

Accessibility Plan Annual Status Report

This Annual Status Report details the annual update for 2020 on the progress of measures taken to improve accessibility. The purpose of this report is to track our progress and make the public aware of our initiatives.

To request an alternate format of this annual status report, please contact:

Email: accessibility@ontarionorthland.ca

Toll-Free Telephone Number: 1-800-461-8558

Once your request is received, our team will contact you to provide you with additional information on when you can expect a response, based on the document and format you are requesting.

Statement of Commitment

Ontario Northland is committed to treating all people in a way that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence. We believe in integration and equal opportunity. We are committed to meeting the needs of people with disabilities in a timely manner and will do so by preventing and removing barriers to accessibility by meeting accessibility requirements under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act.

Purpose

This Accessibility Plan annual status report is prepared annually to update about Ontario Northland's Accessibility Plan and Policy 2014-21. This status report provides the progress of measures taken to implement the strategy, including steps taken in compliance with the regulation (O. Reg. 191/11 Integrate Accessibility Standards under Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, S.O. 2005, c. 11).

Training

Ontario Northland provides accessibility training for all employees. This includes Human Rights and AODA training and Transportation and AODA training. These training modules include a quiz and are delivered to all new employees at employee orientation (takes place minimum once per month) and refresh training is as required.

Employment

Ontario Northland complies with its multi-year accessibility plan for advertising of employment and accommodating people with disabilities during the recruitment process including during interviews. Accommodation is considered and utilized in return-to-work practice, during performance management, during career development and redeployment processes. Accessibility barriers are part of the workplace health and safety committee checklists for workplace audits.

Accomplishments in 2020

Please note some initiatives planned for 2020 were postponed due to the global COVID-19 pandemic, for example, the renewal of the Accessibility Committee and related activities.

General highlights for 2020 include:

- The online ticketing experience was updated for customers purchasing tickets for motor coach services or the Polar Bear Express. This provided an accessible and integrated service for passengers booking their tickets directly on the Ontario Northland website. This eliminated the need for customers to navigate through two different web interfaces to purchase tickets and complete transactions.
- Travel Advisory Warnings were implemented to notify passengers of potential delays or cancellations due to adverse weather – allowing passengers to rebook or cancel their trip at no charge. Ontario Northland employees connect with passengers to review their preferences for travel and ensure customers travelling with assistive devices are properly accommodated on the next available trip if they choose to delay their trip.
- In the event of accessibility equipment failure, and a service disruption occurs, a new process was implemented where Ontario Northland employees will make alternative accessible travel options available for the customer, such as dispatching another vehicle or hiring an accessible taxi to transport the person and their assistive devices to their destination.

Information and Communications Accomplishments

- Real-time arrival and departure time updates were added to the Ontario Northland website, adding an additional source of information for customers who may need an alternative format for arrival and departure times.

Customer Service Accomplishments

- Added a new option for customers to indicate at time of ticket purchase, whether they have allergies that may require a buffer zone during their travel. Employees are trained on how to accommodate a customer should an allergic reaction occur during the passenger's travel. This is in addition to the option to notify Ontario Northland during the ticket booking process if the passenger/customer requires a wheelchair accessible coach or is travelling with a support animal.

Transportation Accomplishments

- All brand-new new motor coaches added to the fleet were purchased with the addition of braille signage for overhead seating identification.

Planned for 2021

- Accessibility Committee: In 2021, Ontario Northland will be renewing its Accessibility Committee and related activities. In addition to monitoring and supporting ongoing accessibility activities and projects in the organization, the Committee will begin to establish a new, long-term Accessibility Plan for ongoing compliance and continuous improvement across the agency. This plan was delayed in 2020 due to the global COVID-19 pandemic.

For more information

For more information about Ontario Northland's accessibility plan, please contact the Senior Director of Passenger Operations at:

- Phone: 1-800-363-7512, ext. 335
- Email: accessibility@ontarionorthland.ca

To request an alternate format of this plan, please contact accessibility@ontarionorthland.ca.