

Accessibility Legislation for British Columbia



Introduction

- Accessibility Directorate, Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction (SDPR)
- Hon. Nicholas Simons, minister of SDPR is supported by Dan Coulter, Parliamentary Secretary for Accessibility to implement the legislation.
- The *Accessible B.C. Act* received Royal Assent June 17, 2021



Context for Accessibility Legislation

- Until the Act was passed, BC was the largest province (by population) that had not passed comprehensive accessibility legislation.
- Five provinces (ON, MB, NS, NL and QB) have enacted accessibility legislation.
- Canada's *Accessible Canada Act* received Royal Assent in June 2019
- Two provinces (NB and SK) are at various stages to develop accessibility legislation.



Key Features of the *Accessible B.C. Act*

- Accessibility legislation seeks to identify, remove and prevent barriers to inclusion experienced by people with disabilities.
- As contemplated, the legislation will:
 - Enable government to establish accessibility standards in a range of areas
 - Establish a Provincial Accessibility Committee to support the development of Accessibility Standards
 - Direct government and prescribed organizations to establish a multi-year accessibility plan, accessibility advisory committee, and feedback mechanism.
 - Establish compliance and enforcement mechanisms including monetary penalties.



Initial Implementation

- Initial implementation activities that government will undertake are to:
 - Establish a Provincial Accessibility Committee
 - Develop government multi-year accessibility plan and feedback mechanism
 - Initiate the development of accessibility standards
 - Initiate regulatory development to prescribe organizations
- Successful implementation will require significant ongoing engagement with stakeholders and the public.



Accessible B.C. Act Part 3

- Part 3 of the legislation includes requirements for the provincial government and other organizations prescribed by regulation to establish an Accessibility Plan, Committee, and Feedback Mechanism.
- SDPR is working to develop recommendations on public sector organizations appropriate to prescribe during initial implementation.
- Prescribed organizations will have at least 1 year to comply once prescribed.



Capacity Considerations

Part 3 requirements are intended to be scalable and flexible for organizations:

- Broad discretion with respect to length, content, and composition of accessibility committees and plans
- No need to duplicate existing work for organizations that already have committees and plans in place
- Organizations can work collaboratively together
- SDPR will develop tailored tools and resources to support organizations.

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Comments? Questions?

