

Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

Effective Date: December 1, 2023

Introduction

Beard Winter LLP/B.W. Law Limited Partnership (herein referred to as B.W. Law) is committed to creating and maintaining an accessible environment for all Firm members, clients and visitors and to meeting the objectives and requirements as outlined in the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (the ‘AODA’).

The Multi-year Accessibility Plan, together with the Information and Communication Standard, the Integrated Accessibility Standards Policy and the Accessible Customer Service Standard Policy, were developed in accordance with the requirements of the AODA, and together they outline our commitment and strategy to achieve accessibility goals. The policies and plan are available on B.W. Law’s website and intranet. B.W. Law will provide, on request, information in an accessible format or with communication supports to people with disabilities, in a manner that takes into account their disability.

The Multi-year Plan will be reviewed and updated at least once every five (5) years.

Information and Communication Standard

B.W. Law is committed to making information and feedback processes accessible to people with disabilities. As required, we will consult with people with disabilities to determine their information and communication needs.

Actions Taken

Accessible Formats, Communication Supports and Web Content:

- The provision of accessible formats and communication supports to persons with disabilities will be done in a timely manner, and upon request, taking into account the individual’s needs, and at no extra cost above what is charged to others;
- All new content on the B.W. Law website conforms with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (‘WCAG’) 2.1, Level AA;
- Feedback can be provided to the Director of Finance & Administration and a response will be provided within 7 days.

Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation

B.W. Law is committed to providing accessible formats and communication supports with respect to the B.W. Law’s employment practices.

Actions Taken

- Information is posted about the availability of accommodation for job applicants with disabilities during the recruitment and selection process;
- Inform job applicants who are selected for an interview that accommodations are available, upon request, in relation to the materials or processes to be used;

- If an employee or new hire with a disability makes a request for accommodation, we will consult with the individual and determine the provision or arrangement of suitable accommodation in a manner that takes into account the application;
- Inform current employees and new hires of policies used to support employees with disabilities;
- If an employee is absent from work due to disability and requires accommodation in order to return to work, an individual accommodation plan is developed for the individual, in consultation with an expert, where necessary;
- When providing performance management information to an employee with a disability, B.W. Law will take into account the accessibility needs of the employee and as applicable, individual accommodation plans;
- When providing career development information to an employee with a disability, B.W. Law will take into account the accessibility needs of the employee, and as applicable, individual accommodation plans;
- Upon request, B.W. Law will consult with the employee to provide or arrange for the provision of accessible formats or communication supports for information that is needed in order to perform the job, and information that is generally available to employees in the workplace.

Workplace Emergency Response Procedures

B.W. Law is committed to providing individualized workplace emergency response information to partners and employees who have a disability, as required. B.W. Law is also committed to providing plans and public safety information in an accessible format, to those customers with disabilities, as requested.

Actions Taken

- B.W. Law's emergency response procedures can be found on the B.W. Law's intranet. B.W. Law will provide, upon request, all existing emergency procedures, plans and public safety information in an accessible format or with appropriate communication supports, in a timely manner, on request;
- Where required, B.W. Law will provide assistance to specific disabled individuals, with the disabled individual's prior consent, to help them evacuate the workplace in the case of an emergency;
- Any person who receives individualized workplace emergency information will also be provided with a person designated by B.W. Law to provide assistance to the employee during an emergency;
- All designated individuals providing assistance will be provided with training for emergency evacuation;
- The individualized workplace emergency response information will be reviewed when an individual is relocated within the firm, when accommodation needs or plans are reviewed and when general emergency response policies are reviewed.

Training

B.W. Law provides training on the Accessible Customer Service Standard and the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) requirements to all lawyers and employees, including those who work with the public or other third parties or who are involved in the development of customer service policies, practices and procedures.

Actions Taken

In accordance with the IASR:

- Training is provided as part of the new hire onboarding process and in a way that best suits the job duties of the Firm members;
- A record will be maintained of the training provided and to whom.

Accessible Customer Service Standard

B.W. Law's Customer Service Standard Policy outlines our commitment to providing access to our facilities and delivering excellent service at all times in a way that respects the dignity and independence of all of our clients and visitors. Since January 2012, B.W. Law has been in compliance with its obligations under the Accessible Customer Service Standard of the AODA.

Actions Taken

The following measures have been implemented by B.W. Law:

- Development of the Accessible Customer Service Standard Policy, which is available on B.W. Law's website and intranet;
- Frontline employees who interact directly with clients and visitors are trained and familiar with various assistive devices;
- Clients and visitors who are accompanied by a registered service animal or support person are accommodated and permitted to access areas of our premises open to the public. If clients and visitors are accompanied by a support person, the support person will be accommodated.
- Notice is provided to clients and visitors with self-disclosed disabilities in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption to services or office facilities. Where possible, we post a notification on our website regarding the disruption. The notice includes the reason for the disruption, how long the disruption is expected to last, and a description of any alternative facilities or services available (where applicable).

For more information, please contact:

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Accessible formats of this document are available upon request.