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ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

2023 to 2025

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Executive Summary

Defence Construction Canada (DCC) provides infrastructure-related support to the Department of National Defence and Communications Security Establishment.

As a federal Crown corporation, DCC is subject to the *Accessible Canada Act (ACA)*.

The ACA was enacted to help create a barrier-free Canada by 2040 through the proactive identification, removal and prevention of barriers to accessibility by organizations under federal jurisdiction.

Since 2019, when the ACA came into effect, DCC has identified several barriers that it will work to remove or prevent in the coming years. These include a range of barriers that may be attitudinal, technological, systemic, physical and architectural, and information- and communication-related.

As part of its ongoing commitment to improving accessibility for Canadians, DCC has already carried out a few initiatives to address these barriers, including incorporating accessibility features into its e-procurement portal and employee training platform, and updating policies to reflect accessibility concerns.

The present plan sets out further work DCC intends to pursue between 2023 and 2025, including the following:

- developing internal guidance and a checklist for DCC employees to ensure access to all DCC in-person events, and, when necessary, reasonable accommodation is provided, including virtual alternatives;
- enhancing DCC external and internal communications accessibility, including ensuring that all non-technical external publications follow accessibility guidelines and are available in alternate formats upon request; and
- educating employees about persons with disabilities, their challenges and their allies.

In developing this plan, DCC consulted persons with disabilities over the course of 2022. DCC will, as required by the ACA, publish progress reports in 2023 and 2024 and then publish a new plan in 2025, based on the progress achieved, feedback from stakeholders and government priorities.

General

Introduction

Defence Construction Canada (DCC) provides innovative and cost-effective contracting, construction contract management, infrastructure and environmental services and lifecycle support to help meet Canada's defence requirements. DCC's Client-Partners are the Department of National Defence and the Communications Security Establishment.

DCC's 1,000-plus person workforce is located in offices on Canadian Armed Forces bases across Canada, at six regional offices (Halifax, Montréal, Ottawa, Kingston, Edmonton and on Vancouver Island) and at Head Office in Ottawa. DCC employees also deploy to support overseas military missions.

As a federal Crown corporation, DCC is a subject to the [Accessible Canada Act](#) (ACA). The ACA and its associated [Regulations](#) came into effect in 2019 to help create a barrier-free Canada by 2040.

Barrier: Anything that limits the full and equal participation in society of persons with disabilities. Barriers can be physical, architectural, technological or attitudinal. They can also be based on information or communications, or can result from policies or practices (systemic).

Disability: An impairment or functional limitation that restricts a person's full and equal participation in society. Impairments can be physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning- communication-related, or sensory. They can be permanent, temporary or episodic, and can be visible or invisible.

Among other things, the ACA requires federal organizations to develop an accessibility plan to identify, remove and prevent barriers to accessibility. Plans are to list initiatives organizations will carry out over three years, starting in 2023, and to be updated every three years, with progress reports published in between.

To develop its accessibility plan, DCC established an Accessibility Working Group, comprising senior leadership from various DCC functional areas. This group will spearhead DCC's efforts to identify, prevent and dismantle accessibility barriers and to comply with the ACA.

DCC developed its plan over the course of 2021 and 2022, taking into the account the principles found in section 6 of the ACA.

To that end, DCC also consulted with persons with disabilities regarding its accessibility plan and about measures DCC could take or improve to enhance accessibility at DCC. The input DCC received during the consultations informs this plan.

DCC's accessibility plan for 2023 to 2025 represents the next important step on DCC's journey to developing a culture of accessibility and ensuring greater accessibility for Canadians.

More information on accessibility at DCC is available on the [DCC website](#). The [Government of Canada website](#) includes background on the ACA and various activities the government is undertaking to create communities, workplaces and services that enable everyone to participate fully in society without barriers.

The glossary on page 14 of this document provides useful definitions of some key accessibility-related terms.

Feedback

DCC's developed its Accessibility Plan with feedback from various stakeholders and DCC continues to welcome your feedback on this plan, our feedback process, our progress reports, and any other issue you encounter. Additionally, you can use these channels to request this plan, progress reports, or request documents in the following accessible formats: **print, large print, Braille, audio format, or electronic format.**

Our feedback process is easy. Simply share your feedback, anonymously or by including your name and contact information, through any of the following channels.

- calling 613-998-9548 or 1-800-514-3555 (toll free)
- faxing 613-998-1061
- commenting in the feedback form on the Accessibility page at <https://www.dcc-cdc.gc.ca/about-dcc/accessibility>
- emailing at accessibility@dcc-cdc.gc.ca or accessibilite@dcc-cdc.gc.ca ; or,
- mailing at:

**Defence Construction Canada
Constitution Square, 19th Floor
350 Albert Street
Ottawa ON K1A 0K3
Attn: Governance and Legal Affairs, Accessibility**

A member of our Governance and Legal Affairs team will acknowledge receipt of your feedback (if not anonymous) and follow up with you directly.

Alternate Formats

If you would like to receive a copy of this plan, a progress report (when available) or a description of DCC's accessibility plan feedback process in an alternate format as prescribed under the ACA, please contact DCC as indicated above.

DCC's Commitment to Accessibility

DCC is committed to advancing accessibility for Canadians in a timely manner based on the principles identified in the ACA. Doing so includes ensuring that employees and candidates for positions at DCC face no barriers to employment or accessing DCC workplaces.

DCC commits to ongoing dialogue with persons with disabilities and their allies, to incorporating their input, and that received through the formal feedback process, whenever possible into planning to improve ongoing initiatives and develop new ones.

Barriers Identified

Since 2019, when the ACA came into effect, DCC has identified several barriers (attitudinal, technological, systemic, physical and architectural, and information- and communication-related) that it will work to remove or prevent in the coming years.

Examples of areas where DCC identified barriers include internal and external documentation, video production, business applications, internal business processes, accessibility in some DCC workplaces, level of education and awareness on disabilities and allyship, as well as public event accommodation processes.

Initiatives Completed to Date

DCC has already carried out a number of initiatives that addressed identified barriers, including the following:

Enhanced recruitment of individuals with disabilities

DCC has engaged disabilities organizations across Canada to help identify candidates with disabilities for employment opportunities at DCC.

Implemented corporate diversity and wellness strategies

DCC has implemented corporate strategies—and updates them periodically—focused on diversity and inclusion and workplace wellness and mental health. The goal of the strategies is to ensure DCC provides a welcoming, respectful, inclusive and healthy workplace for all DCC employees, which helps foster accessibility for all, including those with physical and mental health-related disabilities.

Under the strategies, DCC is carrying out a full suite of awareness, training and policy development and enhancement activities.

Updated or new policies

DCC updated its Ergonomics Policy to improve awareness of the importance of ergonomics in the workplace. Under the policy, DCC employees can request an ergonomic assessment of their workstation to help reduce the likelihood of ergonomic injuries, which can lead to disabilities.

DCC introduced a Flexible Workplace Policy that allows DCC employees some choice in work location, which can make it easier for individuals with disabilities to carry out their duties.

Framework for a safe return to the workplace

DCC's safe return to workplace framework is facilitating DCC's post-pandemic return to the workplace, with the physical and psychological health and safety of DCC employees being paramount. The framework acknowledges the possible impacts of returning to the workplace and allows managers to take the circumstances of individual employees into account.

Enhanced the digital work environment

DCC enhanced its digital work environment by introducing tools such as Microsoft Teams and cloud-based computer storage, so DCC employees can work and collaborate with colleagues, Client-Partners and industry, regardless of whether they are in the physical or virtual DCC workplace.

Updated DCC's branding and website

DCC refreshed its website and branding in 2021, taking accessibility guidelines (such as those related to colour contrast, readability, navigation and information structure) into account.

Implemented e-procurement

DCC implemented e-procurement so bidders can bid on DCC contracts via a web portal and use accessibility tools that are not available for paper-based procurements.

Introduced employee training platform with accessibility features

DCC introduced a digital employee training platform that has accessibility features such as closed captioning and text transcriptions.

Participated in accessibility law training

The members of the Accessibility Working Group took training on complying with accessibility laws to gain a better understanding of accessibility legislative requirements and the barriers individuals with disabilities face.

Planned Initiatives

The following sets out the initiatives DCC has planned for the next three years and beyond to increase accessibility in all areas of its business over which it has control.

Employment

In the medium term, DCC intends to continue to review its employment policies to ensure they do not present accessibility barriers and, in fact, positively enhance accessibility at DCC.

Built Environment

In the medium term, DCC intends to develop internal guidance and a checklist for DCC employees to ensure DCC in-person event accessibility. DCC also intends, in the medium term, to review all DCC workplaces—including locations shared with the Client-Partners—to ensure equal access for all DCC employees and, when necessary, reasonable accommodation, including virtual alternatives.

Provide guidance for access to DCC in-person events

Description: DCC will develop internal guidance and a checklist for DCC employees to ensure access to all DCC in-person events, and, when necessary, reasonable accommodation is provided, including virtual alternatives.

Barrier(s): Physical and Architectural, and Systemic

Timelines: Estimated completion by December 2025

Lead Function: Human Resources (with support from the Accessibility Working Group)

Intended Outcome: DCC employees, Client-Partners, industry representatives and other stakeholders have access to DCC in-person events, and reasonable accommodation is provided, when necessary, regardless of the disabilities or barriers they face.

Review workplace built environment to identify barriers to accessibility

Description: DCC will review all DCC workplaces, including offices where DCC staff are co-located with Client-Partners, to ensure equal access for all employees. This will include identifying and addressing barriers to accessibility in collaboration with the Client-Partners

when the Client-Partner is the custodian of the facility. When necessary, DCC will provide reasonable accommodation, including virtual alternatives for building access.

- Barrier(s):** Physical and Architectural, and Systemic
- Timelines:** Estimated completion by December 2025
- Lead Function:** Operations, with support from Human Resources and Information Technology
- Intended Outcome:** DCC employees have access to all DCC workplaces, including those they share with the Client-Partners. Employees receive reasonable accommodation, when necessary, regardless of their disabilities or the barriers they face.

Information and Communication Technologies

In the medium term, DCC intends to develop a plan to improve the accessibility of the Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) used by DCC employees on a day-to-day basis, such as computer software or telephone devices.

Improve accessibility of ICT used by DCC employees

- Description:** DCC will develop a plan to improve the accessibility of ICT used by DCC employees on a day-to-day basis, including researching best practices, consulting employees and other stakeholders, reviewing the accessible technology tools or features employees currently use and identifying new accessible technology tools or features that may be acquired.
- DCC will also implement a communication plan for educating DCC employees on the accessibility features of current and new ICT.
- Barrier(s):** Technological
- Timelines:** Estimated completion by December 2025
- Lead Function:** Information Technology (with support from Communications and the Accessibility Working Group)
- Intended Outcome:** DCC incorporates best practices for implementing accessible ICT at DCC, such that DCC employees are aware of accessible technology tools and features and are empowered by them, regardless of the disabilities or barriers they face.

Communication, Other Than ICT

In the medium-term, DCC intends to enhance its external and internal communications about accessibility, including ensuring that all external publications follow accessibility guidelines and are available in alternate formats upon request.

Develop accessibility webpage

Description: DCC is creating a home on its website for accessibility-related content, such as this plan, contact information for DCC’s designated accessibility representative, and instructions for requesting alternate formats and providing feedback on accessibility at DCC. The webpage will also highlight DCC’s commitment to accessibility and its accessibility plans and initiatives.

Barrier(s): Technological, and Informational and Communication

Timelines: Complete as of December 2022, with ongoing enhancement

Lead Function: Communications (with support from the Accessibility Working Group)

Intended Outcome: There is a central location on the DCC website to access resources and learn about DCC’s accessibility plans and initiatives.

Improve accessibility of external publications

Description: DCC will review and, as required, improve the accessibility of its current non-technical external publications, including making them available in a variety of alternate formats upon request, when possible.

DCC will develop a plan and a process for producing future external publications according to accessibility guidelines. DCC will also make external publications produced under this process available in a variety of alternate formats upon request.

Barrier(s): Technological, and Informational and Communication

Timelines: Estimated completion by December 2025

Lead Function: Communications (with support from the Accessibility Working Group)

Intended Outcome: Current external publications are updated for accessibility and are available in a variety of alternate formats upon request, when possible. Additionally, future external publications are produced following accessibility guidelines and available in a variety of alternate formats upon request.

Develop accessibility intranet page

Description: DCC will create a section on its intranet featuring accessibility-related resources for DCC employees, such as guidelines for interacting with individuals with disabilities, alternate format standards and checklists, and a lexicon of respectful accessibility language and terminology.

Barrier(s): Technological and Attitudinal

Timelines: Estimated completion by December 2025

Lead Function: Communications (with support from the Accessibility Working Group)

Intended Outcome: DCC employees can easily find accessibility resources in a central location.

Ensure accessibility of all website content

Description: DCC will develop and implement a plan to meet the latest Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) requirements for content on the DCC website, and to ensure that future additions are likewise compliant.

Barrier(s): Technological

Timelines: Estimated completion by December 2024

Lead Function: Communications (with support from the Accessibility Working Group)

Intended Outcome: Content on the DCC website complies with latest WCAG version.

Procurement of Goods, Services and Facilities

In the long-term, DCC intends to seek opportunities to expand or improve accessibility on its e-procurement portal used for bidding on DCC contracts.

Improve accessibility of e-procurement portal

Description: DCC will review its e-procurement portal to see whether and how it could add or improve accessibility features.

Barrier(s): Technological

Timelines: Estimated completion by December 2025

Lead Function: Contract Services (with support from the Accessibility Working Group)

Intended Outcome: Added or improved accessibility features for DCC's e-procurement portal are identified and considered during any future renewal or procurement of e-procurement portal services by DCC.

Design and Delivery of Programs and Services

In the medium-term, DCC intends to expand its already large program offering to include mandatory accessibility awareness training and training for supervisors on supporting individuals with disabilities in the workplace.

Introduce accessibility-related training

Description: DCC will develop and implement accessibility awareness training for DCC employees and additional training for supervisors on supporting individuals with disabilities in the workplace.

Barrier(s): Attitudinal

Timelines: Estimated completion by December 2025

Lead Function: Human Resources (with support from the Accessibility Working Group and the National Manager, Training and Development)

Intended Outcome: All DCC employees are more aware and have a better understanding of the disabilities and barriers Canadians face, and how to be an ally for individuals with disabilities. All employees in public-facing roles, such as receptionists, will be equipped to appropriately welcome persons with disabilities into the DCC workplace. Supervisors know how to support persons with disabilities in the workplace.

Consultations

In developing this plan, DCC consulted with a wide range of disability organizations. The groups DCC approached for their input cover the range of disabilities (from hearing and sight-related conditions, to cognitive, mental health and physical disabilities), as well as umbrella funding groups.

DCC sent each organization a draft of the plan as well as a link to a short survey. The nine survey questions were designed to solicit input on DCC’s overall commitment to accessibility—as evidenced in the plan—as well as the likely efficacy of the planned initiatives.

Likewise, DCC employees were given access to the draft plan via the DCC intranet and invited to respond to the survey, anonymously, if they wished.

DCC made a point of substantially completing its draft plan prior to beginning consultations to prompt meaningful feedback.

DCC chose to use an online survey platform and its own intranet to ensure as many organizations and employees as possible could participate. DCC wished both to limit in-person consultations during the pandemic and to extend its reach, since it has limited interactions and presence with the public. However, respondents were also invited to e-mail DCC to request the plan and survey in an alternative format if they needed them.

The survey ran for 90 days, from June 13, 2022, to September 12, 2022, to allow sufficient time for responses, considering summer absences of disability organization staff and employees.

Glossary

ACA: The *Accessible Canada Act*, S.C. 2019, c. 10, and its associated regulations.

Accessibility plan: A plan that explains the steps an organization will take to identify, remove, and prevent barriers to accessibility so that its policies, programs, practices, and services are accessible to persons with disabilities.

Alternate formats: Information presented in a different format that is accessible for persons with disabilities. This can include audio, braille, large print and electronic text.

Barrier: Anything that limits the full and equal participation in society of persons with disabilities. Barriers can be physical, architectural, technological or attitudinal. They can also be based on information or communications, or can result from policies or practices (systemic).

Braille: A system of raised dots that people who are blind or who have low vision can read with their fingers.

Consultation: Soliciting feedback from persons with disabilities at events, electronically or in writing through documents or surveys. The ACA requires organizations to consult persons with disabilities when preparing their accessibility plans and progress reports, and to describe how they conducted these consultations.

Disability: An impairment or functional limitation that restricts a person's full and equal participation in society. Impairments can be physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning- communication-related, or sensory. They can be permanent, temporary or episodic, and can be visible or invisible.

Electronic text: Text that is formatted to be compatible with adaptive technology that assists persons with disabilities. It can be read aloud using text-to-speech software or screen readers.

Large print: Text that is bigger than the standard 12-point font size and includes other accessibility features.

Screen reader: Software that allows people with visual impairments to read text on computers or smartphones.

Regulated entity: An organization that has obligations under the ACA. This includes federal departments and agencies, Crown corporations, and federally regulated private entities.

Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG): A set of rules for designing websites so their contents and presentation are accessible.

References

Internal

- Flexible Workplace Policy
- Safe Return to the Workplace Framework
- Diversity and Inclusion Strategy (2.0)
- Workplace Wellness and Mental Health Strategy
- Ergonomics Policy
- Duty to Accommodate Policy

External

- *Accessible Canada Act*, S.C. 2019, c. 10
- *Accessible Canada Act Regulations*, SOR/2021-241
- Guidance and Templates for Accessibility Plans – Employment and Social Development Canada
- Sample Accessibility Plan Template – Employment and Social Development Canada