



Condo Accessibility- New Standards

By Denise Lash on May 09, 2011

Accessibility Standards for Customer Service: The Clock is Ticking...

The clock is ticking for condominium buildings: beginning January 1, 2012, private sector organizations in Ontario will be required to comply with the first of five standards to be developed under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*.

The purpose of the Act is to develop standards to reduce barriers that limit the full participation of people with disabilities in various aspects of society; specifically access to goods and services, employment, transportation, and information and communications.



The first of these five standards, the *Accessibility Standards for Customer Service*, is currently in force for designated public sector organizations. As of next year, the standard will apply to any organization providing goods or services “to members of the public or other third parties and that has at least one employee in Ontario”. The definition is broad enough to capture condominiums which provide services (concierge, reception, etc.) to members of the public (this could include visitors for instance) or third parties (other organizations).

In order to ensure compliance, condominiums will be required to:

- provide accessibility-related training to staff and internal policy makers (presumably, employees, board members and agents such as managers);
- develop policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities;
- allow access to the business premises for persons with disabilities accompanied by service animals (e.g. a guide dog) or support person; and
- provide public notice of temporary disruptions impacting access to goods or services by persons with disabilities.

Organizations with twenty or more employees face additional requirements with respect to reporting, proof of compliance, and mechanisms for feedback.



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These requirements, therefore, may not apply to most condominium corporations but may be applicable to larger condominium corporations which have many employees.

Other regulations are on the horizon, including the “[Integrated Accessibility Regulation](#)”, released in 2010, which aims to combine the standards relating to information and communications, employment and transportation. Board members and property managers would well advised to follow the developments of these standards on the [Ministry of Community and Social Services website](#).

Failing to comply with these standards could result in hefty fines. Board members and managers should turn their minds sooner rather than later to these requirements, and use reasonable efforts to ensure that their policies, practices, and procedures are consistent with the principles of the regulation (see subsection 3(2) of the regulation). The [Accessibility Standards for Customer Service](#) is available online together with the Ministry of Community and Social Service's useful guide to ensure compliance also available on its website.

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