

# **WCB ACCESSIBILITY PLAN**

## **2025 to 2026**

**This document is available in alternate formats on request.**

To request alternate formats or provide feedback about this plan, please contact the WCB Accessibility Coordinator by email at [WCBaccessibility@wcb.mb.ca](mailto:WCBaccessibility@wcb.mb.ca) or by phone at 204-954-4323.

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## Part one: Baseline report

### About The Workers Compensation Board

The Workers Compensation Board of Manitoba (WCB) serves workers and employers through a no-fault insurance system integral to the Manitoba economy. Funded by employers, the WCB promotes safe and healthy workplaces, facilitates recovery and return to work, delivers supportive compensation services and ensures responsible stewardship of Manitoba's workers' compensation system.

The WCB insures over 40,000 employers, covering 73 per cent of the Manitoba workforce. The WCB's main location is at 333 Broadway in Winnipeg, with satellite offices in Brandon and Thompson.

SAFE Work Manitoba, a division of the WCB, is dedicated to preventing workplace injury and illness. Working with safety partners, we provide prevention education, safety programming, consulting and strategic direction to create a culture of safety for all Manitobans. SAFE Work Manitoba is located at 363 Broadway.

### Accessibility achievements in 2023 and 2024

The WCB continually seeks to identify, remove and prevent barriers for those with accessibility needs, including workers, employers, other third parties, and WCB staff. Past achievements can be found in previous plans on the accessibility page of the WCB's website.

In 2023 and 2024, the WCB completed several initiatives to enhance accessibility:

- updated the WCB's accessibility plan for 2025-2026
- developed an Accessible Information and Communication Policy that came into effect on May 1, 2024
- updated the WCB's Accessible Customer Service and Accessible Employment policies
- developed and trained all staff on the *Accessible Information and Communication Standard Regulation*, including how to identify, prevent and remove barriers and provide information and communication in alternate formats or through communication supports
  - New hires must complete the training within a month of starting their employment.

- updated the WCB and SAFE Work Manitoba websites, as well as the WCB's intranet site to conform to the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.1 Level AA
- updated the WCB and SAFE Work Manitoba brand guidelines and corporate templates to incorporate accessibility standards
- held regular accessibility working groups meetings to manage accessibility requirements and initiatives across departments.
- expanded the WCB's consultations on accessibility to better understand existing barriers and inform future accessibility enhancements
- created the Accessibility Requests & Feedback Registry to track barriers identified by our stakeholders and the public
- renovated the parking lot and increased the number of accessible parking stalls

### **Accessibility consultations**

On a regular basis, the WCB solicits feedback about barriers to accessibility through customer service surveys we send to injured workers and employers. The WCB also gathers public feedback, which the Accessibility Coordinator tracks in the Accessibility Requests & Feedback Registry.

In 2024, the WCB collaborated with other Crown agencies in a survey of organizations representing persons disabled by barriers. The WCB also held internal employee discussion groups to better understand the accessibility challenges our employees and stakeholders encounter.

### **Accessibility barriers**

Barriers identified through the WCB's consultations include:

#### **Attitudinal barriers**

Employee discussions revealed different levels of employee awareness regarding how to provide access to programs and services in an accessible manner. Staff also had different levels of awareness regarding the measures the WCB had already put in place to provide accessible customer service.

Throughout 2023 and 2024, 86 per cent of injured workers reported that they experienced no barriers when accessing WCB goods and services. For the 14 per cent who had experienced a barrier, many of the issues raised were with service delivery generally, not accessible customer service. However, one per

cent of injured workers identified that the WCB had shown a lack of consideration for their disability or mental health condition.

Organizations representing people disabled by barriers expressed the importance of having staff trained to interact with people with a variety of accessibility needs as communication challenges are varied.

### **Information and communication barriers**

In 2023 and 2024, 98 per cent of workers were satisfied with the information the WCB provided them. However, 2 per cent of worker and employers expressed concern about the complexity of information provided to injured workers. Organizations representing people with intellectual, learning and developmental disabilities shared these concerns.

In 2024, organizations representing Deaf, deafened and hard of hearing clients identified a lack of alternate communication options at WCB as well as a lack of American Sign Language (ASL) video options on the WCB's websites and social media.

### **Technological barriers**

Throughout 2023 and 2024, 99 per cent of injured workers identified no issues with finding and accessing information or navigating the WCB's websites and web forms. However, six per cent of employers experienced difficulties.

In 2024, organizations representing clients with intellectual, learning and developmental disabilities noted that websites, contact forms and electronic submissions can be challenging for their clients to navigate, even for those with internet access and computer literacy skills.

The WCB's current business systems do not provide a mechanism to communicate information about a stakeholder's accessibility needs to the many different business areas and employees that may handle a file.

### **Systemic barriers**

In 2024, employee discussion groups revealed that some employees were concerned about how systemic barriers might be affecting WCB hiring practices or requests for employee accommodation. Employees had varying levels of awareness regarding how to request accommodation for their own accessibility barriers and the accommodation options available them.

In 2024, organizations representing people with disabilities noted the importance of their clients being able to communicate with the WCB through a variety of channels. Some clients had experienced situations where the WCB's practices of communicating primarily by phone were inaccessible

to them, while others experienced challenges with electronic communication.

The desire to communicate through a specific and preferred channel was expressed by workers and employers in surveys. Employee discussion groups noted increased requests from workers and employers for communication by email or text and that not all business areas of the WCB are set up to communicate through these channels.

### **Physical and architectural barriers**

Throughout 2023 and 2024, the majority of stakeholders experienced no challenges navigating the WCB's locations. However, in 2023, 12 per cent of the subset of injured workers who came into the WCB for a healthcare appointment indicated they had experienced barriers that made it difficult to access WCB services. This is a significant increase from the three per cent who experienced barriers in 2019, the last period for which survey results from this group are available.

In 2024, employee discussion groups revealed that some employees have faced barriers entering and exiting the WCB's main building on Broadway when ramps had not been continually cleared.

## **Part two: Accessibility plan**

### **Statement of commitment**

The Workers Compensation Board of Manitoba (WCB) 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.

### **WCB accessibility plan 2025 to 2026**

The WCB will continue to incorporate accessibility measures into its policies, procedures, training, communications and physical environment. The ongoing actions identified below represent the initiatives that the WCB will continue to monitor and perform in the upcoming two years.

Actions referenced and completed in previous plans can be found on the accessibility page of the WCB's website. They have not been included below.

#### **1. Corporate-wide processes to identify, prevent and remove barriers to accessibility**

##### **Ongoing actions**

The WCB will continue to:

- consult with representatives across departments to review, remove and prevent barriers and enhance employee awareness
- collaborate with workers, employers and members of the public on a case-by-case basis to accommodate their individual needs whenever reasonably possible
- invite employees, stakeholders and members of the disability community to share feedback and identify barriers that exist within the workplace and in the WCB's programs and services
- provide ongoing awareness about accessibility issues to employees through regular channels such as the employee newsletter, social media and the WCB website
- monitor the WCB's progress on the initiatives and actions identified in this current accessibility plan

### **New initiatives / actions**

The WCB will:

- review the accessibility questions on the WCB's customer service surveys to gather further details about the accessibility barriers experienced
- increase the cadence of internal communications featuring accessibility topics, including a series of articles in the internal employee newsletter
- review WCB business systems and process for interim measures that can be used to communicate stakeholder accessibility needs until systems are updated
- develop refresher accessibility training to be delivered to WCB employees on a periodic basis

### **Expected outcomes**

The WCB anticipates that:

- the current plan is posted on the WCB's website and is available in alternate formats
- identified barriers are removed where possible, and reasonable accommodation alternatives are in place in the event barriers cannot be removed
- employees are trained to identify, prevent and remove barriers, respond to accommodation requests and offer reasonable alternatives when a barrier cannot be removed

## **2. Accessible customer service**

### **Ongoing actions**

The WCB will continue to:

- provide multiple methods to contact the WCB, including by phone, in-person, email and web forms
- record requests and feedback received through the WCB's accessibility email, [wcbaccessibility@wcb.mb.ca](mailto:wcbaccessibility@wcb.mb.ca), and phone number, 204-954-4323, in the Accessibility Requests & Feedback Registry
- communicate to the public about temporary barriers in place



- include accessibility guidelines in corporate event planning processes through the Event and Meeting Planning Checklist
- provide training and resources to assist employees in delivering accessible customer service

### **New initiatives / actions**

The WCB will:

- explore additional accessible services for people who are Deaf, deafened or hard of hearing
- review and update the WCB's accessible customer service training to ensure it continues to meet current and new standards
- review and update the WCB's Accessible Customer Service Handbook
- expand the processes for communicating temporary barriers to accessible features
- explore opportunities to proactively ask stakeholders whether they have any accessibility needs

### **Expected outcomes**

The WCB anticipates that:

- accessibility requests and feedback inform the WCB about accessibility barriers experienced by our stakeholders and the public
- events are held in accessible spaces, publicized in an accessible manner and additional fees for support people are waived
- employees assist customers who self-identify as being disabled by barriers and recognize and support customers who use assistive devices, support people or service animals
- WCB stakeholders experience improved customer service

## **3. Accessible information and communication**

### **Ongoing actions**

The WCB will continue to:

- make the public aware that information is available in alternate formats and through communication supports on request
- maintain and update the accessibility pages on the WCB's external and internal websites

- monitor the WCB's external websites with automated accessibility testing tools to help identify and correct accessibility issues
- provide training and resources to assist employees in providing information in alternate formats or through communication supports

### **New initiatives / actions**

The WCB will:

- review WCB systems for interim ways to record when a stakeholder requires information in an alternate format or through a communication support until systems are updated
- merge the WCB and SAFE Work Manitoba websites into a single website, improving navigation and accessibility of information

### **Expected outcomes**

The WCB anticipates that:

- the WCB's stakeholders, and the public generally, are aware that the WCB will provide information in alternate formats and through communication supports on request
- information about the WCB's accessibility plan, policies and commitments is clear and accessible
- the WCB has a single external website with improved navigation and clearer, more accessible information
- employees are aware of accessible formats and communication supports and have the tools to provide accessible information and communication

## **4. Accessible employment**

### **Ongoing actions**

The WCB will continue to:

- inform prospective employees during the recruitment and selection process that accommodations are available during the hiring process upon request
- inform employees when they are hired of the WCB's accessible employment policies and practices

- provide employees with disabilities who request accommodation with reasonable accommodation, and the opportunity to discuss ongoing challenges and the adequacy of their accommodation
- develop Workplace Emergency Response Plans with employees who require assistance in the event of an emergency
- train leaders to understand that they must not tie the need for accommodation to job performance, must take an employee's individualized accommodation plan into account and must take steps to ensure performance management is free from discriminatory conduct

#### **New initiatives / actions**

The WCB will:

- review and update the WCB's accessible employment training to ensure it meets current and new standards
- conduct a diversity census of the WCB's employees for updated information on employee's accessibility needs

#### **Expected outcomes**

The WCB anticipates that:

- employees and prospective employees with accessibility needs are aware they can request accommodation and are provided with reasonable accommodation throughout the interview process
- employees are supported and provided with the training and accommodation required to perform their duties to the best of their abilities
- WCB's performance management process takes into account the fact that employees may be disabled by barriers and that accommodations may not fully address those barriers
- a network of employees is developed who can provide perspectives on accessibility challenges within the WCB

## **5. Accessible locations**

#### **Ongoing actions**

The WCB will continue to ensure all applicable building codes and by-laws with respect to accessibility are met in future leases and site renovations.

### **New initiatives / actions**

The WCB will:

- review of the WCB's physical environment, including accessibility features and assistive devices, in each location
- update the process for notifying the public when an accessibility feature is not working at one of the WCB's locations
- explore creating maps of the public areas of the WCB for those who come to our locations in person

### **Expected outcomes**

The WCB anticipates that:

- barrier-free design principles to enhance accessibility are incorporated in future space plans and site renovations
- removal and prevention of barriers is included and considered in future leased space, facility maintenance and renovations on an ongoing basis
- stakeholders and the public are able to access and navigate the WCB's locations