



## **The Accessible Canada Act**

### **Bison Transport's Accessibility Progress Report 2024**



## Contents

<b>The Accessible Canada Act</b> .....	1
<b>Bison Transport’s Accessibility</b> .....	1
<b>Progress Report 2024</b> .....	1
<b>General</b> .....	2
<b>Summary</b> .....	2
<b>Addressing Areas Identified in the Accessible Canada Act (ACA)</b> .....	3
<b>Employment</b> .....	3
<b>Built Environment</b> .....	5
<b>Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)</b> .....	6
<b>Communication Other Than Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)</b> .....	7
<b>Procurement of Goods, Services and Facilities</b> .....	8
<b>Design and Delivery of Programs and Services</b> .....	9
<b>Transportation</b> .....	9
<b>Consultations</b> .....	9
<b>Feedback</b> .....	10
<b>Definitions</b> .....	10
<b>Accessibility</b> .....	10
<b>Barrier</b> .....	10
<b>Disability</b> .....	10

## General

### Summary

Bison Transport is committed to building a culture of inclusivity and accessibility. Not only is this part of our company culture but opening access to all is imperative to our continued growth and competitiveness as an employer in the trucking industry. We will contribute to a barrier-free Canada for everyone by building an accessibility framework that will support employees and the public we serve to have the best experience possible with our services, products, and facilities.

We know creating a barrier-free environment takes time and we are dedicated to the ongoing identification, removal, and prevention of barriers. We published our initial Accessibility Plan, as



required under the Accessible Canada Act, in 2023, and this progress report highlights steps we have taken over the past year to continually increase our accessibility for all.

## **Input and Feedback**

Bison Transport welcomes feedback on our Accessibility Plan and progress reports from the public, employees, and our stakeholders. This feedback is valuable to help break down accessibility barriers and build on our commitment to accessibility. If you have an inquiry or feedback, please use one of the contact methods below. We will respond to all feedback in a timely manner. If you require support while providing feedback, let us know and we will do our best to accommodate your needs.

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## **Statement of Commitment**

Bison Transport is committed to ensuring our organization and the services we provide are accessible to all, including persons with disabilities. All Canadians have the right to benefit from our services equally and those who work with us have the right to perform their jobs free of barriers. Our Accessibility journey will be developed by consultation with persons with disabilities.

## **Reporting Our Plan**

As required by the Accessible Canada Act, we will publish a progress report every year that measures our progress against our commitments. We will review and update our Accessibility Plan every three years.

## **Addressing Areas Identified in the Accessible Canada Act (ACA)**

**Employment** - The “employment” area ensures that candidates and employees with disabilities and those who experience barriers are supported throughout the entire employment lifecycle.

Bison has identified the following barriers that candidates and employees with disabilities may encounter:

**Barrier #1:** *Our organization continues to experience competition for employees and is currently not attracting a high volume of qualified candidates from underrepresented populations such as people with disabilities.*



**Actions:**

- Increase number of job posting locations that reach people with disabilities and affiliated communities.
- Ensure job posting documents follow accessibility best practices and readability and be prepared to provide information in accessible formats when requested.
- Develop a recruiting and employment procedure for applicants with disabilities.
- Educate hiring managers on accessibility and how they can ensure a barrier-free hiring, selection, and accommodation process.

**Progress:**

- Our job postings follow some best practices such as using bullet points to provide concise information and spelling out acronyms.
- Began development of plain language training to be offered for our staff.

**Next Steps:**

- Continue to explore job posting locations that reach people with disabilities and affiliated communities.
- Finalize and offer plain language training for staff.
- Implement plain language usage in job postings.
- Explore consulting with a third party to assist with developing a recruiting and employment procedure for applicants with disabilities.
- Collaborate with our Learning and Development team to explore training on Accessibility, and Accessible Hiring Best Practices, whether it is developed in house or outsourced.

**Barrier #2:** *Improve awareness opportunities for candidates to request reasonable accommodations during the recruitment process.*

**Actions:**

- Incorporate language in job postings that show accommodations are available for roles that do not have a bona fide occupational requirement for applicants with disabilities and establish process for receiving accommodation requests.
- Educate candidates and employees about the availability of accommodations for applicants with disabilities in recruitment and selection processes.
- Add accessibility commitments and offerings to Bison's external careers page so candidates can envision themselves working in an environment with available accommodations.

**Progress:**

- Statement of commitment on Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility has been drafted and shared with Corporate Marketing to add to our external careers website.

**Next Steps:**



- Draft statements to indicate accommodations are available and assess which roles are eligible.
- Collaborate with our Learning and Development and Corporate Marketing teams to provide information to candidates and employees about accommodation availability.

**Built Environment** - The “built” environment area ensures that workspaces and the work environment are accessible for all.

**Barrier #3:** *Some spaces within the main office and shop locations may limit the mobility of employees and visitors with disabilities.*

**Actions:**

- Conduct built environment audit to assess all physical barriers that may be present and require correction.
- Identify mobility barriers in all building locations that can only be accessed by stairs and develop a plan to correct or find alternate space in the building that can accommodate a permanent or temporary restriction.
- Add illumination signage in less lit areas to support those with visual impairments to identify important safety signage.
- Facilities and Finance leadership will provision the budget for modifications required to address accessibility deficiencies.

**Progress:**

- An on-site review was conducted in Winnipeg on February 29<sup>th</sup> by MLPD with a preliminary report shared on August 9<sup>th</sup>.
- Other terminals across Canada conducting their own audits, based on the Winnipeg audit guidelines
- Budget for physical modifications has been provided.
- At our headquarters at 1001 Sherwin Road, the following physical adaptations have occurred:
  - Renovated accessible washroom with new toilet and grab bars on walls.
  - Increased number of accessible parking spots
  - Lowered paper towel dispensers
- At our Winnipeg Shop, lowered two fire alarm pull stations.

**Next Steps:**

- Identify physical barriers in all terminals across Canada, correct those that can be corrected without large capital expenditure being incurred. Any larger project to be placed on multi-year modification plan.
- Identify and replace all interior signage in all terminals across Canada, that require the addition of braille (washrooms, boardrooms etc.)
- In 2025, renovate the kitchen at 1001 Sherwin Road to add accessible microwaves, coffee urns, and increase access to the kitchen sinks.



- Review final report from MLPD to assess if the remaining actions listed above are deemed a priority or if alternate physical modifications are required.

**Barrier #4:** *Cannot safely dispose of sharps or medical devices in office or yard locations leading to improper handling and transporting items home to dispose of.*

**Actions:**

- Install designated sharps containers in a small number of washrooms with tamper resistant disposal units and educate employees on how to use them appropriately.

**Progress:**

- Barrier has been discussed with our Health and Safety team with a plan to action for Q1 2025.

**Next Steps:**

- Finalize plan in Q1 and develop communication with employees for their awareness.

Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) - “Information and Communication Technologies” are various technological tools used to send, store, create, share, or exchange information.

**Barrier #5:** *Some systems do not support accessibility features and, technology teams are not well versed with supporting accessibility technologies.*

**Actions:**

- Review current company websites, intranet and applications and remediate accessibility deficiencies.
- Update and standardize technology style design guides to ensure compatibility with accessibility features and tools.
- Ensure training materials and support are available for people with disabilities on how to access and use accessibility features such as scaling text and images, enabling text to speech features, and closed captioning on Microsoft Teams.

**Progress:**

- Bison’s external website has been redesigned and fully meets accessibility standards.
- Our Learning and Development team has begun to include instructions on using accessibility tools for eLearning courses.

**Next Steps:**

- Review the Herd (intranet) and applications to assess accessibility barriers.
- Continue to review the technology style design guides to ensure accessibility.
- Continue to revise eLearning to include accessibility information.



**Barrier #6:** Tools and software used in the company which have accessibility capabilities are not being used in an accessible way.

**Actions:**

- Educate and communicate opportunities to utilize accessibility features already available to the broader workforce.

**Progress:**

- As eLearning modules are updated and revamped, accessibility features are being shared in the course instructions, including how to enable accessibility mode and what it allows you to do, how to toggle audio voice overs, navigation instructions, and how to use the interactive components.
- Videos created include captions and the Learning and Development team is currently exploring additional tools to assist with captions.

**Next Steps:**

- Review all major tools and software used in the company and identify those with accessibility features.

**Barrier #7:** Technologies commonly used in meetings, online learning, and collaboration spaces can limit the ability of facilitators and attendees to participate meaningfully.

**Actions:**

- Add closed captioning to online learning videos and ensure all other accessibility features are available as required.

**Progress:**

- All videos created by both Learning & Development and Corporate Marketing use captioning.

**Next Steps:**

- Create a standard for video creation to ensure this accessibility standard continues to be met.
- Establish a cadence of review to ensure accessibility tools and resources for meetings, online learning, and collaboration spaces are using the most up to date accessibility features, and ensure all stakeholders are aware, understand how to use them, and frequently share updates with the business to increase awareness among all staff.

**Communication Other Than Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)** - This area requires that organizations provide barrier free access for the public, clients, and employees to all the communications that the company produces for this audience.

**Barrier #8:** Bison does not have a consistent process to ensure alternate formats of communication are available.



**Actions:**

- Review external website social media video content and identify ways to improve accessibility through alt text and closed captioning.
- Develop process to identify and create accessible options when developing web-based content.
- When requested, Bison will provide alternate formats within time frames required by the Accessible Canada Regulation which will include print, large print, audio format, braille, or an electronic format that is compatible with adaptive technology.

**Progress:**

- Closed captioning has been utilized for video creation.
- The external website has been revised and is WCAG 2.2 compliant.

**Next Steps:**

- Establish a cadence of review to ensure the external website and social media content continues to utilize best practices for accessibility standards.
- When requested, Bison will provide alternate formats within time frames required by the Accessible Canada Regulation which will include print, large print, audio format, braille, or an electronic format that is compatible with adaptive technology.

Procurement of Goods, Services and Facilities - The “procuring (buying) goods, services, and facilities” area ensures that accessibility is considered at the beginning of the buying process.

**Barrier #9:** *Bison’s procurement procedures and practices do not take into consideration accessibility requirements.*

**Action:**

- Review vendors' accessibility capabilities to ensure they can deliver goods and/or services consistent with our current accessibility needs.
- Ensure accessibility needs are considered when purchasing software, equipment, and food items.
- Review digital accessibility needs when receiving Request for Proposals from external customers.

**Progress:**

- Bison has continued its relationship with MLPD throughout 2023-2024 by utilizing their consultation services. These consultations and final report provided by MLPD has informed us on accessibility factors to consider in our procurement procedures and practices.

**Next Steps:**

- Using MLPD’s final report, we will create accessibility standards to be utilized during the procurement process.





- Educate all stakeholders involved in the procurement process so they understand the requirement and importance of utilizing the accessibility standard in their assessment.

**Design and Delivery of Programs and Services** - When designing and delivering Bison's internal and external programs and services, accessibility considerations must be part of the process.

**Barrier #10:** *We do not currently have a standard approach for ensuring all programs, processes, and services have taken accessibility into consideration.*

**Action:**

- Comply with mandatory requirement to consult with persons with disabilities by creating a forum to review and provide feedback on all programs, processes, policies to support the development of future programs and services.
- Develop and promote guidelines on how to apply the accessibility lens when reviewing company policies, programs, and services.
- Create accessibility checklists to help ensure key accessibility considerations are made.

**Progress:**

- MLPD has provided a final report on their findings. Beginning in Q1 2025 we will use this report as a resource to further develop the resources listed below.

**Next Steps:**

- Use findings from the final report from MLPD to:
  - Create a master inventory of all programs, processes, and policies and a system to update regularly.
  - Develop guidelines, checklists and other resources to apply accessibility standards to all current programs, processes, and policies.
  - Establish a standard process to ensure future programs, processes, and policies apply an accessibility lens prior to full adoption and roll out to the business.

**Transportation** - Transportation for this purpose refers to the transportation of people, not goods. Bison Transport does not coordinate a transportation system, or a fleet of transportation vehicles as defined in the Accessible Canada Act and is not included in the scope of this plan.

## Consultations

We have continued our partnership with the Manitoba League of Person's with Disabilities (MLPD) with the following actions and commitments:

- Four consultation meetings with MLPD from January to May 2024.
- On site review of the physical space at our headquarters on February 29<sup>th</sup>, 2024.
- Preliminary draft report shared with our Property Services Department to begin plans for changes to our physical space at our headquarters in Winnipeg, MB.



- Release of our Accessibility Survey to all Canadian staff on August 12<sup>th</sup>, as designed by MLPD.

Upon close of our Accessibility Survey, MLPD will provide us with a final report including both recommendations from their on-site review and information gathered from the Accessibility Survey. To measure our progress, we will continue to receive feedback and survey our employees and stakeholders with an additional progress report in 2025.

## Feedback

Despite having our Accessibility Plan published on our external website with a clear process for providing feedback, to date, we have not received any. This may indicate a lack of awareness, and action will be implemented to ensure our staff and stakeholders are aware of the opportunity to provide us with accessibility feedback.

## Definitions

**Accessibility** – Refers to the needs of persons with disabilities being intentionally and thoughtfully considered when products, services, and facilities are built or modified so they can be used and enjoyed by persons of all abilities.

**Barrier** – The Accessible Canada Act defines a barrier as “anything – including anything physical, architectural, technological, or attitudinal, anything that is based on information or communications or anything that is the result of a policy of a practice – that hinders the full and equal participation in society of persons with an impairment, including a physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication, or sensory impairment or a functional limitation.:

**Disability** – The Accessible Canada Act defines a disability as “any impairment including anything physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication, or sensory impairment, or a functional limitation, whether permanent, temporary, or episodic in nature, or evident or not, that, interaction with a barrier, hinders a person’s full and equal participation in society.