

***Ontario Launches “AODA” Targeted Audits of
Retailers with 500 or More Employees***

October 2015

The Ministry of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure **has launched a blitz of large retailers to ensure they meet the requirements under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (“AODA”).** The blitz, slated to continue throughout the Fall, places special focus on:

- The creation and making public of a multi-year accessibility plan that outlines the steps put in place to remove and prevent barriers for employees and customers.
- The development of customized emergency plans for employees with disabilities.

Retail is among the first industries to be targeted likely because of its high-profile. However, it won’t be the last.

Audit blitzes will become more and more frequent across all industries as part of the Ministry’s stated compliance and enforcement plan. A blitz may focus on specific areas of compliance or on compliance generally.

It is therefore important for every organization to have met compliance standards already in place and be planning for the future. For example, since 2012 every organization has been required to comply with the *Customer Service Standards* which mandated the development of accessibility policies and training. In 2014 and 2015 the *Integrated Accessibility Standards* imposed additional policy and training requirements as well as requirements for website accessibility.

Requirements for January 1, 2016

As of **January 1, 2016** every private sector organization will have new obligations under the Integrated Accessibility Standards (“IAS”) of the AODA:

Small Organizations (fewer than 50 employees in Ontario) are required to:

Training	Accessible Feedback
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide training on IAS and <i>Human Rights Code</i> to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> employees and volunteers persons involved in developing policies persons who provide goods, services or facilities on the organization’s behalf 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure processes for receiving and responding to feedback from employees, the public and clients are accessible to persons with disabilities

Large Organizations (50 or more employees in Ontario) are required to:

<p>Accessible Formats and Communication Support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Upon request, make information accessible by providing or arranging accessible formats and/or communication supports <p>Recruitment/Assessment/Selection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Notify employees, the public, and applicants about accommodation during recruitment• Upon request, provide and arrange accommodation in consultation with persons with disabilities• Inform successful applicants about policies	<p>Accommodation During Employment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Advise employees of support policies• Upon request make accessible information (a) required to perform the job; and (b) generally• Establish a written process to develop individual accommodation and return to work plans• Consider accessibility needs regarding:<ul style="list-style-type: none">(a) performance management(b) career development and advancement(c) re-deployment
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