



WCB Accessibility Plan 2019-20

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Baseline Report

About The Workers Compensation Board

The Workers Compensation Board of Manitoba (WCB) is an injury and disability insurance agency governed by a Board of Directors representing employers, workers and the public interest and funded by employer premiums. The WCB provides benefits to injured workers and their families. We work with workers, employers and healthcare professionals to promote safe and healthy workplaces and return workers to health and work in a safe and timely manner.

The WCB provides benefits and supports to approximately 30,000 injured workers per year, as well as assessment and related services to approximately 34,000 employers. The WCB's main location is at 333 Broadway in Winnipeg, with satellite offices in Brandon and Thompson. In addition, SAFE Work Manitoba, an arms-length agency of the WCB located at 363 Broadway, provides training, consultation, information and other injury and illness prevention services to workers and employers throughout Manitoba.

Accessibility Achievements

Providing compassionate and responsive service to injured workers has always been a priority at the WCB. The WCB has undertaken several initiatives to enhance accessibility, including:

- Collaborating with workers, employers and members of the public on a case-by-case basis to accommodate their individual needs whenever reasonably possible.
- Updating the WCB website according to the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 AA. The WCB internal web-based portal for information (intranet) is also being improved to bring it into compliance with the international accessibility standard.
- Continuing to ensure physical accessibility around the WCB's main building at 333 Broadway and requiring that future proposals for space planning or renovations incorporate accessibility plans.
- Using an access Text Telephone (TTY) machine to communicate with hearing impaired customers.
- Adopting communications guidelines to enhance accessibility and service for all by addressing language, culture and literacy needs - including the use of plain language, simple graphics and easy-to-read fonts.

- Conducting public consultations on accessibility with the general public and disability agencies in order to better inform future accessibility enhancements.
- Creating an Accessibility Working Group to ensure compliance with *The Accessibility for Manitobans Act*. The working group is responsible for developing, implementing and updating the WCB's Accessibility Plan to ensure that barriers to services are reduced throughout the various areas of the organization.

Accessibility Barriers

In 2016, as part of an initial effort to better understand the barriers to accessibility encountered at the WCB, the WCB conducted an internal survey of its employees. We also participated in a joint survey of the general public and organizations representing persons disabled by barriers. This was done in collaboration with other Crown agencies in order to better understand the needs of WCB stakeholders who are disabled by barriers.

Barriers identified through the 2016 consultations included:

Attitudinal Barriers

The internal survey revealed different levels of employee awareness regarding the measures the WCB was taking to make its goods and services more accessible, and different levels of knowledge regarding problems encountered by persons with disabilities when accessing WCB goods and services. On the basis of these survey results, the WCB concluded that staff would benefit from ongoing training to increase their understanding of what constitutes a barrier to accessibility and to improve service in relation to persons with disabilities.

Informational and Communication Barriers

Informational and communication barriers exist when an individual experiences difficulty communicating as a result of a disability. While most stakeholders were satisfied with the way that the WCB communicated information, some stakeholders identified difficulties with the way that information was provided or presented to them. Some, for example, said they would have preferred to have received information from or communicated with the WCB in a different manner. Others stated that information provided to them was too confusing or complex. Others stated that they had difficulty obtaining access to information about WCB practices and policies because they either did not have access to or could not access the internet.

Technological Barriers

Technological barriers include tools or work that cannot be accessed because of a disability. Several survey respondents pointed out that technological solutions have been provided for user control of computer font size. Others, however, pointed to difficulties in locating information on the WCB's internet site.

Systemic Barriers

Systemic barriers include patterns of behavior that are part of the social or administrative structures of an organization, or barriers established or perpetuated by an enactment, policy or practice. Some of the internal survey respondents noted concerns with how systemic barriers may influence hiring practices or requests for employer accommodation. Some WCB stakeholders with mobility disabilities identified the requirement to travel to WCB offices for health care examinations as a barrier, particularly if they had to travel long distances to do so.

Physical and Architectural Barriers

Physical and architectural barriers are structures or designs preventing or impeding a person from accessing the physical environment or service. Internal survey respondents noted that while WCB premises are generally accessible, certain areas commonly accessed by injured workers still had doorknobs that were difficult to open, and confusing layouts. Staff also indicated that finding accessible transportation for clients living in rural areas could be difficult. Some WCB stakeholders noted challenges exiting their vehicles from parking lots located at WCB buildings due to the fact that parking spaces were so close to each other.

Accessibility Barriers -- Follow Up

As part of its ongoing efforts to identify, prevent, and remove accessibility barriers at the WCB, the WCB continues to include a question regarding accessibility barriers on a survey sent to injured workers. The WCB plans on adding a similar question to the survey it provides to injured workers when they attend the WCB offices for a health care examination.

The surveys sent to injured workers in 2018 reveal that while a majority of injured workers do not experience accessibility barriers when attempting to access WCB goods and services, some continue to experience barriers, specifically in the areas of information and communication (challenges in obtaining information from the WCB in preferred format, difficulties in understanding the information due to complexity or use of jargon); accessing WCB information online (primarily due to lack of internet access); and travelling to WCB offices for health care assessments. Continued challenges with exiting vehicles in WCB parking lots due to lack of space between parking stalls were also noted.

Accessibility Plan

Statement of Commitment

The Workers Compensation Board of Manitoba is committed to ensuring equal access and participation for all stakeholders, regardless of their abilities. We believe in inclusion and diversity and are committed to treating people in a way that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence.

The WCB is committed to identifying, removing and preventing barriers to accessibility and meeting the requirements of *The Accessibility for Manitobans Act* and its associated Standards.

Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

The WCB has incorporated accessibility measures into its policies, procedures, training, communications and physical environment, and will continue to do so. The attached Multi-Year Accessibility Plan identifies and updates the actions taken in that regard, including anticipated outcomes and current status of the initiatives. The current plan continues to address the Customer Service Standard, based on consultations in that regard. The WCB is aware that a new regulation addressing Accessible Employment Standards is forthcoming. Initiatives and actions to ensure compliance with new standards will be incorporated into a future iteration of this plan, once public consultations are complete.

1. Awareness

(a) Policy

Initiative/Action	Expected Outcomes	Current Status
Develop an Accessible Customer Service Policy	Establish a clear message and overarching direction about WCB's commitment to accessibility.	Completed.
Develop a Statement of Commitment		Completed.

(b) Plan

Initiative/Action	Expected Outcomes	Current Status
Develop and make public a multi-year Accessibility Plan.	Identify actions that will continue to make the WCB more accessible.	Completed.
Update the Accessibility Plan every two years.		Completed for 2019/20. Next plan update in 2021/22 will include further consultations and more directly address the new Accessible Employment Standard.

(c) Internal Coordination

Initiative/Action	Expected Outcomes	Current Status
Establish an Accessibility Committee and assign an Accessibility Coordinator to manage accessibility requirements and initiatives across departments.	Maintain representation across departments to review, remove and prevent barriers and enhance employee awareness.	Completed.

(d) Training

Initiative/Action	Expected Outcomes	Current Status
Design training for all new and existing employees on the AMA, <i>The Human Rights Code</i> , and the Accessible Customer Service Standard.	Create awareness and educate employees on the AMA, <i>The Human Rights Code</i> and the Accessible Customer Service Standard. Assist employees with identifying barriers to accessibility and solutions to resolve, remove or prevent barriers.	Completed. All Staff trained through a series of e-modules. Training will be required of new staff.
Establish timelines for employees to complete Accessibility training and track course completions.		Employees are given two weeks to complete each module and progress is tracked.
Provide ongoing awareness about accessibility issues to employees by regular channels such as internal newsletters, blogs and intranet postings.		<i>BoardTalk</i> , the WCB newsletter, featured an overview of the accessibility initiatives and upcoming training modules.

2. Communications

Initiative/Action	Expected Outcomes	Current Status
Ensure WCB websites are accessible by complying with web accessibility development standards.	All WCB websites are accessible.	The WCB web content meets the WCAG 2.0AA standards. About 70% of linked WCB documents have been upgraded and the remainder are scheduled to be completed by 2020. Upgrading of the SAFE Work Manitoba has begun.
Assist customers who self-identify as being disabled by barriers and recognize and support customers who use assistive devices, support persons or service animals.	Customers receive timely access to information, goods or services in a manner that enhances their dignity, independence and participation in the workers compensation system.	Staff continue to assist injured workers who face barriers and training is ongoing.
Ensure employees are familiar with supports available to make information more accessible.	Employees are aware of accessible formats and communication supports.	Employees will continue to be made aware of new tools and supports as they become available.
Develop procedures to produce public information in ways that enhance accessibility and notify the public that information is available in alternate formats.	Information is provided in alternate formats in a timely manner.	Completed.

3. The Physical Environment

Initiative/Action	Expected Outcomes	Current Status
Establish a process for addressing structural barriers that are identified or arise when it is reasonable to do so	Maintain and improve physical access for the public to WCB buildings.	Completed
Establish a process of notification and signage when accessible features of buildings are not available.		Completed
Incorporate considerations of barrier free design principles to enhance accessibility for future space plans and renovations.		Completed. The WCB is including accessibility principles in ongoing renovations, such as automatic doors and lower counters.

4. Public Events

Initiative/Action	Expected Outcomes	Current Status
Develop processes, resources and/or checklists for employees to ensure reasonable accessibility to public events.	WCB led public events are accessible to all Manitobans.	Event plans are vetted to ensure they are reasonably accessible.
Hold events in accessible spaces, meet the communication needs of persons disabled by barriers on request, publicize events in an accessible manner and waive additional fees for support persons.		Processes for ensuring accessible events have been established. The promotion of such events meets accessibility requirements. The WCB will accommodate requests for support whenever reasonably possible.

5. Feedback and Response

Initiative/Action	Expected Outcomes	Current Status
Establish a system to receive and respond to feedback from the public about accessible customer service, ensuring that feedback is acknowledged in a timely manner.	Communication channels are open and evident and feedback provided is evaluated and addressed.	Public feedback email (wcbaccessibility@wcb.mb.ca) Or phone 204 954 4232 ext 4323 Dedicated staff receive feedback, ensure timely responses and track requests.
Track and monitor requests from members of the public.		Tracking mechanism is in place.

6. Accessible Employment Standard

Initiative/Action	Expected Outcomes	Current Status
Analyze the Government of Manitoba's new regulation concerning employment standards and adjust membership of the WCB Accessibility Committee as needed.	Representation from various areas of the WCB aligns effectively with the content of the new standards.	Not initiated
Expand the baseline to address WCB's accessibility as an employer in relation to existing and prospective employees.	Identify opportunities to make improvements.	In progress.
Undertake extensive internal consultations with employees and joint external consultations with stakeholders, in coordination with Manitoba Crown Agencies.	Identify potential gaps and possible improvements that will make the WCB an even more accessible workplace.	Mechanisms for internal consultation are being explored. A collaborative approach to external consultation has been confirmed with Crown Agencies.

