

Accessibility for People with Disabilities in Canada

A VISUAL GUIDE TO ACCOMMODATION PRACTICES IN PUBLIC SPACES, INCLUDING COURTS

British Columbia enacted the Accessible BC Act in 2021, requiring public-sector organizations to create accessibility plans and consult with people with disabilities. Every courthouse in B.C. has a **court accessibility coordinator** to help arrange accommodations like interpreters or assistive devices. However, detailed accessibility standards are still being developed, and **private businesses aren't yet covered**, leaving gaps in access across the province.

Manitoba passed its Accessibility Act in 2013 but has fallen behind on enforcement and implementation, especially for building accessibility and private sector compliance. Many public spaces remain inaccessible, and there's **still no province-wide standard** for the built environment. **The province missed its own 2023 goal for full accessibility.**

Quebec & P.E.I. have no stand-alone laws guaranteeing access for service animals beyond traditional guide dogs. People with other types of service animals — like psychiatric or medical alert dogs — often face inconsistent access and must rely on human rights complaints if denied entry. Without clear legislation, businesses and public spaces can legally refuse uncertified or non-guide service animals.

Alberta has no comprehensive accessibility legislation, relying instead on the Human Rights Act and case-by-case accommodation requests. Disability advocates argue the province is "lagging behind" others, with **significant gaps in areas like court accessibility, public transportation, and building standards.** Calls for a dedicated provincial accessibility law have so far gone unanswered.

Ontario's Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) was created in 2005 with the goal of making the province fully accessible by 2025. It was meant to establish mandatory accessibility standards in multiple areas: customer service, information & communications, employment, transportation, and design of public spaces. Despite the deadline, **Ontario is still nowhere near full accessibility**, with slow enforcement and compliance gaps-- especially in small businesses and older public buildings.

