

Did you miss the November 1, 2018 deadline?

Private organizations in Manitoba are now required to comply with the Accessibility Standard for Customer Service.



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The Accessibility for Manitobans Act (AMA) strives to achieve an accessible society for all Manitobans disabled by a barrier. Over time, a number of accessibility standards will be enacted under the AMA to address accessibility in the following areas: customer service; employment; information and communications; the build environment; and transportation.

The Accessibility Standard for Customer Service is the first standard to be enacted as a Regulation under the AMA. It requires that governments, municipalities, and public and private organizations provide accessible customer service. The Regulation has been phased in over several years, starting with governments and large public institutions. The final phase-in now applies to private organizations, including businesses, non-profit organizations and small municipalities. “Customer” means more than retail customers but includes anyone who receives goods or services from an organization, such as clients, members, patients, constituents and the like.

As of November 1, 2018 the Customer Service Accessibility Standard requires that private organizations who provide goods or services in Manitoba and who have at least one employee in Manitoba provide accessible customer service, implement a Customer Service Accessibility Policy, and provide related training to employees and volunteers.

A Customer Service Accessibility Policy must touch upon the following points: how the organization will communicate with customers disabled by a barrier; how it will support customers who use assistive devices, support persons and service animals; how the organization will notify customers if their premises are temporarily inaccessible and what alternatives may be available; how it will train staff; and how the organization will collect and consider feedback related to the accessibility of its goods and services.

Missed the November 1, 2018 deadline? There is no need to panic – there is still time to comply with the AMA, but it should be done as soon as possible. We would be pleased to help you prepare a Customer Service Accessibility Policy or to answer any questions you may have about complying with the Customer Service Standard Regulation.

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While care is taken to ensure the accuracy for the purposes stated, before relying upon these articles, you should seek and be guided by legal advice based on your specific circumstances. We would be pleased to provide you with our assistance on any of the issues raised in these articles.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Melissa practices in the areas of labour and employment law and human rights law. She has experience providing advice to both employees and employers, in both unionized and non-unionized contexts.