Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission | Conseil de la radiodiffusion et des télécommunications canadiennes

Canada

Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission

REPORT ON ACCESSIBILITY

2025–26

The Honourable Marc Miller, P.C., M.P.

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

ISSN: 2564-0844
Cat. No.: BC9-32E-PDF

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From the Minister



The Canadian Heritage Portfolio brings together organizations that promote culture, the arts, heritage and human rights, while advancing inclusion and accessibility for Canadians. The Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) is instrumental in fostering a communications system that reflects these shared values.

Accessibility is essential to ensuring that Canadians can fully participate in social, cultural and economic life. The Government of Canada is committed to achieving a barrier-free Canada by 2040, and the CRTC contributes to this shared objective through its work in the communications sector. As part of its regulatory functions, the CRTC continues to improve the accessibility of broadcasting and telecommunications services by identifying, removing and preventing barriers.

I am pleased to present the CRTC's Report on Accessibility for 2025–26, which highlights actions taken and ongoing efforts to improve accessibility across Canada's communications system.

The Honourable Marc Miller

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

Chairperson and Chief Executive Officer’s message



On behalf of the CRTC, I am pleased to present the CRTC’s 2025–26 Report on Accessibility.

Over the past year, the CRTC has continued to help identify, remove and prevent barriers in the broadcasting and telecommunications industries.

We introduced changes to make programming more accessible for Canadians who rely on described video and audio description. We ensured government authorities receive timely information during major outages to help restore services more quickly for persons with disabilities. We also launched a number of public consultations to better support accessibility in Canada’s communications system, one of which looked at what consumer protections are needed for Canadians, including persons with disabilities, in the event of a service outage.

While we have made progress, we know that there is still more work to do. The CRTC remains committed to working with our partners to help create a communications system that is accessible and barrier-free.

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 *Accessible Canada Act* (ACA) took effect in 2019 with the objective of realizing a Canada without barriers for persons with disabilities by 2040. The ACA applies to the federal government and to federally regulated industries, including broadcasting and telecommunications. As such, the CRTC helps ensure that communications services are accessible and usable for persons with disabilities.

In line with its legislative obligations, the CRTC reports annually on the specific accessibility measures and actions it has taken for the industries it regulates. This report presents the results for 2025-26.

During this period, the CRTC introduced changes to better support Canadians who rely on described video and audio description. It also set industry reporting requirements for Internet and cellphone service providers in the event of major outages. These requirements include reporting on impacts to services such as teletypewriter (TTY) and Internet Protocol (IP) relay-based accessibility services.

In addition, the CRTC continued to improve the accessibility of its public consultation processes by removing barriers to the participation of persons with disabilities, consistent with the ACA principle of “Nothing Without Us.” For example, the CRTC published guidelines explaining how its public proceedings are made accessible for persons with disabilities. It also continued to provide summaries for the most relevant notices of consultation and decisions in American Sign Language (ASL), Langue des signes québécoise (LSQ) and audio formats, and to accept comments in ASL and LSQ for a number of public consultations.

Results

Broadcasting Act and *Telecommunications Act*

In 2025-26, the CRTC continued to monitor the implementation of the accessibility reporting requirements of broadcasting and telecommunications service providers under the ACA.[1]

The CRTC conducted two inquiries related to the identification, removal and prevention of barriers in its public consultation processes during this period.[2]

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 (the Regulations) came into force in 2021. The Regulations require service providers to establish an accessibility feedback process and to publish an accessibility plan and progress reports on a three-year cycle. Service providers are also required to notify the CRTC by specific dates once these obligations have been met. The CRTC reviews these documents to ensure they comply with the Regulations and follows up as needed.

Accessibility of CRTC public consultations

In May 2025, the CRTC published an information bulletin that explains how it makes its public proceedings accessible and how people can request an accommodation in a proceeding. These guidelines apply to all public proceedings under the *Broadcasting Act* and the *Telecommunications Act*. The information bulletin is available in accessible formats, including an audio version, as well as ASL and LSQ video versions.

The CRTC also launched a public consultation to improve public interest participation in its proceedings. In that consultation, the CRTC looked at how to make funding more predictable and faster to better support individuals and groups representing a diverse range of perspectives, including persons with disabilities. A summary of the notice of consultation was published in ASL and LSQ and comments were accepted in both sign languages.

[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* and Inquiries conducted under subsection 48(1) of the *Telecommunications Act*.

Broadcasting Act

The CRTC conducted four inquiries related to identifying, removing and preventing barriers under the *Broadcasting Act*, as described below.[3] In three of these cases, the CRTC is imposing conditions of service to address accessibility barriers. The fourth inquiry is ongoing. No additional measures, such as mandatory orders or notices of violations, were required.[4]

Regulatory policy on described video and audio description

The modernized *Broadcasting Act* requires the CRTC to ensure that persons with disabilities can access programming without barriers. Described video and audio description enable persons who are blind or partially sighted to have full access to visual content.[5]

In December 2025, the CRTC introduced regulatory changes to better support Canadians who rely on described video and audio description, whether they access programming online or via traditional television services. These changes will be phased in over the next two years, giving platforms time to adjust while helping ensure Canadians can continue to access programming without barriers.

As a result of the CRTC's decision, by December 2027, online and on-demand services will be:

- required to include described video for all new, scripted, pre-recorded original programs in English and French;
- expected to include described video for new third-party programs and for partially scripted live events of national interest;
- required to include audio description for all original information-based programs in English and French; and
- required to offer a search feature to make it easier to find programming with described video.

[3] Inquiries conducted under subsection 12(1) of the *Broadcasting Act*.

[4] 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 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*.

[5] Described video and audio description help Canadians understand what is happening on screen. Described video adds narration that explains important visual details, while audio description is often used in news and information shows to read aloud on-screen text and graphics.

Removing barriers to accessibility of television distribution services

In October 2025, the CRTC published a decision approving, in part, an application arguing that barriers to accessibility had prevented persons who are blind or partially sighted from accessing certain broadcasting services. The application argued that individuals who use screen readers should have access to set-top boxes, websites and mobile applications that enable independent access to programming.

As a result of this decision, the CRTC imposed a condition of service requiring the service provider to report on the status of the rollout of its set-top box that supports screen reader technology. The CRTC also launched a follow-up public consultation to update and expand accessibility requirements that help persons with disabilities identify and access programming.

Closed captioning non-compliance

As part of its review of an application to change the ownership and control of a broadcasting service, the CRTC found that the service did not meet the required closed captioning accuracy threshold for live programming in 2023 and 2024. Therefore, in August 2025, the CRTC imposed conditions of service requiring it to:

- file monthly reports to the CRTC outlining its efforts to improve the quality of closed captioning for live programming;
- include in those reports the monthly evaluations for closed captioning accuracy for two ten-minute live program segments; and
- continue filing these reports until the service has met or exceeded the threshold for closed captioning accuracy for at least six consecutive months.

The service filed its final report in March 2026 after meeting the required threshold for closed captioning accuracy for six consecutive months. The service is therefore no longer required to submit monthly reports to the CRTC.

Telecommunications Act

The CRTC conducted five inquiries related to identifying, removing and preventing barriers under the *Telecommunications Act*, as described below.[6] Since these inquiries are either ongoing or did not uncover significant compliance issues, no additional measures, such as orders or notices of violations, were required.[7]

[6] Inquiries conducted under subsection 48(1) of the *Telecommunications Act*.

[7] 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

Outage reporting and resiliency

In September 2025, the CRTC set final reporting requirements for Internet and cellphone service providers to help improve coordination during major outages. Service providers must notify the CRTC and other government authorities within specific timeframes and submit detailed post-outage reports. Both notifications and post-outage reports must include information on affected services, including teletypewriter (TTY) and Internet Protocol (IP) relay-based accessibility services used by persons with hearing or speech disabilities. A summary of the decision was published in ASL and LSQ.

The CRTC also launched two public consultations as part of its efforts to improve communications services across Canada and to help lessen the disruptive impact of service outages on Canadians. The first consultation considered new requirements and standards for how service providers design and operate their networks, including measures to improve the reliability of accessibility services. The second consultation looked at additional consumer protections in the event of an outage, including whether additional or different protections are needed for persons with disabilities. Details of both consultations were published in ASL and LSQ and comments were accepted in both languages.

Canada's public alerting system

In July 2025, the CRTC launched a public consultation to help improve the National Public Alerting System (NPAS). The NPAS is used by emergency management officials across Canada to warn the public about emergency situations like severe weather events and other potential concerns to public safety. This system is a shared responsibility between federal, provincial and territorial governments and agencies. The CRTC plays a supporting role by requiring cellphone and television providers, and broadcasters to distribute emergency alerts to the public.

Through this consultation, the CRTC reviewed how public alerts are distributed in Canada to help improve the NPAS, including by improving the accessibility of alerts. Key information of the consultation was published in ASL and LSQ and comments were accepted in both languages.

Compliance reports filed by cellphone companies

With 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.

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*.

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

Canada's communications system should provide services that are accessible without barriers to persons with disabilities.

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.[8] 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.

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.

[8] Telecom Regulatory Policy CRTC 2017-182, Telecom Decision CRTC 2021-199 and Telecom Decision CRTC 2025-67.

Appendix

Results

Broadcasting Act

Measure	Number of Incidences
Proceedings related to identifying, removing and preventing barriers[9]	6
Proceedings related to accessibility reporting requirements[10]	1
Orders related to identifying, removing and preventing barriers[11]	nil
Orders related to accessibility reporting requirements[12]	nil
Notices issued for violating requirements related to identifying, removing and preventing barriers[13]	nil
Notices issued for violating accessibility reporting requirements[14]	nil

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

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

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

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

[13] 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.

[14] 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*.

Telecommunications Act

Measure	Number of Incidences
Inspections to ensure compliance with requirements related to identifying, removing and preventing barriers[15]	nil
Inspections related to accessibility reporting requirements[16]	nil
Orders related to identifying, removing and preventing barriers[17]	nil
Orders related to accessibility reporting requirements[18]	nil
Notices issued for violating requirements related to identifying, removing and preventing barriers[19]	nil
Notices issued for violating accessibility reporting requirements[20]	nil
Proceedings related to identifying, removing and preventing barriers[21]	7
Proceedings related to accessibility reporting requirements[22]	1

[15] 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.

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

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

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

[19] 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.

[20] 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*.

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

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