Fall 2003 MOVING AHEAD

CANADIAN TRANSPORTATION AGENCY

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CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

"How is it going?" A common question. The answer is very important to me, the members and the staff of the Accessible Transportation Program of the Canadian Transportation Agency.

Over the past eight years, a number of mandatory regulations and voluntary codes of practice have taken effect and apply to air, rail and ferry travel. The objective of these measures is to make it possible for persons with disabilities to travel without facing undue obstacles.

The standards are the commitment to accessible transportation by government and industry. Monitoring industry's commitment to the standards tells the story. In the past year, the Agency completed full monitoring of carriers' compliance with the air, rail and ferry codes of practice. The results were encouraging and confirmed that the carriers are working toward compliance with the codes. While there is still room for improvement, Canadian carriers made real progress in meeting the needs of travellers with disabilities through their compliance with most elements of the codes.

AVAILABLE IN MULTIPLE FORMATS





Citizens with disabilities have called for the true story. It is important to know what obstacles are likely to be encountered and how to overcome them when taking long distance trips in Canada. Through the Agency's extensive public information program, we are able to assist travellers, travel agents and carriers in planning for a barrier-free trip. Our popular publications include "Taking Charge of the Air Travel Experience", "Fly Smart", and the "Reservation Checklist for Air Travel". Consistent delivery of disability-related transportation services enables Canadians with disabilities to travel with greater confidence. It is more comfortable to travel knowing that services that are needed will be there when they have to be used.

Agency members and staff pay attention to the comments of travellers with disabilities. Sometimes these comments are shared at meetings, conferences and seminars. Making suggestions and offering solutions that work for you helps us all and I encourage our readers to give us their suggestions and feedback. Periodically the Agency conducts surveys of travellers and their experiences in a more formal way. In 2000, Agency staff conducted the first ever airport survey of travellers with disabilities and received a very

high return of questionnaires. As a result, the Agency has credible data about the actual travel experiences of people. The results were provided to the air carriers and the community of persons with disabilities. This valuable information confirmed that many respondents had a positive experience, but also highlighted problems encountered.

Publishing travel adventures is another effective way to document what is possible in accessible travel and tourism.

Many people take the time to share their travel experiences with Agency staff who work in the Accessible Transportation Directorate. Some are positive and others are less so. Complaints are monitored closely to spot trends or other indications of patterns pointing to systemic problems requiring a broad remedy like regulations or codes of practice. Results of these complaints are posted on our web site in the form of decisions and are summarized for Parliament in the Agency's Annual Report.

The Agency has field investigators who visit transportation service providers and terminal operators to verify training records. Every carrier

and terminal operator is required to keep available for inspection by the Agency and the general public a copy of its current training program prepared in the form specified by the Personnel Training for the Assistance of Persons with Disabilities Regulations. This personal contact by our field staff helps to impress on industry the importance of awareness and vigilance when it comes to professional service for customers with disabilities.

In 2002 the Agency's field investigators began verification of the reports which service providers and terminal operators are required to submit to the Agency. These reports measure the compliance by service providers and terminal operators with the requirements of the codes of practice. This self-reporting of compliance is then verified through actual on site comparison of the paper with the physical equipment and amenities offered during a trip.

The Agency has committed to report publicly on "how it is going". This accountability is open and transparent. Results of the various monitoring exercises are regularly reported to organizations who serve on the

Agency's Accessibility Advisory Committee at meetings and through the dissemination of information between meetings.

I consider it important that all interested persons have an opportunity to judge for themselves "how it is going" in accessible transportation. I want all to know what has been accomplished and what more needs to be accomplished to remove undue obstacles within Canada's national transportation system.

The Agency is committed to removing undue obstacles. Your interest is key to solidifying the gains made in accessible transportation. Publicize the results presented in this edition of the Moving Ahead newsletter. Ask your travel agent and your service provider about these amenities and accessible equipment. Use the facilities. Dialogue with your transportation service provider about what works and what can work better. Our destination together is a barrier-free Canada. The journey has started. Take part and make it happen. The common question "How is it going?" makes us all accessible transportation monitors. •

Marion Robson



Alberta Inter-community Public Transportation Guide

by Sara Wong, Alberta Government

The Alberta Inter-community Public Transportation Guide has been updated with information regarding bus, rail and air routes, including accessibility information.

In addition, the guide has been enhanced to include rest stop information and air routes with destinations outside of Alberta. The travel time calculator has been enhanced to include rail information.

You are encouraged to visit it on Alberta Transportation's web site at www.trans.gov.ab.ca, click "Barrier Free". This web site also contains

information about other barrier-free initiatives that may be of interest to you.

We would like to hear from you! If you have any comments or suggestions about the revised guide, please contact:

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Alberta Inter-community
Public Transportation
Guide

footung accessibility Information

Training is a Serious Business

by Chris Stark

The Canadian Transportation Agency administers the Personnel Training for the Assistance of Persons with Disabilities Regulations (PTRs). The Agency views these PTRs as minimum standards; carriers and terminal operators are encouraged to exceed these standards.

Operations of rail, marine and air services, with the exception of small air carriers, as well as rail, marine and air terminal operators, with the exception of small air terminal operators, are required to ensure

that their employees and contractors who provide different types of transportation-related services to persons with disabilities are properly trained to do so. receive a level of training to be able to properly transfer a person to a wheelchair, to guide and orient a person who is blind or visually impaired and to assist a person who has balance, agility or coordination difficulties.

Carriers also have to ensure that an appropriate level of training is provided to their employees and contractors who are required to handle different

types of mobility aids. The PTRs require them to be familiar with the procedures for securing, carrying and stowing mobility aids, including methods of disassembling, packaging, unpackaging and assembling these aids.

Employees and contractors of carriers required to provide assistance with special equipment or aids provided by carriers for persons with disabilities, such as telephone devices, audio or video equipment, level-change devices and on-board oxygen, have to be trained.



Employees and contractors of carriers and terminal operators who interact with the public or make decisions respecting the carriage of persons with disabilities have to know the carrier's or terminal operator's policies and procedures with respect to persons with disabilities. In addition, they have to receive general sensitivity training to be able to identify and respond to the needs of persons with disabilities while they travel.

Carriers' employees and contractors who provide physical assistance to persons with disabilities have to



The PTRs require that persons providing transportation-related services have a level of training adequate to the requirements of their functions. The PTRs cover service personnel who may interact with persons with disabilities. The Regulation gives the service provider some flexibility in the scope and nature of the training provided to ensure that the training is consistent with its type of operation. The operator is in the best position to determine the most effective way of providing the requisite training.

The PTRs' description of transportation-related services "includes passenger security screening, baggage handling, vehicle rental, public parking and, in the case of air terminals, all ground transportation from the terminal". So not all employees at a terminal would be covered. Ramp maintenance personnel, firefighters, etc. are not necessarily required to be trained. However people such as the duty managers, information desk personnel and persons in similar positions are required to be trained. The terminal operator is also responsible for ensuring that their contractors have the requisite training.

All personnel required to be trained have to complete their initial training within 60 days after beginning work. They also have to receive periodic refresher training sessions.

These training programs must be made available to the Agency and to the general public. The PTRs provide that: "Every carrier and terminal operator shall keep available for inspection by the Agency and the general public a copy of its current training program prepared in the form set out in the schedule and containing the information required therein."

The Agency regularly inspects carriers and terminal operators' records to ensure that they are in compliance with the administrative provisions of these PTRs. The Agency has been doing this monitoring work since 1994, through our field investigation officers stationed in each region of the country. Every effort is made to visit transportation service providers and all terminals covered by the PTRs every 3 to 4 years with hub terminals and large carriers being visited more often.

Enforcement

The Agency's Enforcement Program encourages voluntary compliance with the *Canada* Transportation Act, the Air Transportation Regulations and the PTRs. The program consists of two main elements: a periodic inspection program and a targeted investigation program. Agency offices are located in Moncton, Montreal, Toronto, Winnipeg, Edmonton and Vancouver.

In 2001, the Enforcement Division completed 263 on-site inspections of Canadian-based air carriers and 23 passenger terminal operators.

The Administrative Monetary Penalties (AMPs) program is one of several ways the Agency can enforce the law; other options include formal reprimands, cease-and-desist orders, licence suspensions or cancellations, and prosecutions. AMPs provide an alternative between administrative sanctions and prosecutions as a means to encourage voluntary compliance with the law.

Since a formal warning is normally the first step in the AMPs process for all but the most serious contraventions, carriers and terminal operators have ample opportunity to take corrective action in order to avoid a monetary penalty. •

A Warm "Nunavutian" Welcome

by Chris Stark

Travelling north to make a presentation about persons with disabilities was something new for the Accessible Transportation Program. The opportunity arose after an Agency field investigator went to the Iqaluit airport to review records required to be kept under Personnel Training Regulations (PTRs).

Interest was awakened. A desire to better serve this segment of the travelling public generated an invitation to address the Nunavut Airport Operators First Annual Conference in Iqaluit. Even though only two of the territories' airports are covered by the PTRs, it was felt that all the large and small airport staff would benefit







from information about how to make airport terminals and their services more user-friendly for persons with disabilities.

The presentation emphasized the need for services and amenities that

enhanced the travel experience of persons with disabilities such as: entrances that are ramped, doorways that are wide enough to permit passage by persons using wheelchairs, accessible washrooms, TTY service at terminals, tactile signage. The importance of dialogue between service providers and persons with disabilities with



Chris Stark with his dog Richie and a security officer at the Igaluit Airport in Nunavut

respect to transportation related needs was stressed. Customer service and awareness training was highlighted as a critical element of inclusive service for all.

Nunavut — "our land" in the Inuktitut language — has been home to Inuit for millennia and part of Canada for more than a century. Nunavut is the new Canadian territory that came into being on April 1, 1999, with 27,000 residents.

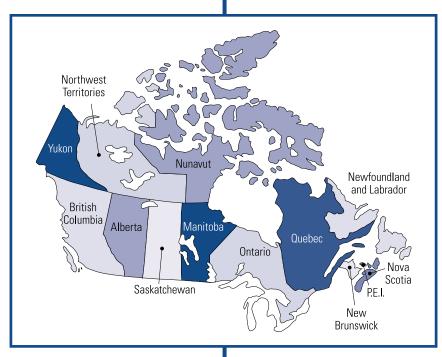
> Adventure and eco-tourism is facilitated by the National Parks in the territory. Baffin boasts a number of sanctuaries and parks including the 21,500 square kilometres Auyuittuq **National Park** accessed from Pangnirtung, on the Cumberland Peninsula, with some of the highest cliff faces in the world. lust 50 kilometres

southeast of Pangnirtung is the Kekerton Historic Park that once served as a major whaling station, built in 1857 by Scottish whalers.

Tourism is a growing source of revenue for the territory. Serving tourists with disabilities takes on added importance when developing a new market. More and more seniors are seeking the northern experience and need accessibility

accommodations like ramps and larger print to enhance the quality of the adventure. Careful planning can find out where this infrastructure is available.

The Iqaluit Airport boasts a modern international facility — in fact, its lengthy runway serves as an alternate landing site for the NASA space program. Several airlines offer service to the Baffin communities.



The Iqualuit Airport Manager pointed out that the airport was very functional. The Iqaluit **Airport** features ramps to the terminal, an accessible unisex washroom, a

The only practical means for long distance travel in Nunavut is by air. There are no highways outside the communities and no railways. The main air gateways are Iqaluit, Rankin Inlet and Resolute in Nunavut, and also Yellowknife and Inuvik in the Northwest Territories.

TTY sign at the public phone bank for a TTY for public use at the lunch counter and lots of large print signs. In addition, the main area of the terminal is filled with interesting displays of Inuit art past and present and there is an adjacent gift shop.







The Iqualuit hotel where we stayed features ramps to the entrance and an elevator with tactile markings. In general, my guide dog was welcomed everywhere and we visited such stores as the North Mart

and several local restaurants. Except for the temperature difference, it was easy to imagine that we were in Mexico when a polite person approached us to sell carvings and prints.

Curb cuts are not an issue as there are no sidewalks. The shoulders of Iqualuit

roads are very wide and although a bit bumpy are easy to walk along. In a few days when the snow came they would smooth out. When it

came time to cross the road, cars stopped as we stood at the edge. Walking around town with a guide dog was accompanied by lots of barking by local dogs as we passed by. It was strange to not find any

trees. No lawns here. This sparse vegetation makes the tundra all the more beautiful.

Nunavut offers a unique chance to have an adventure. The hearty spirit of residents makes this a trip to remember. The warm welcome and hospitality

makes the experi-

ence unforgettable. The accessibility amenities make this an option to consider.



Chris Stark with his dog Richie enjoying the tundra

Focus on Independence: Tips From an Independent Traveller

(reprinted with permission from Canadian National Institute for the Blind)

As the Ontario Division "trouble-shooter" in the operations department, Canadian National Institute for the Blind, Stacey Headey-Komenda travels thousands of kilometres every year by air, train, and bus.

That's quite a feat when you consider that she has less than 20/400 vision. In the past year alone, her travels have taken her to Australia, Grenada, and all over Ontario.

"Don't let your vision stop you from travelling. I get the greatest satisfaction from travelling independently," says Stacey.

The greatest challenges Stacey faces when she travels by air are finding her seat, searching for washrooms, and identifying her luggage at her destination.

Here are some useful suggestions. When buying an airline ticket, inform the agent about your visual impairment and he or she will note it on your ticket. All airlines have a separate check-in counter for people with special needs. Staff will escort passengers directly to their seats. When you check in at the airport, someone will be there to help you. Or simply identify yourself to an airline agent when pre-boarding, and you will be escorted to your seat.

Before she travels, Stacey makes sure that her itinerary is always written out in large print.

On board, she always counts how many seats there are to reach the washrooms and the nearest emergency exits.

At the baggage carousel, Stacey can easily identify her suitcase as it has a huge Canadian flag stuck on it.

"All visually impaired people should know the colour of their luggage to identify it, in case it gets lost," she says. •



Accessible Transportation Award – Marine Atlantic

by Diane Mainville

The past year was a very busy year for us at the Canadian Transportation

Agency.

The Accessible **Transportation** Directorate monitors, measures and evaluates the industry's compliance with our regulations and codes of practice related to persons with disabilities. Given that all provisions of the air, rail and ferry accessibility codes of practice came into effect as of January 1, 2002, our monitoring exercise in 2002 was especially comprehensive and covered all three modes of transportation.

Wanda Harbin, Ombudsman for Marine Atlantic accepting an award from the Agency

This exercise required industry participation, which led to an important observation: one industry representative stood out, in both achieving the accessibility goals we promote,

and in setting the example for others – industry leaders who care about

easing and improving the transportation experience for those in our society who experience challenges to its travel abilities.

The outstanding example by this industry leader led the Agency to recognize it by presenting an award for outstanding achievement in transportation accessibility.

The inaugural incentive award, aptly named the Accessible Transportation Award, was presented to Marine Atlantic, an

interprovincial ferry operator linking Nova Scotia with Newfoundland.

Much can be said about the ways that Marine Atlantic has contributed to improving accessibility in transportation over the past few years. We'd like to highlight the ways in which its contribution excelled:

Initiative, Effort and Improvement

Marine Atlantic has its own ombudsman for complaint resolution. It has also formed its own Accessibility Advisory Committee, for which it recruited members of the disability community.

Striving towards the objective of 100% compliance with the Ferry Code, it has gone above and beyond what was requested of it by improving the level of accessibility in its terminal. As well, it hired a consultant to advise them on its particular accessibility issues and to give sensitivity training to its staff.

Some of the improvements to accessibility in Marine Atlantic's ferries include:

- I. Sonic and Visual alarms
- II. Closed-caption TV
- III. Wheelchair ramps
- IV. Lowered counter tops in the dining areas
- V. Wheelchair access to washrooms

Dedication and Caring

Marine Atlantic has demonstrated dedication and caring through an

inclusive and integrated approach to client service, permitting independent access to most on-board services and amenities for persons with disabilities.

In 2000, it prepared and distributed its own Customer Satisfaction Survey, the results of which helped it identify customer concerns specific to its own operations.

Cooperation and Participation

Exemplary in its enthusiastic participation and cooperation, Marine Atlantic co-hosted the launch of the CTA's Ferry Code in 1999, at which it organized a tour of one of its newly refitted ferries.

As well, it contributes as an active and valuable member on the Agency's Accessibility Advisory Committee.

Last but not least, in a recent inspection exercise, Marine Atlantic went out of its way to facilitate and cooperate with Agency staff during the assessment of the level of accessibility of its ferries.

Thank you, Marine Atlantic, for your achievements and leadership in improving accessibility within the federal transportation network!



Removing the Static on Lines of Communication between Travel Agents and Air Carriers

by Chris Stark

Making the arrangements for travel clients to receive services booked is key to success. The Canadian Transportation Agency continues to work hard to support travel professionals in their efforts to provide quality service to travellers with disabilities.

A recent Agency survey of 1,120 persons with disabilities who travel by air established that 66% of travellers with disabilities book their flights through a travel agent. The survey also revealed that 19% of individual requests related to services for persons with disabilities made at booking were not properly passed on to the carrier personnel.

A letter was sent to all travel agencies and airlines operating in Canada by the Agency so that travel professionals will be aware of some of the

real life problems encountered by travellers with disabilities during trips arranged for them by the travel industry. Identifying these difficulties is an important first step towards eliminating the obstacles being encountered during the trip. A lot of the problems encountered by travellers with disabilities arise as the result of a lack of clear communication at the level of the travel agency and the air carrier. The letter sets out suggestions to improve the dialogue between persons with disabilities and travel agencies and airlines' reservation staff, to help meet their travel-related needs.

Appended to the letter was the Agency's "Reservation Check-List – Air Travel", which provides travel agents with an easy-to-use guide for assessing and documenting the additional needs of all customers.

The Check-List sets out some 60 possible disability-related services or accommodations identified under 20 themes, all of which are concisely presented on two pages. The Check-List includes space to indicate the date the request for services was made to the booking agent, the date

the booking agent notified the carrier of the request and the date the carrier confirmed with the booking agent that the services would be provided to the traveller with a disability. Items covered by the Check-List include: travel-related information, accessible seating, advance notice, arrival and departure services, on-board aircraft services, service animals, use of personal wheelchairs during the journey and the carriage of mobility and technical aids.



In the summer of 2001, the Agency first distributed the Checklist to all Canadian travel agencies and airlines operating in Canada for use by their reservation staff as a tool for ensuring that the travel related needs of persons with disabilities are met. Its use is not mandatory; however,

feedback was very positive. Many callers thanked the Agency for developing such a useful tool.

The Checklist and the letter are available on the Agency's web site at www.cta.gc.ca, or by contacting the Agency at the coordinates in this newsletter.



Equipment Accessibility: How Industry is Doing

by Diane Mainville







The Accessible Transportation
Directorate monitors, measures and
evaluates the industry's compliance
with Agency regulations and codes of
practice related to persons with disabilities. Monitoring activities include
conducting surveys, reviewing transportation service providers' training
records, and site visits.

The Agency has currently issued three codes of practice (Air, Rail and Ferry). The codes provide for the Agency to conduct periodic monitoring of industry compliance. In 2001 and 2002, the Agency conducted industry surveys to assess carriers' progress in implementing the provisions in the codes. These surveys collected information on the accessibility features present when each code was released (benchmark data) and those present on the date the code entered into effect (implementation data). Full

participation (a 100% response rate) was obtained from all carriers for all three surveys.

Rail Code Monitoring

The Rail Code was released in February 1998 and came into effect on April 1, 2001. A monitoring questionnaire was distributed to all rail carriers covered by the Rail Code in autumn 2001 to collect both benchmark and implementation data.

In the first rail industry monitoring survey, more than two-thirds (66%) of the accessibility criteria that were applicable for passenger rail cars had a level of medium, high or full compliance, and the other third had low or non-compliant rates.

The criteria in the Rail Code with a high level of compliance related to signage, lighting, stairs, floor surfaces and handrails and grab bars. The criteria with the lowest levels of compliance related to wheelchairaccessible sleeping cars, movable armrests and identification of call buttons in accessible washrooms.

Between 1998 when the Rail Code was released, and 2001 when it was implemented, the level of compliance remained stable. Thirteen per cent of the criteria showed improvements and only four per cent showed a decline.

Ferry Code Monitoring

The Ferry Code was released in June 1999 and came into effect on January 1, 2002. A monitoring questionnaire was distributed to all ferry operators covered by the Ferry Code in the winter of 2002 to collect both benchmark and implementation data.

In the 2002 survey of ferry operators, more than half (57%) of the applicable accessibility criteria in the Ferry Code had full compliance, 29 per cent had high compliance, 11 per cent had medium compliance and only three per cent had low or no compliance. Between 1999 and 2002, 43 per cent of ferry accessibility criteria showed improved compliance ratings while 18 per cent declined.

The greatest improvements in Ferry Code criteria were related to signage, lighting, stairways, handrails and wheelchairs provided by operators. The criteria with the lowest levels of compliance included supplemental passenger briefing cards, identification of accessible seats in passenger lounges, tactile markers for call buttons and thermostats in accessible cabins.

Air Code Monitoring

The Air Code was released in January 1997. Most of the provisions in the Air Code came into effect on January 1, 1999. The washroom provisions came into effect on January 1, 2002.

The Agency conducted a survey to collect benchmark data in 1997 and implementation data in 1999. During the winter of 2002, a monitoring questionnaire was again distributed to all air carriers covered by the Air Code to collect follow-up data.

For the 2002 Air Code survey, more than one third (37%) of the accessibility criteria had full compliance, 40 per cent had high compliance, 13 per cent had medium compliance and 10 per cent had low compliance.



The criteria in the Air Code with a high level of compliance include signage, lighting, handrails, floor surfaces and supplemental passenger briefing cards. The criteria with the lowest levels of compliance are tactile row markers and signs.

Overall Results

The results of the 2002 industry surveys are encouraging. Most of the criteria are at a level of full or high compliance in all three modes and only a few are at a level of low or non-compliance.

Generally, the criteria with a low rate of compliance included colour contrasting and tactile identification of equipment and accessories, such as signs and markers for call buttons. On average, carriers showed improvement in the identification of accessible washrooms, tactile markers on accessories in accessible washrooms, and emergency window exits.

Copies of the monitoring reports are available from the Agency.

While the results of the industry surveys are positive, the Agency encourages transportation service providers to continue to make efforts to improve the overall level of accessi-

bility of their fleet. Carriers should regularly assess themselves against the requirements of the codes, remembering that all new equipment should meet or exceed the codes' accessibility criteria.

The Agency will continue to conduct periodic surveys to measure and report on improvements in accessibility.

Visits by Agency Field Investigators

The Agency has Field Investigators who visit transportation service providers and terminal operators across Canada to verify actual training records. In 2002, these same investigators started to confirm information submitted by carriers covered by the various Agency codes of practice. Carriers report in writing on their measures to meet the requirements of the codes of practice. This self-reporting of compliance is then verified through actual on-site comparison of the paper reports submitted to the Agency.

To date, investigators' visits have been beneficial and were very well received by carriers. In a few of the cases, these visits accelerated implementation of some accessibility features where the Agency provided carriers with information and guidance on how to implement them. This personal contact helps to impress on industry the importance of awareness and vigilance when it comes to professional service for customers with disabilities. •

WEB RESOURCES

Travel @ Home and Abroad

www.passages.gc.ca

This site covers topics such as: Travel in Canada, Travel Abroad, and Living Abroad.

Department for Transport, Mobility and Inclusion

www.mobility-unit.dft.gov.uk

This site has information from the Department of Transport, Mobility and Inclusion, Britain on policies and provisions for public transport users, pedestrians and motorists that are acceptable, accessible, available and affordable (exclusively in English).

Canadian Air Transport Security
Authority

www.catsa.gc.ca

The Canadian Air Transport Security Authority is responsible for several key security initiatives, including:

- pre-board screening of passengers and their belongings;
- training and certification of screening officers;
- all security equipment at airports;
- purchase, deployment, maintenance and operation of explosives detection systems.

More details of the above are found on their site.

www.handicaps.ca

This site offers easy access to information about programs and services



for persons with disabilities on subjects such as accessibility, education, tax, rights, accommodation, employment, and health (exclusively in French).

Toronto Tourism

www.torontotourism.com/ what_see_do/special-accessible.asp

Toronto with Ease is an annual publication which includes everything you need to know to make your trip to Toronto an enjoyable, memorable and accessible one (exclusively in English).

Mapping for the Visually Impaired www.tactile.nrcan.gc.ca/page.cgi?url=index_e.html

This site provides maps and information on:

Maps for Education: tactile maps showing the general geography of Canada, including thematic maps and the Tactile Atlas of Canada

Maps for Mobility: sample maps to download and print and procedures to make mobility training maps, to help visually impaired persons be more mobile

Maps for Transportation and Tourism: sample maps to download and print and procedures to make maps to help visually impaired persons visiting travel destinations in Canada

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