportation services for people with disabilities travelling for other reasons.

The province must review current urgent and non-urgent health care transportation options. The review must

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- include the transportation of people in their own wheeled mobility device
- propose options to fill gaps in service

The province must develop policies and processes for transporting someone in their wheeled mobility device to and from the hospital in an ambulance.

Resources and education

Recommendation 45: The province must create a central resource hub for municipalities and transportation service providers to help them meet the public transportation accessibility standard. The resources, including training materials, must be available in accessible formats for service providers to use before the standard becomes law.

It must also implement a public education campaign about inclusive, accessible public transportation practices. People with disabilities must provide input into the campaign content.

Review built environment Accessibility Standard

The province must revise the built environment Accessibility Standard, regulation No. 9 (a), so that the word “accessible” comes before the word “transportation.”

Working definitions

Definitions about the types of transportation referred to in these standard recommendations can be found at the beginning of this document.

The definitions below are for other common terms used in this document.

These definitions may change to align with the definitions in the draft standard recommendations for Information and Communication.

Accessibility plan: A plan to identify, remove and prevent barriers in policies, programs, practices, and services of a public sector body.

Accessible formats: Print, electronic, audio, or visual material that is formatted to remove barriers so that people can equitably access the information.

This may include making sure the material is compatible with assistive technology, closed captioning, described video, large print, braille, and video transcripts.

Assistive devices: Equipment, hardware, software, apps, computers, or devices that help people with all aspects of life.

Disability: This includes a physical, mental, intellectual, learning or sensory impairment, including an episodic disability, that, in interaction with a barrier, hinders an individual's full and effective participation in society. (Nova Scotia Accessibility Act)

CSA B651: Canadian Standards Association standard for Accessible design for the built environment, as supplemented, amended, added to, replaced or superseded.

CSA D435: Canadian Standards Association standard for Accessible transit buses standard, as supplemented, amended, added to, replaced or superseded.

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CSA D409: Canadian Standards Association standard for Motor vehicles for the transportation of persons with physical disabilities, as supplemented, amended, added to, replaced or superseded.

Flag stopping: Some fixed-route services in rural areas allow for passengers to wave at a bus on the side of the road for pick-up, and to be dropped off at nonspecific stops.

Medical device: Any instrument or component used to treat, diagnose or prevent disease or physical condition.

Mobility aid or device: a term used to include the variety of assistive devices used by people with reduced mobility or physical disabilities, including manual and power wheelchairs, scooters, canes and crutches.

Municipality: means one of the following:

- a regional municipality
- a municipality of a county or district
- a town
- a village, as defined under the Municipal Government Act

Non-urgent healthcare transportation services: Services that transport people who cannot drive themselves or use public transportation to reach medical appointments, treatments or healthcare facilities. Non-urgent healthcare transportation focuses on scheduled, planned transportation that supports ongoing healthcare needs and routine medical care. The services are scheduled in advance and cater to patients who are medically stable but require assistance getting to their appointments.

Plain language: the wording, structure, and design of communication are so clear that the intended audience can easily do the following:

- find what they need
- understand what they find

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- use the information

Only the intended audience can say whether a communication is in plain language for them.

Real-time transit information: Data provided to passengers about the location, arrival, and departure times of public transportation vehicles that is provided immediately.

Service dog: As defined in the Service Dog Act, a service dog is a dog that is trained to perform specific tasks to help a person with a disability and is certified as a service dog.

Guide dog: A guide dog is defined, in accordance with the Blind Persons' Rights Act, as a dog trained to help individuals who are blind or partially sighted.

Support person: Someone who accompanies a person with a disability or a deaf person to help with communications, personal care, or accessing and benefiting from services.

Visitor: A person who does not live in the community where a paratransit or door-to-door service operates.