

## **Accessibility standards**

### **What are barriers to accessibility?**

Barriers are obstacles that prevent people with disabilities from doing the kinds of things many of us do without thinking. Things like catching a bus, going to work or school and buying groceries.

### **What is a standard?**

A standard is an agreed way of doing something.

Accessibility standards are the rules that businesses and organizations in Ontario will have to follow to identify, remove and prevent barriers to accessibility.

Ontario is developing standards in many important areas of life:

- customer service
- employment
- information and communications
- public transportation
- built environment (buildings, parks, trails etc.)

### **How are standards being developed?**

Committees of people from the disability, business and public communities:

- develop proposed accessibility standards
- submit an initial proposed standard for public review
- revise the proposed standard to incorporate public input, and
- submit a final proposed standard to the government for consideration as law.

The government then decides what will become law and when.

### **What happens when standards become law?**

Once developed and made into law, these standards will include the steps and timelines that businesses and organizations will have to follow.

### **Where are we now?**

The Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Regulation is now law. It came into effect on January 1, 2008. Public sector organizations have to meet requirements under this standard by January 1, 2010. The private sector and non-profit organizations will follow January 1, 2012.

The Integrated Accessibility Standard, which incorporates the Information and Communications, Employment and Transportation standards, came into effect on July 1, 2011. Both public and private sector organizations have to meet the requirements within this standard. The compliance dates vary from 2011 to 2021.

The Accessible Built Environment Standard is being finalized now.