



Canadian Radio-television and
Telecommunications Commission

Conseil de la radiodiffusion et des
télécommunications canadiennes

Canada

Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission

REPORT ON ACCESSIBILITY

2024–25

The Honourable Steven Guilbeault, P.C., M.P.

Minister of Canadian Identity and Culture and Minister responsible for
Official Languages

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From the Minister

The Canadian Heritage Portfolio, which includes the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC), plays an important role in creating a barrier-free country, where every person has access to quality programs and services.

The *Accessible Canada Act* came into force in July 2019 and declared that all persons, regardless of their disabilities, are entitled to full and equal participation in society. It also requires that laws, policies, programs, services and structures be designed with accessibility in mind. As a result, the CRTC is required to report annually on specific accessibility indicators about the industries it regulates.



Over the past year, the CRTC has made important advances by making inquiries into how the broadcasting and telecommunications sectors it regulates could improve the accessibility of services offered to Canadians. This includes requiring broadcasters to report the accuracy of closed captioning services and ensuring telecommunications service plans are available that accommodate persons with disabilities, among others. The CRTC is also displaying a commitment to accessibility by extending the comment period on its public consultations to give persons with disabilities sufficient time to share their lived experiences and perspectives.

I am pleased to present the CRTC's Report on Accessibility for 2024–25. I would like to highlight the Commission's ongoing efforts to include accessibility issues in everything it does. I hope you will enjoy reading this report.

The Honourable Steven Guilbeault

Minister of Canadian Identity and Culture and Minister responsible for Official Languages

Chairperson and Chief Executive Officer’s message

I am pleased to submit the CRTC’s Report on Accessibility for 2024-25.

Over the past year, the CRTC has continued to take concrete action to help identify, remove and prevent barriers for persons with disabilities in the sectors we regulate.

We launched public consultations on closed captioning, described video, and audio description to help ensure broadcasters and online streaming services offer programming that is accessible to persons with disabilities. We completed our review of the video relay service policy – an essential tool for sign language users and voice telephone users to communicate with each other. We also continued to improve the accessibility of our proceedings by accepting submissions in sign language.

Together with our partners, we remain committed to helping advance these initiatives as we work toward a fully accessible, barrier-free communications system.



Vicky Eatrides

Chairperson and Chief Executive Officer

Introduction

The Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) is an independent quasi-judicial tribunal that regulates the Canadian communications sector in the public interest. It holds public consultations on broadcasting and telecommunications matters and makes decisions based on the public record. The CRTC is committed to helping ensure communications services are more accessible and useable by persons with disabilities.

The *Accessible Canada Act* (ACA) took effect in July 2019. It amended the *Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission Act* to increase accountability and transparency through an annual reporting requirement. As the regulatory body responsible for overseeing the broadcasting and telecommunications industries, the CRTC is committed to the ACA's goal of making Canada barrier-free by 2040.

In 2024–25, the CRTC launched public consultations on accessible programming for persons with disabilities and updated its video relay service (VRS) policy. As part of a series of consultations on telecommunications services, the CRTC has also been focusing on the accessibility of making shopping for Internet services easier and on self-service options that allow Canadians to make changes to their Internet and cellphone service plans.

In addition, the CRTC continued to improve the accessibility of its public consultation processes by removing barriers to the participation of persons with disabilities in the policy-making process consistent with the principle of “nothing about us without us” that underlies the ACA. For example, for a number of its consultations, the CRTC accepted comments in American Sign Language (ASL) or Langue des signes québécoise (LSQ) with extended deadlines to allow persons with disabilities additional time to share their perspectives.

The CRTC keeps the public up to date on the specific accessibility measures and actions it has taken for the industries it regulates. What follows are the results for the 2024-25 fiscal year.

Results

Broadcasting Act and Telecommunications Act

In 2024-25, the CRTC continued to monitor the implementation of the accessibility reporting requirements of broadcasting and telecommunications service providers under the ACA.¹

Compliance with the CRTC Accessibility Reporting Regulations

The CRTC is responsible for implementing accessibility reporting rules for the broadcasting and telecommunications industries under the ACA. The [CRTC Accessibility Reporting Regulations](#) came into force in 2021 and include a requirement for service providers to establish [an accessibility feedback process](#), to publish [an accessibility plan](#) and [progress reports](#), and to notify the CRTC by specific dates once they have done so.

During the 2024-25 fiscal year, service providers were required to do the following by June 1, 2024:

- Large companies (100 or more employees) – publish their first progress reports and notify the CRTC.
- Mid-sized companies (10-99 employees) – publish their initial accessibility plans and notify the CRTC.

The CRTC reviews these documents with an emphasis placed on those of the larger companies (i.e., companies with 100 or more employees), which provide service to the majority of Canadians.

Broadcasting Act

The CRTC conducted four inquiries related to identifying, removing and preventing barriers under the [Broadcasting Act](#), as described below.² Since these inquiries are either ongoing or did not uncover significant compliance issues, no further action was necessary with respect to measures like orders or notices of violation.³

¹ Inquiries conducted under [subsection 12\(1\) of the Broadcasting Act](#) in relation to [sections 42 to 44 of the Accessible Canada Act](#) and Inquiries conducted under [subsection 48\(1.1\) of the Telecommunications Act](#) in relation to [sections 51 to 53 of the Accessible Canada Act](#).

² Inquiries conducted under [subsection 12\(1\) of the Broadcasting Act](#).

³ The CRTC has nothing to report under these provisions: Orders made under [subsection 12\(2\) of the Broadcasting Act](#) in relation to the identification, removal and prevention of barriers; Orders made under [subsection 12\(2\) of the Broadcasting Act](#) in relation to [sections 42 to 44 of the Accessible Canada Act](#); Notices of Violation issued under [section 34.8 of the Broadcasting Act](#) in relation to contraventions of a regulation or order made under Part II of that Act in relation to the identification, removal and prevention of barriers; Notices of Violation issued under

Television distribution and programming services

Starting in March 2024 and continuing in 2024-25, the CRTC held a public proceeding to consider [a complaint](#) about the accessibility of certain television distribution and programming services for persons who are blind or partially sighted. To support full participation, the CRTC extended the comment period to help ensure that persons with disabilities had additional time to share their perspectives.

Public consultations on accessible programming

In June 2024, the CRTC launched public consultations on [closed captioning](#) and on [described video and audio description](#). Closed captioning is an accessibility measure that can remove barriers for persons who are Deaf or hard of hearing,⁴ while described video and audio description are accessibility measures that can remove barriers for persons who are blind or partially sighted.⁵

For the notice of consultation on closed captioning, the CRTC published it in [ASL](#) and [LSQ](#). Individuals were also able to submit their comments in ASL or LSQ. All comments and sign-language video transcripts will form part of the public record and will inform the CRTC's decision. The CRTC also extended the comment period of both public consultations to give persons with disabilities additional time to share their perspectives.

These consultations will help ensure that barriers are identified, removed and prevented and that broadcasters, including online streaming services, offer programming that is accessible to persons with disabilities.

Compliance reports on closed captioning accuracy rate for live television programming

Canadians who use and rely on closed captioning to access television programming should have access to the highest possible quality of closed captioning for live programming. There are two distinct regulatory frameworks for closed captioning: one for the English-language market⁶ and one for the French-language market.⁷

[section 34.8 of the *Broadcasting Act*](#) in relation to any of [subsections 42\(1\) to \(4\) and \(7\)](#), [43\(1\) to \(3\)](#) and [44\(1\) to \(3\) and \(6\)](#) of the [Accessible Canada Act](#).

⁴ Closed captioning enables persons who are Deaf or hard of hearing to have full access to audio-visual content by displaying what is being said and providing additional contextual information for the viewer by describing who is speaking, what music is playing, and other audible cues.

⁵ Described video and audio description enable persons who are blind or partially sighted to have full access to visual content. Described video provides a narration of important visual details and information about actions, characters, scene changes and on-screen text that cannot be understood from the main soundtrack alone. Audio description is often used for information-based programming (including newscasts, weather reports, sports scores and financial data) and provides a voice-over description of key elements such as text and graphics that appear on the screen.

⁶ See [Broadcasting Regulatory Policy 2019-308](#) and [2019-308-1](#) for more information.

⁷ See [Broadcasting Regulatory Policy 2011-741](#) and [2011-741-1](#) for more information.

Generally, broadcasters are required to measure the accuracy rate of live closed captioning for two programs each month and [to report](#) to the CRTC either annually or biannually on their efforts to improve the accuracy of closed captioning of live programming. In cases of repeated non-compliance with the expected accuracy rate, the CRTC may explore imposing additional regulatory requirements.

Telecommunications Act

The CRTC conducted five inquiries related to identifying, removing and preventing barriers under the [Telecommunications Act](#), as described below.⁸ Since these inquiries are either ongoing or did not uncover significant compliance issues, no further action was required with respect to measures like orders or notices of violation.⁹

Updated VRS Regulatory Policy

VRS is a basic telecommunications service that enables people with hearing or speech disabilities who use sign language to communicate with voice telephone users. The service is available throughout Canada, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

In February 2025, the CRTC published an [updated regulatory policy](#), confirming that VRS remains a basic telecommunications service that must be made available in Canada. The updated regulatory policy gave the Canadian Administrator of VRS (CAV) the flexibility and resources to enhance the service to meet the evolving needs of its users and to make use of advances in technology. It will also help to advance:

- 1) **Inclusivity and diversity** including by requiring the CAV to update the language of their mandate to reflect inclusivity, diversity, and intersectionality, as well as having representation from Indigenous and Deafblind communities on the CAV's board of directors to ensure the CAV considers the perspectives and lived experiences of these communities;
- 2) **Reconciliation with Indigenous peoples** including by requiring the CAV to engage on an ongoing basis with current or potential VRS users who self-identify as Indigenous and who use ASL or LSQ to understand their specific needs and how VRS could be enhanced to meet those needs;

⁸ Inquiries conducted under [subsection 48\(1\) of the Telecommunications Act](#).

⁹ The CRTC had nothing to report under these provisions: Inspections conducted under [section 71 of the Telecommunications Act](#) in relation to compliance with decisions made under the Act in relation to the identification, removal and prevention of barriers; Inspections conducted under [section 71 of the Telecommunications Act](#) in relation to [sections 51 to 53 of the Accessible Canada Act](#); Orders made under [section 51 of the Telecommunications Act](#) in relation to the identification, removal and prevention of barriers; Orders made under [section 51 of the Telecommunications Act](#) in relation to [sections 51 to 53 of the Accessible Canada Act](#); Notices of violation issued under [section 72.005 of the Telecommunications Act](#) in relation to contraventions of decisions made under that Act in relation to the identification, removal and prevention of barriers; Notices of violation issued under [section 72.005 of the Telecommunications Act](#) in relation to any of [subsections 51\(1\) to \(4\) and \(7\), 52\(1\) to \(3\) and 53\(1\) to \(3\) and \(6\) of the Accessible Canada Act](#).

- 3) **Usability** by updating minimum requirements for accessibility features, including improved call notifications; and
- 4) **Transparency and accountability** including by requiring the CAV to publish a summary of its annual report on its website in ASL and LSQ and requiring the CAV to provide more information in its annual report and on its website about all VRS outages.

Summaries of the updated regulatory policy were published in [ASL](#) and [LSQ](#).

Routing of 9-8-8 calls and texts

In January 2025, the CRTC [launched a public proceeding](#) to seek comments on how to improve the routing of 9-8-8 calls and texts. 9-8-8 provides anyone in Canada with bilingual, trauma-informed, and culturally appropriate support for mental health crisis and suicide prevention. The Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) oversees funding and administration of the 9-8-8 helpline, and the service is delivered by the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH). The CRTC is responsible for directing telecommunications service providers to make the necessary network modifications to implement 9-8-8 and any subsequent improvements. PHAC and CAMH have raised concerns about the current 9-8-8 call routing method, which is based on a caller's area code and not their physical location. This could impact call centres' ability to connect callers with local emergency services and resources.

To help ensure that the service meets the needs of callers who use VRS to access 9-8-8, the CRTC invited comments from the CAV, including on potential alternative routing solutions for these calls. This will help identify any existing barriers and help prevent new barriers to the use of the 9-8-8 service, including for individuals who are Deaf or hard of hearing.

Public consultation on shopping for home Internet services

In December 2024, the CRTC [launched a public hearing](#) to make it easier for consumers to shop for Internet services. It is considering standardizing information like price and speed in a broadband consumer label to help Canadians easily compare plans. As part of the consultation, the CRTC stated that any broadband consumer label it adopts must be machine-readable. This will help ensure that assistive technologies can easily interpret and present the information to users, thereby improving accessibility for persons with disabilities. The CRTC is also seeking feedback on any other accessibility-related considerations to further enhance its efforts in making broadband consumer labels accessible for all.

The CRTC published the notice of hearing in [ASL](#) and [LSQ](#) and accepted comments in the two sign languages. All comments and sign-language video transcripts will form part of the public record and will inform the CRTC's decision.

Public consultation on Internet and cellphone service plans (self-service mechanisms)

In November 2024, the CRTC [launched a public consultation](#) on making it easier to choose an Internet or cellphone service or to modify existing plans by enhancing self-service options. The CRTC is examining what self-service options currently exist and their accessibility for persons with disabilities. To support full participation, the CRTC extended the comment period to give persons with disabilities sufficient time to share their perspectives.

Compliance reports filed by cellphone companies

With the regulatory policy [Mobile wireless service plans that meet the needs of Canadians with various disabilities](#), the CRTC put measures in place to make it easier for persons with disabilities to find and subscribe to accessible cellphone plans that work best for them.

These measures require cellphone companies to send the CRTC a yearly report about their consultations with persons with disabilities and their accessible plan offerings. The CRTC [makes these reports public](#) and welcomes feedback from persons with disabilities.

Observations

Implementation of Next Generation 9-1-1

Access to emergency services is critical for everyone, including persons with disabilities.

Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG9-1-1) is a new and improved 9-1-1 service.¹⁰ Once launched, NG9-1-1 will give Canadians and first responders tools that will provide quicker and more accessible communication during emergencies. These tools include the ability for Canadians to interact with 9-1-1 call centres by sending texts, including with pictures, videos and location information. This will benefit and enhance the safety of all Canadians, including the Deaf and hard of hearing communities, and individuals with speech disabilities. The CRTC acknowledges the importance of NG9-1-1 and will continue to support the transition within its mandate. Similar updates may also be required to improve the accessibility of 9-8-8.

¹⁰ [Telecom Regulatory Policy CRTC 2017-182](#), [Telecom Decision CRTC 2021-199](#), and [Telecom Decision CRTC 2025-67](#).

Public Interest Participation

The CRTC [launched a public consultation](#) on how it can better support people, including public interest groups, to participate in its proceedings. One of the goals of this proceeding is to ensure that funding is broadened to better reach individuals and public interest groups representing a diverse range of perspectives, including persons with disabilities.

VRS and Indigenous Sign Languages

Indigenous peoples who are Deaf should have the opportunity to communicate using an Indigenous Sign Language (ISL). In its [updated VRS regulatory policy](#), the CRTC announced that it intends to launch a consultation to gain a better understanding of how ISLs are used in Canada, how many people rely on ISLs, and the availability of interpreters who can sign in these languages. This will provide the CRTC the information it needs to assess how it can promote and support the use of ISLs in VRS.

Appendix

Results

Broadcasting Act

Measure	Number of Incidences
Proceedings related to identifying, removing and preventing barriers ¹¹	4
Proceedings related to accessibility reporting requirements ¹²	1
Orders related to identifying, removing and preventing barriers ¹³	nil
Orders related to accessibility reporting requirements ¹⁴	nil

¹¹ Inquiries conducted under [subsection 12\(1\) of the *Broadcasting Act*](#) in relation to the identification, removal and prevention of barriers.

¹² Inquiries conducted under [subsection 12\(1\) of the *Broadcasting Act*](#) in relation to [sections 42 to 44 of the *Accessible Canada Act*](#).

¹³ Orders made under [subsection 12\(2\) of the *Broadcasting Act*](#) in relation to the identification, removal and prevention of barriers.

¹⁴ Orders made under [subsection 12\(2\) of the *Broadcasting Act*](#) in relation to [sections 42 to 44 of the *Accessible Canada Act*](#).

Notices issued for violating requirements related to identifying, removing and preventing barriers ¹⁵	nil
Notices issued for violating accessibility reporting requirements ¹⁶	nil

Telecommunications Act

Measure	Number of Incidences
Inspections to ensure compliance with requirements related to identifying, removing and preventing barriers ¹⁷	nil
Inspections related to accessibility reporting requirements ¹⁸	nil
Orders related to identifying, removing and preventing barriers ¹⁹	nil
Orders related to accessibility reporting requirements ²⁰	nil
Notices issued for violating requirements related to identifying, removing and preventing barriers ²¹	nil
Notices issued for violating accessibility reporting requirements ²²	nil

¹⁵ Notices of violation issued under [section 34.8 of the *Broadcasting Act*](#) in relation to contraventions of a regulation or order made under Part II of that Act in relation to the identification, removal and prevention of barriers.

¹⁶ Notices of violation issued under [section 34.8 of the *Broadcasting Act*](#) in relation to any of [subsections 42\(1\) to \(4\) and \(7\), 43\(1\) to \(3\) and 44\(1\) to \(3\) and \(6\) of the *Accessible Canada Act*](#).

¹⁷ Inspections conducted under [section 71 of the *Telecommunications Act*](#) in relation to compliance with decisions made under that Act in relation to the identification, removal and prevention of barriers.

¹⁸ Inspections conducted under [section 71 of the *Telecommunications Act*](#) in relation to [sections 51 to 53 of the *Accessible Canada Act*](#).

¹⁹ Orders made under [section 51 of the *Telecommunications Act*](#) in relation to the identification, removal and prevention of barriers.

²⁰ Orders made under [section 51 of the *Telecommunications Act*](#) in relation to [sections 51 to 53 of the *Accessible Canada Act*](#).

²¹ Notices of violation issued under [section 72.005 of the *Telecommunications Act*](#) in relation to contraventions of decisions made under that Act in relation to the identification, removal and prevention of barriers.

²² Notices of violation issued under [section 72.005 of the *Telecommunications Act*](#) in relation to any of [subsections 51\(1\) to \(4\) and \(7\), 52\(1\) to \(3\) and 53\(1\) to \(3\) and \(6\) of the *Accessible Canada Act*](#).

Proceedings related to identifying, removing and preventing barriers ²³	5
Proceedings related to accessibility reporting requirements ²⁴	1

²³ Inquiries conducted under [subsection 48\(1\) of the *Telecommunications Act*](#) in relation to the identification, removal and prevention of barriers.

²⁴ Inquiries conducted under [subsection 48\(1.1\) of the *Telecommunications Act*](#) in relation to [sections 51 to 53 of the *Accessible Canada Act*](#).