

REASONS WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT

It is important to meet the needs of customers with a disability because:

- ↻ They are loyal consumers who will recommend your quality product or service. As a business owner or service provider your common goal is to satisfy your customers, making them feel comfortable and welcome so they return time and time again. In meeting your obligations as a business owner, you can expect these customers with disabilities to refer your business to their friends, family, and co-workers. Making your services more accessible to disabled customers mean they are far more likely to remain loyal, which could lead to increased profitability.
- ↻ According to the Disability Discrimination Act of 2005, treating a disabled person unfairly or not meeting their needs means you could have legal action taken against you.
- ↻ Improving your overall level of customer service can really make a difference in the lives of disabled individuals and it can help you stand out from your competitors.
- ↻ Encouraging employment applications from disabled people widens your talent pool as well as increasing your chances of finding employees with the right skills and experience.

DID YOU KNOW ABOUT THIS TAX BREAK?

Under the Income Tax Act, the Federal Gov't allows businesses and commercial building owners to deduct the amount they paid during the taxation year to make renovations or alterations to a building that enables individuals who have a mobility impairment gain access to the building or to be mobile within it. For more information contact Revenue Canada at 1-800-959-5525.

CELEBRATE YOUR HIGH LEVEL OF ACCESSIBILITY AND INCLUSIVENESS

- ↻ What you do to improve accessibility does not have to be expensive
- ↻ When posting material of the web, use guidelines provided by the Web Accessibility Initiative at www.w3.org/WAI/
- ↻ Remember to shovel the snow and remove the debris on the side walks in front of your entrance
- ↻ Make sure your shopping aisles are wide enough for scooters and wheelchairs
- ↻ Make sure your counter tops are at a convenient height for people using mobility aids
- ↻ Think about providing a chair for the elderly to sit down and rest
- ↻ Make sure all floor surfaces are free of tripping hazards
- ↻ Do not rush your customers, and allow them time to manoeuvre around and ask questions

HOW TO CONTACT US FOR MORE INFO

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**TOGETHER WE CAN
MAKE A DIFFERENCE**

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ACCESSIBILITY & INCLUSIVENESS



What you as a business owner can do to meet the needs of your customers with disabilities

MAKE YOUR ENTRANCE VISIBLE

- Install exterior signs that use plain, visible, large and colourful text
- Paint your business entrance in a color that contrasts well with its surroundings
- If your business has multiple entrances, make sure you post signage that indicates where the accessible entrance is

AVOID ENTRANCE CLUTTER

- Remove obstacles from your entrance, such as sandwich boards or displays, so that baby strollers, wheelchairs and scooters can manoeuvre
- Keep side walks clear of snow, ice, leaves, and other debris that may be deemed a hazard for both the disabled and other customers
- Make sure the path to your business is accessible by providing non-slip, level surfaces and accessible curbs

MAKE YOUR ENTRANCE ACCESSIBLE

- If you don't have street level access for your customers, use color-contrasted tape to identify the potential challenge
- Reposition any door hardware to a height that is accessible to all
- Ensure the door is light and easy to open or close
- If your door has reflective glass, make sure to use tape or decals to help identify it
- Ensure doormats are secure
- Make sure your staff can see the entrance to assist customers in need
- Be sure to post accessible signage and guide dogs welcome signs when applicable

WASHROOM ACCESSIBILITY

- If you don't have accessible washrooms, make sure you and your staff knows where the nearest washrooms are



Why make your businesses accessible?

It makes sense for the future of our downtown. Our "Gold Star Program" will inform visitors where they can shop, eat, and stay.

OUR GOLD STAR PROGRAM

We hope that our Gold Star Program will encourage businesses to participate in a rating system that will allow visitors with disabilities to equally enjoy our downtown community. On a rating scale of one to four, these visitors will know where they can go to enjoy their stay, their shopping and their dining experience. This rating will be used by people with disabilities to determine where they can stay, eat, shop, play and relax. This is a "no pressure" program for the businesses that choose to participate or not. Our hope is that this program will entice all businesses to recognize that individuals with every type of disability would love to frequent our downtown, but we just aren't ready for them. This is only due to obstacles and lack of knowledge. This program is here because we appreciate everyone and want to be the most welcoming and accessible business community that we can be.

THE "GOLD STAR" PROGRAM WILL BE COMPLETED IN SEPTEMBER 2008 AND THE RESULTS WILL POSTED ON THE DOWNTOWN LANGLEY MERCHANTS ASSOCIATION WEBSITE, THE CITY OF LANGLEY WEBSITE AND THE TOURISM LANGLEY WEBSITE.

TYPES OF DISABILITIES

There are many types of disabilities – they can be visible, hidden, permanent, or occur only at certain times – these types include:

- vision
- physical
- developmental
- learning
- hearing
- speech or language
- mental health/intellectual
- both vision and hearing combined

Disabilities can vary from individual to individual. Having low vision is different than being legally blind. Being hard of hearing is different than being deaf.

The number of people with disabilities is predicted to increase as our population grows. Therefore this is a major market group and if you as a business owner do not satisfy the needs of this group, you will lose them to your competitors.

Carry out a few easy and inexpensive adjustments and it will pay off in the long run. This is why we are providing business owners with a few simple steps and procedures to help make your business more accessible.

