

# Handbook for Accessible Employment:

Under the Accessibility for  
Ontarians with Disabilities Act



## Ontario's Accessible Employment Standard

About 15.5 per cent of Ontario's population has a disability and that number will grow as our population ages. Ontario will be increasingly dependent on a workforce that includes people with disabilities and people who are working beyond the retirement age.

The employment standard is about making accessibility a regular part of finding, hiring and supporting employees with disabilities.



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Section 1:

# **Practices and Processes**

# Introduction

This guide will help you meet the requirements of the accessible employment standard. The standard will make accessibility a regular part of finding, hiring and supporting employees with disabilities.

Under the standard, different types and sizes of organizations are given different timelines to meet their legal requirements. The chart below summarizes the requirements and timelines.

## Government of Ontario and Public Sector Organizations

Requirements	Government of Ontario*	50+Employees	1-49 Employees
Workplace Emergency Response Information	Jan 1, 2012	Jan 1, 2012	Jan 1, 2012
Accessible Hiring Practices	Jan 1, 2013	Jan 1, 2014	Jan 1, 2015
All-staff information about Support for Employees with Disabilities			
Accessible Formats and Communication Supports			
Individual Accommodation Plans			
Return to Work Processes			
Performance Management, Career Development and Job Changes			

\* Includes Legislative Assembly

## Private Sector and Non-Profit Organizations

Requirements	50+ Employees	1-49 Employees	
Workplace Emergency Response Information	Jan 1, 2012	Jan 1, 2012	
Accessible Hiring Practices	Jan 1, 2016	Jan 1, 2017	
All-staff information about Support for Employees with Disabilities			
Accessible Formats and Communication Supports			
Individual Accommodation Plans		Not Applicable	
Return to Work Processes			
Performance Management, Career Development and Job Changes			Jan 1, 2017

The content in this section is adapted from the Conference Board of Canada's Employers' Toolkit: Making Ontario Workplaces Accessible to People With Disabilities

# 1. Workplace Emergency Response Information

Individualized emergency response information is:

- A plan to help an employee with a disability during an emergency.
- Emergency information that is accessible so an employee with a disability can understand it.

## **What you need to do**

If you know an employee might need help in an emergency due to a permanent or temporary disability:

- Provide individualized workplace emergency response information to the employee.
- Get the employee's consent, then share this information with the people designated to help them in an emergency.
- Review the emergency response information when the employee changes work locations, when you review the employee's accommodation needs, or when you review your organization's general emergency response policies.

## **Quick Fact**

Disabilities can be permanent or temporary.

## **Example:**

An employee with a broken leg needs help using the stairs or opening doors.

## Steps to consider

There is no simple solution to developing individual emergency response information. The law does not specify what accommodations employers must make or what information must be provided. It is flexible so you can work with your staff to determine what employees need in an emergency.

For a step-by-step guide to providing emergency response information for employees with disabilities, and a sample employee emergency response information template, please see **Accessibility Standard for Employment, Providing emergency response information for employees with disabilities** at [ontario.ca/AccessON](https://ontario.ca/AccessON)

## 2. Accessible Hiring Practices

### Recruitment

#### **What you need to do**

You must let job applicants know that you will provide accommodation during the hiring process.

#### **Tips and resources**

- Include a statement when posting jobs in a newspaper or on your website.
- Let job applicants know directly by email, in-person, or by phone.

#### **Sample Wording**

[Name of Organization] welcomes and encourages applications from people with disabilities. Accommodations are available on request for candidates taking part in all aspects of the selection process.

### Selection process

#### **What you need to do**

When you are inviting an applicant to take part in the selection process, such as an interview:

- Let them know that accommodations relating to the assessment are available on request.
- Consult with them on how you can best meet their needs.

## Tips and resources

- Remember that candidates with disabilities usually know which accommodations will be most suitable for them.
- Educate and train managers/recruiters on bias-free interviewing processes.
- Minimize bias in the interview process. For example, use standard interview scripts, questions and scoring for all candidates.
- Consider any transferable skills that the applicant may bring to the position besides the traditional minimum experience or educational requirements.
- Use pre-employment training programs to prepare people with disabilities to enter the workforce as well as to assess their job skills.

## Accessible Interviewing Checklist

### Location

- Conduct the interview in an accessible location.

**Example:** An applicant who uses a walker or wheelchair can easily enter and move around in the interview room.

### Format of skills assessment tests

- Make the format of assessment tests accessible to people with disabilities.

**Example:** Computerized tests are accessible to people with vision loss using screen readers.

- Allow candidates to demonstrate their knowledge and skills by using assessment tests.

**Example:** If the candidate has difficulties reading, an oral test or text-to-speech software is used.

### **Room set-up for in-person interviews**

- Set up the interview room in an accessible way.

**Example:** The room is brightly lit and quiet to minimize distractions and help a person with hearing loss who reads lips.

### **Interviewing timelines**

- Allocate additional time for people with disabilities.

**Example:** An interview or test takes longer for an applicant with cerebral palsy who takes longer to speak.

### **Support**

- Allow individuals with disabilities to bring support persons to interviews.

**Example:** A support person or family member of a person with a disability guides the candidate between interview locations and sets up preferences on the computer before a test.

### **Paperwork**

- Assign a staff member to help the applicant with a disability.

**Example:** If an applicant with vision loss or a learning disability has difficulty filling out written forms, a staff member is available to help.

Source: The Conference Board of Canada

## Notice to successful applicants

### What you need to do

When making an offer of employment, let successful applicants know about your policies for accommodating employees with disabilities.

### Tips and resources

- Speak directly to applicants to tell them about your policies on accommodating employees with disabilities.
- Include the information in the offer letter or in a separate email.

### Sample wording

[Name of Organization] has an accommodation process in place that provides accommodations for employees with disabilities. If you require a specific accommodation because of a disability or a medical need, please contact [Company Representative, Title] at [Telephone number] or by e-mail at [Email]. This ensures that the appropriate accommodations are in place before you begin your employment.

# 3. All-staff Information about Policies for Supporting Employees with Disabilities

## What you need to do

Inform all employees of your organization's policies to support employees with disabilities. This includes job accommodation policies that take into account an employee's accessibility needs due to disability.

## Tips and resources

- Use a variety of communication methods such as:
  - posters
  - all-staff emails
  - lunch and learns
  - town halls
  - brochures
- Use plain language so written communication is easy to understand.

## Sample Wording

It is the policy of this organization to ensure that job accommodations are provided for employees with disabilities. Please contact your manager if you would like to discuss accommodations.

# 4. Accessible Formats and Communication Supports

## What you need to do

Upon receiving a request for accommodation, consult with the employee with a disability to provide the most appropriate accessible formats and communication supports for job-related information.

## Tips and resources

- When deciding on the most appropriate accessible formats or communications supports for an employee with a disability, it may be useful to involve an external accessibility expert.
- For a step-by-step guide on making information accessible for employees, please see **Information and Communications Standard, Making information accessible to people with disabilities** at [ontario.ca/AccessON](https://ontario.ca/AccessON)

## Examples of job-related information

- Policies
- Newsletters
- Bulletins
- Fact sheets on health and safety information
- Employee orientation and training materials
- Employee surveys
- All staff e-mails

## Quick Fact

Accessible formats are alternatives to standard print and are accessible to people with disabilities. Accessible formats include:

- large print
- braille
- recorded audio
- electronic formats

Communication supports help people with disabilities gain access to information. Communication supports include:

- plain language
- sign language
- reading out loud
- captioning
- writing notes

# 5. Individual Accommodation Plans

## **What you need to do**

All organizations — except private sector and non-profit organizations with 1–49 employees — must develop and write a process for creating documented accommodation plans for employees with disabilities that include the following:

- How an employee participates in the development of their individual accommodation plan.
- How an employee is assessed on an individual basis.
- How a unionized employee can ask for a representative from their bargaining agent.
- How a non-unionized employee can ask for a representative from the workplace to participate in the development of the accommodation plan.
- How assistance can be requested from an outside expert, at your expense.
- The steps you will take to protect the privacy of the employee's personal information.
- The schedule for when and how the plan will be reviewed and updated.
- How an employee will be provided with an individual accommodation plan that considers their disability accommodation needs.
- How you will tell an employee that their individual accommodation plan has not been accepted.

It is important for you and the employee with a disability to determine and implement appropriate accommodation measures. However, the final decision rests with you.

## **Steps to consider**

Here are some steps to consider. A flowchart of the process is shown in Figure 2 and a sample template is shown in Section 3.

### **Step 1: Recognize the need for accommodation**

You must accommodate employees with known disabilities. Usually the process begins when an employee with a disability requests accommodation. However, if a manager notices that an employee needs accommodation, the manager should discuss accommodation measures with the employee.

### **Step 2: Gather relevant information and assess needs**

To help the employer or external expert determine the appropriate accommodation measures, the employee may be asked to provide medical information. As an employer, you are responsible for all related costs.

Work with the employee during the process. The employee should provide input about what might be most effective and appropriate. You, along with the employee, the union representative (if applicable), and external experts should decide what accommodation will best address the employee's needs. This may involve experimentation, partial implementation of solutions, and training.

### **Step 3: Write the individual accommodation plan**

Once an accommodation is decided, the details must then be formally written down in an individual accommodation plan. Remember this process does not apply to employers with 1 to 49 employees in the private and non-profit sectors. In addition, individual accommodation plans must include:

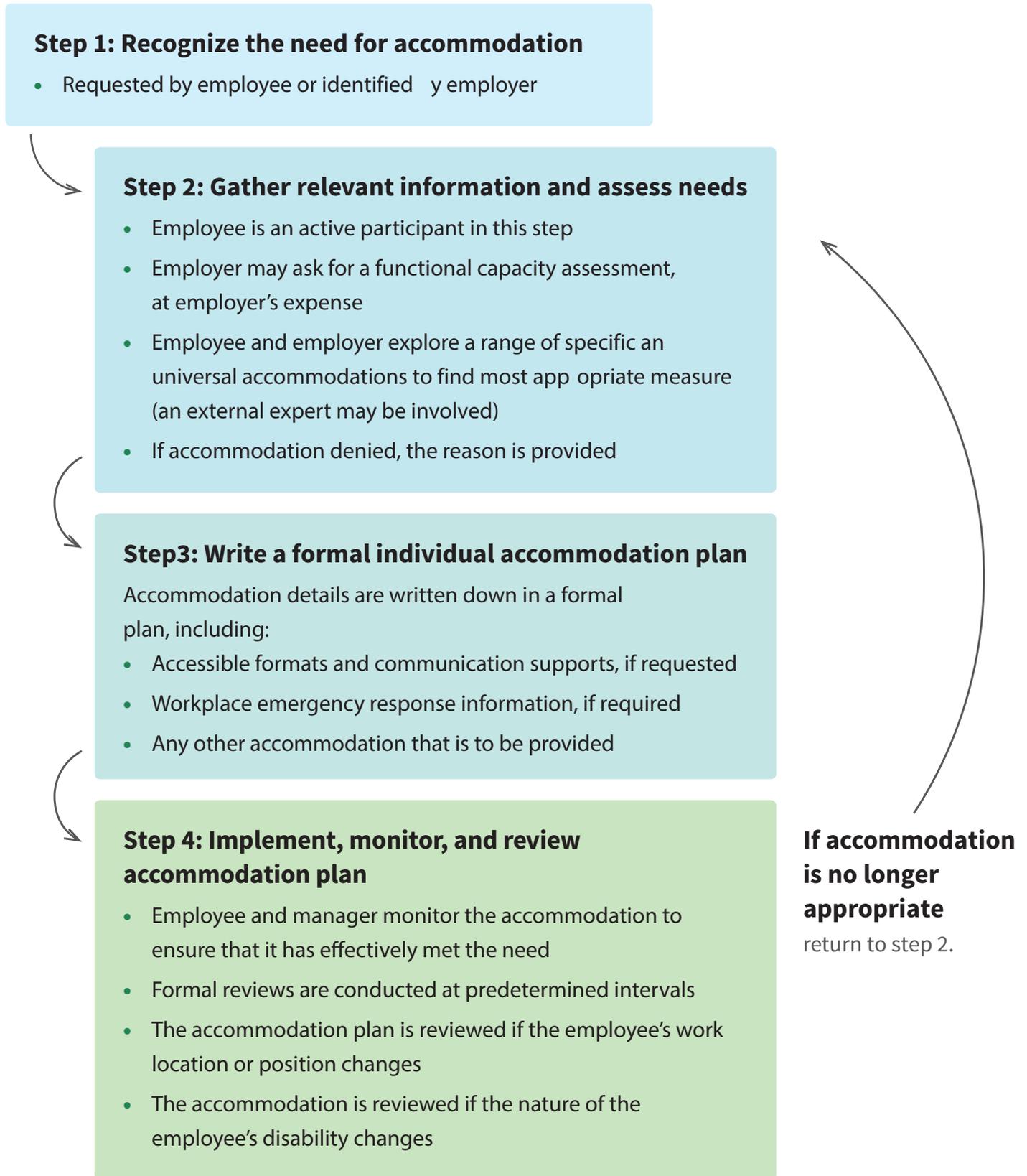
- Any information regarding accessible formats and communication supports, if requested.
- Workplace emergency response information, if required.
- Any other accommodations to be provided.

See Section 3 for a Sample Accommodation Plan Template.

### **Step 4: Implement, monitor, and review individual accommodation plan**

Implement an accommodation plan as soon as possible once the employer and the employee have accepted it. Both parties should monitor the situation and review the plan regularly to confirm that the accommodation is appropriate.

**Figure 2: Sample Accommodation Process**



# 6. Return to Work Processes

## **What you need to do**

All organizations — **except** private sector and non-profit organizations with 1–49 employees — must document the steps to help employees return to work when they are away due to a disability and require accommodation.

If an employee's injury or illness is covered by the return to work provision of the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997, this does not apply.

## **Steps to Consider**

A process chart is shown in Figure 3. For a sample template, please see Section 3.

Your organization's process might look like this:

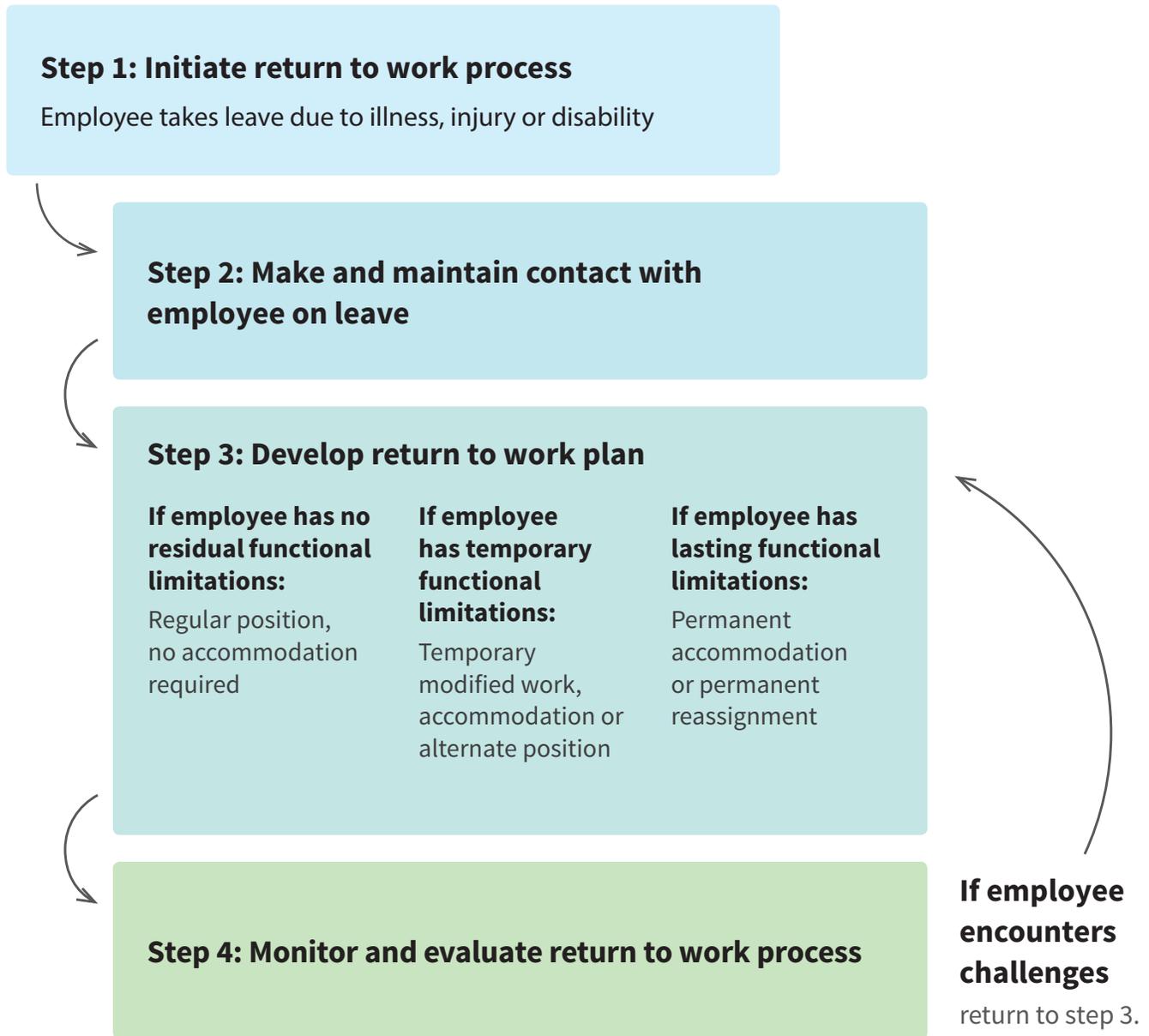
### **Step 1: Initiate the return to work process**

You and the employee with a disability should work together to use the return to work process successfully. It may be beneficial to appoint a return to work coordinator to oversee the process, though this is not required.

### **Step 2: Make and maintain contact with the employee on leave**

While the employee is on leave, you may want to maintain occasional contact, with their consent. This will help you and the employee to assess the conditions for their return to work, as well as address other concerns. This step ensures that both parties have a good understanding of the accommodations that may be required.

**Figure 3: The Return to Work Process:**



### **Step 3: Develop a return to work plan**

When assessing the employee's condition in preparation for their return, you and the employee can get a doctor to fill out a capability assessment form to clarify what the employee needs. Other people that may be a part of the return to work process include:

- front line managers
- insurance provider representatives
- union representatives

The employee, the manager, the return to work coordinator (if there is one) and any others (if needed) should develop a formal Return to Work Plan that is included in the employee's accommodation plan. See Section 3 for a Sample Return to Work Plan Template and Section 2 for Accommodation Solutions.

### **Step 4: Monitor and evaluate the return to work process**

Once the plan is in place and the employee has returned to work, there should be follow-up conversations to make sure the appropriate accommodations have been made.

# 7. Performance Management, Career Development and Job Changes

The Employment Standard requires that you consider accessibility in the workplace during different phases of your employees' careers. This includes:

- performance management
- career development
- job changes

In each of these areas, be sure to refer to an employee's accommodations plan and find out if they need accessible formats or communications supports.

## Performance management

### **What you need to do**

If your organization uses performance management, or works with employees to measure and improve their performance, productivity and effectiveness, take into account the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities.

Some employers may use a formal performance management process, with written plans and scheduled discussions between managers and employees. Others may be more informal.

### **Tips**

- When measuring employee performance, look at the difference between disability-related issues on the job and performance-related issues.
- Be aware of managers' opinions and attitudes that might influence their view of employees with disabilities.

# Career development

## What you need to do

If you offer an employee with a disability the opportunity for advancement, you must provide the accommodations needed to help them succeed.

## Tips

- Make sure training and development programs, mentoring and employee resource groups are accessible to people with disabilities.

## Examples:

- Handouts or other materials are available in accessible formats (e.g., large print).
- People in wheelchairs have access to rooms used for training.

# Job changes

## What you need to do

If you reassign or redeploy employees as an alternative to layoffs, you must take the needs of employees with disabilities into account.

Make sure you transfer the employee's accommodation plan and supports upon reassignment.

## Tips

- You may want to use the employee's accommodation plan to select a new job that would suit them.
- When the employee arrives at the new position, review their accommodation plan to make sure that they can function at full capacity without any delays.

Section 2:  
**Accommodation  
Solutions**

# Accommodation Solutions

Accommodations are tools and strategies that allow employees with disabilities to do their jobs. Most accommodations are low cost or no cost, such as a Smartphone or a flexible work schedule.

Successful job accommodations will vary from individual to individual. In addition, an accommodation that works well for one employee may not be right for someone else, even if the disabilities appear to be alike. With the employee and employer consulting with one another, both parties will be able to find and implement the best possible accommodations.

Not all people with a disability need accommodations to perform their jobs and some may only need a few accommodations.

In this section you will find examples of job accommodations. The list is organized by disability as follows:

1. Employees who are Deaf, Deafened or Hard of Hearing
2. Employees who have Vision Loss
3. Employees who have Mental Health Disabilities
4. Employees who use Wheelchairs
5. Employees who have Intellectual Disabilities
6. Employees who have Learning Disabilities
7. Employees who have Environmental Sensitivities

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The content in this section is adapted from the Accommodation and Compliance Series, Job Accommodation Network (JAN), <http://askjan.org>

# 1. Employees Who are Deaf, Deafened or Hard of Hearing

Hearing loss is a decrease in ability to hear and can occur at birth, suddenly, or gradually over time. Hearing loss can range from mild to severe.

## Possible Accommodations

### When communicating with the employee face-to-face

- Write notes with pen and paper, tablet or chalk board etc.
- Send email or text messages as an alternative to face-to-face communication (e.g., using a Smartphone).
- Use a personal assistive listening device or portable assistive listening system if the individual can benefit from amplification.

### When communicating in groups, meetings or training sessions

- Meet in a small group and sit at a round table that facilitates lip-reading.
- Provide written materials in advance, such as the meeting agenda or course materials.
- Hire a qualified sign language interpreter (ASL) or video remote interpreter on an as-needed basis.
- Use relay conference captioning during group conference calls.
- Meet in a location where background noise is minimal or not present.

### When communicating with the employee by telephone

- Use a TTY.
- Use a video relay service.
- Use email or instant messaging instead of regular phone.

### When using sounds in the environment to communicate to a wide group of employees

- Use a visual or vibrating alerting device.
  - **Note:** Alerting devices are used to alert people to a broad range of sounds, such as abnormal machine sounds, timers, a telephone ringing and emergency signals

- Modify equipment by adding a light to the sound source.

## Situation Scenarios

1. **An electricity serviceman with progressive hearing loss sometimes worked in a bucket truck and needed to communicate to coworkers. The usual method of communication was via a radio.**

The employer switched to cell phones and the employee was able to use text messaging to communicate.

2. **An employee working in an office environment had hearing loss. She could not be around noise in the office environment for long periods of time.**

The employer provided her with a private room to work alone.

3. **A public sector employer had several employees who were Deaf or hard of hearing needed to ensure these employees were able to respond to emergency signals and communicate in an emergency.**

Each employee was provided with a vibrating pager that was connected to the alarm system. When the alarm sounded they were paged. Laminated note cards with flashlights assisted with signing or lip reading.

## 2. Employees Who Have Vision Loss

Vision loss results from conditions that range from:

- some usable vision
- low vision
- total blindness

### Possible Accommodations

#### When providing printed material to an employee

##### Low Vision

- Provide a hand, stand or portable magnifier .

- Provide information in large print (recommended font size is at least 16 point but preferably 18 point).
- Use colour paper, acetate sheet or overlay to increase colour contrast between printed text and document background.

#### **No Vision**

- Use auditory versions of printed documents.
- Use documents formatted in braille.
- Use Optical Character Recognition (OCR) which scans printed text and provides a synthetic speech output or text-based computer file .

### **When helping employees to access computers**

#### **Low Vision**

- Provide screen magnification software.
- Provide an anti-glare guard and computer glasses to reduce glare.
- Allow for frequent breaks to rest eyes when fatigue is a factor.

#### **No Vision**

- Provide screen reading software.
- Provide computer braille display.

### **When employees have difficulty taking notes or writing down information**

#### **Low Vision**

- Provide pens that include a bold felt tip or lighted pen.
- Provide paper with tactile lines, bold print or low glare.

#### **No Vision**

- Provide laptops with speech output or braille display.
- Provide digital recorder.

### **Situation Scenarios**

- 1. An administrative assistant with low vision was having difficulty distinguishing among certain character keys on computers.**

The employee was provided with a glare guard for the computer monitor and large print keyboard labels.

## **2. A customer service representative working for a financial institution lost his vision and could no longer read his computer screen.**

The employer provided screen reading software for his computer so that all information on the screen and inputted into the system would be read back to him.

## 3. Employees Who Have Mental Health Disabilities

Mental health disabilities include a broad spectrum of conditions and experiences. They have an adverse effect on an individual's mental health, emotional well-being and sense of self.

Some examples of more common mental health disabilities are:

- anxiety
- depression
- obsessive compulsive disorders

### **Possible Accommodations**

#### **When an employee needs flexible work hours**

- Allow time off work for rehabilitation, assessments, medication counselling, and psychotherapy appointments.
- Work with the employee to adapt break schedules and work hours.

#### **When an employee easily loses concentration**

- Reduce distractions in the work area:
  - Provide space enclosures, sound absorption panels, or a private office.
  - Allow the employee to listen to soothing music using headphones.
  - Plan for uninterrupted work time.
- Divide large assignments into smaller tasks and goals.
- Restructure job to include only essential functions.

### **When an employee needs help to stay organized**

- Use daily, weekly and monthly task lists.
- Use a colour coding scheme to prioritize tasks.
- Divide larger assignments into smaller tasks and goals.

### **When an employee has a panic attack**

- Allow the employee to take a break and go to a place where he or she feels comfortable to use relaxation techniques or contact a support person.

### **Situation Scenarios**

- 1. A grocery store clerk with seasonal affective disorder had difficulty working an early schedule due to oversleeping. She also experienced fatigue and depression during late fall and winter months.**

The employer gave her an afternoon shift and she was moved to the front of the store, which had windows and let sunlight enter her workspace.

- 2. A graphic designer with a panic disorder experienced recurrent panic attacks when traveling during peak traffic times. He was required to drop off design orders and pickup print proofs from a print shop when necessary.**

The employer gave him a schedule that allowed him to drop off and pick up materials when coming to work in the morning.

- 3. An accountant for a large agency had bipolar disorder. His duties included research, writing, and filing reports. He had difficulties with concentration and short-term memory during very busy periods that required long hours.**

The accountant was accommodated with a more consistent caseload that did not result in extreme fluctuations in workload. He was provided a work area that was away from noise and given ear buds to listen to music. He also met briefly with his supervisor once a week to discuss workload issues.

## 4. Employees Who Use Wheelchairs

People use wheelchairs for a variety of reasons and may have a wide variety of limitations. They may need assistance with personal care while at work. As well, they may encounter a variety of obstacles such as:

- getting to their workstations
- working at their desks
- attending meetings and training sessions

### **Possible Accommodations**

#### **When an employee's daily living requirements need accommodation**

- Allow the person to take periodic rest breaks.

#### **When a workstation requires adjustments to allow the employee to do their job**

- Provide an adjustable desk or table.
- Provide page turners and book holders for those who cannot manipulate paper.
- Provide writing aids for those who cannot grip a writing tool.
- Provide voice activated speaker phone, large button phone, automatic dialling system, and/or headset, depending on the person's limitations and preferences.
- Provide alternative access for computers such a speech recognition trackballs, key guards, alternative key boards, and/or mouth sticks.

#### **When accessing the worksite is difficult or an employee**

- Provide flexible scheduling so a person who cannot drive can access public transportation.
- Provide accessible restrooms, lunchrooms, break rooms etc.
- Allow the person to work from home if he or she cannot get to the work site.

### **Situation Scenarios**

#### **1. A magazine editor became quadriplegic and had limited use of his upper extremities.**

The employer purchased speech-activated software.

**2. A medical transcriptionist was injured and became paraplegic.**

Her employer modified the transcription machine with hand control (instead of foot control) so the transcriptionist could continue working.

**3. An employee who uses a wheelchair was not able to reach the top and the controls of the office printer/copier because they were too high.**

The employer accommodated the employee by purchasing a small desktop printer/copier for her workspace.

**4. A university chemistry professor used a wheelchair.**

The university could not remodel the entire lab and change the height of all work surfaces, so the university provided an elevating wheelchair instead.

## 5. Employees Who Have Intellectual Disabilities

People with intellectual or developmental disabilities may experience limitations in:

- cognitive abilities
- motor abilities
- social abilities

These limitations can affect workplace performance. However, people with intellectual disabilities successfully perform a wide range of jobs, and can be dependable workers.

### Possible Accommodations

**When an employee needs help with reading information**

- Provide pictures, symbols, or diagrams instead of words.
- Provide written information in audio format.
- Use voice output on computer.

**When an employee has trouble writing, e.g., responding to a questionnaire**

- Allow a verbal response instead of a written response.
- Provide templates or forms to prompt information requested.

### **When an employee needs help with time management**

- Provide verbal, written or symbolic reminders.
- Use task list with numbers or symbols.
- Provide additional training or retraining as needed.

### **When an employee has gross and fine motor limitations**

- Use large button phone, headset.
- Use orthopaedic writing aids.
- Use grip aids.

### **When an employee's social skills are limited**

- Provide emotional support.
- Give positive feedback and encouragement.
- Use visual performance charts.

### **Provide help interacting with co-workers**

- Use co-workers as mentors and provide disability awareness training to all employees.
- Use role-play scenarios to demonstrate appropriate behaviour in workplace.
- Model appropriate social skills such as where to eat, when to hug, how to pay for coffee, and how to ask for help.

### **Situation Scenarios**

#### **1. A grocery stocker with an intellectual disability could not remember to wear all parts of his uniform.**

With the employee's consent, the employer took a picture of the employee in full uniform and gave it to him to use as a reference when preparing for work.

#### **2. A production worker with an intellectual disability had difficulty grasping a plastic bottle to accurately apply an adhesive label.**

The employer had a wooden jig that secured the bottle, allowing the employee to use both hands when applying the label.

## 6. Employees Who Have Learning Disabilities

Learning disabilities affect the ability to:

- speak or use written language
- do mathematical calculations
- coordinate movements

Many people develop coping skills through:

- special education
- tutoring
- medication
- therapy

### **Possible Accommodations**

#### **When an employee has trouble understanding the written word**

- Use tape-recorded messages and materials.
- Double space text in printed materials.
- Provide screen reading software for computers.
- Use a reading pen which is a portable device that scans a word and provides auditory feedback.

#### **When the employee has trouble writing down information**

- Provide personal computers/laptops.
- Use software program that assists with spelling, reading and grammar.
- Use speech recognition software that recognizes the employee's voice and changes it to text on the computer screen.
- Use plain language.

### **When mathematics is a problem for an employee**

- Use calculators with large display screens.
- Provide talking tape measure.
- Provide Computer Assisted Instruction (CAI) software for mathematics.

### **When an employee needs help organizing work, or with time management**

- Use day planners or electronic organizers.
- Allow the employee to attend time management workshops.
- Provide checklists to help employee remember tasks.
- Divide large assignments into smaller tasks and goals.

### **Situation Scenarios**

- 1. An employee who works in a manufacturing company has a learning disability. The employee had difficulty remembering task sequences of the job.**

The supervisor provided written instructions with each major task broken down into smaller, sequential sub-parts. Each sub-part was colour-coded for easy reference.

- 2. A clerical employee with an auditory processing disorder worked for a large employer where different work assignments were handed out daily.**

The employer used a voice recorder to capture information about the assignment, such as the job location, the supervisor's name, and tasks to be completed. The employee was able to listen to this recorded information, sometimes several times a day.

- 3. A building contractor had a learning disability making it difficult to perform mathematical calculations efficiently. To ensure calculations were accurate, the employee spent extra time calculating and double-checking the numbers.**

The site supervisor purchased a contractor's calculator to help the employee calculate fractions, triangles, area, and more, efficiently and accurately.

## 7. Employees Who Have Environmental Sensitivities

Environmental sensitivities are generally an inability to tolerate an environmental chemical or class of foreign chemicals. Symptoms may include:

- headaches
- dizziness
- fatigue
- nausea
- breathing difficulties
- difficulty concentrating
- memory loss
- eczema
- arthritis-like sensations
- muscle pain

### **Possible Accommodations**

#### **When ventilation and indoor air quality is an issue**

- Provide an office or workspace with windows that open.
- Use air purification systems.
- Maintain a work environment which is free of pollutants such as fragrances, toxic cleaning agents, pesticides, exhaust fumes etc.
- Provide additional rest breaks for the individual to step out for fresh air or take medication.
- Have an air quality test performed by an industrial hygiene professional to assess poor air quality, dust mould, mildew etc.

#### **When undertaking construction, remodelling, and cleaning activities**

- Provide notification ahead of time for remodelling, painting, pesticide applications, carpet shampooing, floor waxing etc.
- Allow for alternative work arrangements for those people who may be sensitive to the chemical agents used.
- Use non-toxic materials and supplies.

## Situation Scenarios

- 1. An employee was having difficulty breathing due to co-worker fragrances and new carpet fumes.**

The employee was able to work in an enclosed cubicle with an air purification system. Co-workers decreased/eliminated their use of fragrances. The employee spent more time in the office communicating with co-workers by telephone, email or video-conference.

- 2. A graphic arts professional whose company was in the process of remodelling was having some difficulty working in the building due to paint fumes and construction materials.**

The employee was able to work from home on a temporary basis during the remodelling phase of her portion of the building. The employer provided all of the necessary software, modem and a new telephone line to be used for business purposes. The employee attended weekly meetings by teleconference.

- 3. A teacher diagnosed with environmental sensitivities was required to attend weekly faculty meetings in the school building. She could not be in the school building for extended periods of time and usually taught class from a portable classroom outside of the building.**

The teacher was asked to participate in the meetings by teleconference from her portable. As an alternative, she was also invited to attend the meetings and wear a respirator mask if she felt comfortable doing that.

Section 3:  
**Templates**

# 1. Sample Accommodation Process Template

The Employment Standard requires that every Ontario employer, other than small organizations (1–49 employees), have a written process for developing individual accommodation plans for employees with disabilities.

An example of an accommodation process is described below. It can be modified to meet your organization's needs.

## The Accommodation Process

[Insert organization name] is committed to providing accommodations for people with disabilities. When an employee with a disability requests an accommodation, we will follow this process.

### **Step 1: Recognize the Need for Accommodation**

The need for accommodation can be:

- Requested by the employee through his/her supervisor, or human resources.
- Identified by the employee's manager or the hiring manager.

### **Step 2: Gather Relevant Information and Assess Needs**

The employee is an active participant in this step.

- [Insert organization name] does not require details on the nature of the employee's disability to provide an accommodation; it only needs to know about the employee's abilities.

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The content in this section is adapted from the Conference Board of Canada's Employers' Toolkit: Making Ontario Workplaces Accessible to People With Disabilities

- The manager may ask for a functional capacity assessment at the organization's expense.
- The employee and his/her manager evaluate potential options to find the most appropriate measure.
- An external expert may be involved, at the organization's expense.

The employee can request the participation of a representative from his/her bargaining agent. If there is no bargaining agent, someone from the workplace can be a representative.

### **Step 3: Write a Formal, Individual Accommodation Plan**

Once the most appropriate accommodation has been identified, the accommodation details are written down in a formal plan, including:

- Accessible formats and communication supports, if requested.
- Workplace emergency response information, if required.
- Any other accommodation that is to be provided.

The employee's personal information will be protected at all times.

If the employer denies an accommodation, ensure that the employee knows the reasons for the denial.

### **Step 4: Implement, Monitor, and Review Accommodation Plan**

The employee and his or her manager monitor the accommodation to ensure that it has effectively resolved the challenge.

- Formal reviews happen according to a regular schedule.
- The accommodation plan is reviewed if the employee's work location or position changes.
- The accommodation is reviewed if the nature of the employee's disability changes.

If the accommodation is no longer appropriate, the employee and the manager can work together to gather information and reassess the employee's needs in order for [Organization name] to find the best accommodation measure (Step 2).

# 2. Sample Accommodation Plan Template

You can print and complete the form below to document an employee’s individual accommodation plan.

Employee Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Title/Department: \_\_\_\_\_ Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Limitations</b>	<b>Job-Related Tasks/ Activities Affected by Limitations</b>	<b>Is this an essential job requirement?</b>

Sources of expert input into accommodation plan (e.g., HR Manager, family doctor, specialists):

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Accommodation measures to be implemented from [ start date ] to [ end date ].

If no end date is expected, the next review of this accommodation plan will occur on [ review date ]. (It is recommended that the accommodation measure(s) be reviewed annually, at a minimum.)

**Description of Accommodation Measure(s):**

<b>List job requirements and related tasks that require accommodation</b>	<b>What are the objectives of the accommodation (i.e. what must the accommodation do in order to be successful?)</b>	<b>What accommodation strategies/tools have been selected to facilitate this task/activity?</b>

**Roles and Responsibilities**

<b>Outstanding Actions to Implement Accommodation</b>	<b>Assigned To</b>	<b>Due Date</b>

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Employee's Signature

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Manager's Signature

# 3. Sample Return to Work Process Template

The Employment Standard requires every Ontario employer, except an employer that has a small organization, to have a return to work process for its employees who have been absent from work due to a disability and require an accommodation to return to work.

An example of a written process is described below. It can be modified to your organization's needs.

## The Return to Work Process

At [insert organization name], we are committed to supporting employees who have been absent from work due to a non-work related disability and who require an accommodation in order to return to work. We will follow the process detailed below to support their safe return to work.

### Step 1: Initiate the Return to Work Process

- The employee reports a need for disability leave to supervisor or human resources.
- Information is sent to return to work coordinator ([Name of RTW Coordinator], [Phone], [Email]).

### Step 2: Make and Maintain Contact with the Employee on Leave

#### Return to work coordinator:

- maintains regular contact with the employee, with the employee's consent
- provides the employee with return to work information
- helps resolve any problems with treatment, if asked by the employee
- monitors employee's progress until fit for work

**Employee:**

- gets and follows the appropriate medical treatment
- updates the return to work coordinator with his or her progress
- provides the healthcare provider with return to work information

**Health-care provider:**

- provides the appropriate and effective treatment to employee
- provides required information on employee's functional abilities, if requested

**Step 3: Develop a Return to Work Plan**

- The employee, the return to work coordinator and the healthcare provider (if needed) develop a formal return to work plan. This is included in the employee's individual accommodation plan (if applicable).
  - If the employee has no residual functional limitations, he or she returns to his or her regular position with no accommodation required.
  - If the employee has temporary functional limitations, he or she returns to work to a temporary modified job with a accommodation, or to an alternate transitional position.
  - If the employee has lasting functional limitations, he or she returns to work with permanent accommodations or is reassigned to another permanent position.

**Step 4: Monitor and Evaluate the Return to Work Process**

- The employee, supervisor, and return to work coordinator monitor and review the return to work plan regularly until it is completed.
- The return to work process will undergo modifications to overcome any challenges the employee encounters.

# 4. Sample Return to Work Plan Template

This template can be used to document the return to work plan and can then be added to the employee's individual accommodation plan, if applicable.

Employee Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Start Date: \_\_\_\_\_ End Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Job Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Earnings: \_\_\_\_\_

Goal of Return to Work Process: \_\_\_\_\_

Week	Functional Limitations	Work Days per Week	Work Hours per Day	Job Tasks	Accommodation	Safety Considerations
Week 1						
Week 2						
Week 3						
Week 4						

Does the return to work process involve a temporary assignment to a different position?

- Yes (Please answer the questions below.)
- No

What is the new position? \_\_\_\_\_

Length of assignment (if known): \_\_\_\_\_

What training is required? \_\_\_\_\_

What safety precautions are being taken during training? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Employee's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Manager's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

# Where to find more information

- Learn more about the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act and find free tools and templates at [ontario.ca/AccessON](http://ontario.ca/AccessON)
- Look at the **Employers' Toolkit: Making Ontario Workplaces Accessible to People with Disabilities** that Conference Board of Canada has developed.
- Watch the Harold Jeepers video series developed by Human Resources Professionals Association on the requirements of the employment standard, at <http://www.hrpa.ca/AODA>
- Visit **Job Accommodation Network** for more information on workplace accommodations and disability employment issues.



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## **Creating opportunity, building independence**

Greater accessibility means greater opportunity for Ontario:

- for businesses to harness the buying power of more people – on-site and online
- for people with disabilities to participate in our labour force and economy
- for entrepreneurs to create new businesses based on inclusive design, products and services
- for employers to find untapped talent



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