

Plain Language Summary of The Accessible Canada Act

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CDAC thanks Kerri Joffe, Staff Lawyer at ARCH for her permission to adapt her summary of the Accessible Canada Act. While we made every effort to use plain language, the process is complex and you can get more information in [Kerri's article](#)

What is the Accessible Canada Act?

On June 20, 2018, the Accessible Canada Act was read in the House of Commons.

At this time, the Accessible Canada Act is called Bill C-81. Bill C-81 has to go through a number of stages in Parliament before it becomes a law in Canada.

When it becomes a law, the Accessible Canada Act will tell organizations and services that are controlled by the federal government that they have to remove barriers for people with disabilities.

This includes barriers for people who have physical, mental, intellectual, learning, communication or sensory impairments or other types of disabilities.

What organizations will have to remove barriers?

The new law is for most government organizations and services that are controlled by or have to follow the government's laws. Some examples are, Canada Revenue Agency, Transportation Canada, Public Health Agency of Canada and the Supreme Court of Canada. The law would also apply to Royal Canadian Mounted Police, banking, telephone, radio and television services.

What sort of barriers will need to be removed?

The new law will tell organizations to remove barriers to building and spaces, so that people who use mobility devices can use them. The law will tell organizations what they need to do to employ people with disabilities. It will also tell organizations how to make their goods and services and information accessible for people who have disabilities.

What will these organizations have to do?

The law will tell organizations to work with people who have disabilities to come up with a plan to make their services accessible. It will tell them to give people with disabilities ways to make complaints. It will also tell them to share their accessibility information with the public.

Who will tell the organizations what they need to do?

The new law will make a new organization called the Canadian Accessibility Standards Development Organization. People with disabilities and experts in the disability field will make up the board of directors for this organization. They will recommend ways or legal rules to make government controlled services accessible. They will give these recommendations to the government. When the government decides which recommendations to use, they are called regulations.

Who will be in charge of making things happen?

The new law will put an Accessibility Commissioner in charge of making sure that organizations and services follow the law. The commissioner will give advice to the Minister of Accessibility. They will check to see if organizations are following the regulations and they will also handle serious complaints from people with disabilities. However, they will not handle complaints about some government-controlled services. People with disabilities can also make a complaint to the Canadian Human Rights Commission if they have been discriminated against because of their disability. There will also be an independent Chief Accessibility Officer who will check to see if everything is working well.

What will happen if organizations do not follow the law?

If organizations do not follow the regulations, they may get a warning or they may have to pay a fine.

What happens next?

When the House of Commons gets back to work in the fall, Bill C-81 will continue to work its way through the process of becoming a law.

At this time, disability organizations are collecting information about how well Bill C-81 meets the needs of people with disabilities.

For more information and to read the full text of the Act, go to:

<http://www.parl.ca/DocumentViewer/en/42-1/bill/C-81/first-reading#enH755>

To read the Government of Canada's plain language summary of the Act go to: <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-socialdevelopment/programs/accessible-people-disabilities/act-plain-languagesummary.html>