

## Learn More about Accessibility Standards

Accessibility begins with awareness. Applying an accessibility mindset toward your business environment and functions will help you to be able to identify and resolve barriers before they result in an accessibility-related complaint. **The CSA standard B651-18 “Accessible Design for the Built Environment” can help you understand what is required to meet current accessibility standards.**

The Commission has a list of free tools, resources, and funding options dedicated to helping businesses become more accessible. You can access these any time day or night from the resource page on our website [nwthumanrights.ca/resources/accessibility](http://nwthumanrights.ca/resources/accessibility)

## Let's Talk

### 1. Call us

You can call us toll-free from anywhere in Canada at **1-888-669-5575**. If you live in Yellowknife you can call our office directly at **867-669-5575**.

### 2. Email us

You can contact us day or night by emailing [info@nwthumanrights.ca](mailto:info@nwthumanrights.ca). We will respond to your email within one business day.

### 3. Visit our Office

Our regular business hours are **8:30 am to 5:00 pm Monday to Friday**. Our office is located on the main floor of the Laing Building at **5003 49<sup>th</sup> St.**

To receive this information in another language, please call 1-888-669-5575.

Pour obtenir cette information dans une autre langue, veuillez composer le 1-888-669-5575.



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## Let's Talk About Accessibility & the Building Code



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Disabilities affect the way people interact with their environment. Creating an accessible environment means removing barriers so people can access your space more easily.

Many people have hidden disabilities such as vision impairment, hearing impairment, or painful conditions that affect their strength and energy levels.

Not all disabilities are permanent. A broken arm or leg can also decrease a person's mobility.

**Disability-related complaints make up 49% of ALL complaints received by human rights commissions across Canada (CHRC, 2019).**

### **Expectations for accessibility have changed**

Many business owners believe they are exempt from current accessibility standards because they have been “grandfathered” based on the age of the structure but this is not always the case. Many business owners are surprised to learn that **meeting the minimum standards set out in the National Building Code may not mean a space is considered accessible.**

Courts and Tribunals are making decisions that show compliance with the National Building Code (NBC) does not always protect a business from human rights complaints. Businesses have a responsibility to accommodate individuals for their specific needs.

There are plans to reform the NBC, however it is not expected to happen until 2025. It may be in your best interest to consider taking measures to assess the accessibility of your own space and make any necessary changes.

### **Accessibility is Good for Business**

Businesses that incorporate accessibility are more likely to meet legal requirements under the *Human Rights Act*, be innovative, inclusive, and have positive brand messaging that reaches a larger market.

When accessibility is part of strategic planning, businesses are better equipped for success.

- **Drive Innovation:** Accessibility features in products and services often solve unanticipated problems.
- **Enhance Your Brand:** Diversity and inclusion efforts so important to business success are accelerated with a clear, well-integrated accessibility commitment.
- **Extend Market Reach:** The global market of people with disabilities is over 1 billion people with a spending power of more than \$6 trillion. Accessibility often improves the shopping experience for all users whether online or in person.
- **Minimize Legal Risk:** Businesses that are inclusive and accessible to all people are less likely to encounter human rights complaints.

### **Cost of Accommodations**

Many accommodations are simple and inexpensive. There are several resources available online that can assist business owners with making their businesses and events more accessible. Some simple things you can do to improve accessibility might include:

- Propping open heavy doors
- Adding a removable ramp over a lip or step at your entrance
- Increasing the size of a readable font on your signs, brochures, or website
- Including a variety of seating options in your waiting areas
- Adjusting the height of desks, phones, service counters, etc.
- Installing grab bars in accessible washrooms

**Only about 25% of accessibility requirements in the NBC reflect current national and international best practices. (The Canadian Commission of Building and Fire Codes, 2015)**