

Frequently Asked Questions:

Q. I am allergic to dogs and another member has a service dog. What do I do?

A. Service animals provide support for people to complete activities of daily living or life-saving interventions. Speak to your Health and Safety Officer or the event coordinator to ask about ventilation and also about seating so that exposure to the service animal is limited.

Q. Who has to be trained in AODA by OSSTF/FEESO?

A. Anyone dealing with OSSTF/FEESO members on behalf of OSSTF/FEESO. This includes: Bargaining Unit Executives, Workplace Representatives, Branch Representatives, Provincial Committee members, and District Office Staff.

Q. Do we have to add ramps or elevators to our office right now to comply?

A. Under the AODA Design of Public Spaces Standard, organizations must make new and redeveloped spaces accessible. This includes having ramps, lifts or elevators whenever there are stairs. If your office is not being redeveloped currently, you should prioritize to accommodate people as necessary.

Q. When planning an event, how can I accommodate a person with a wheelchair or scooter?

A. Examine the venue prior to an event to ensure an accessible location that has barrier-free pathways and accessible bathrooms. Check entrances and doorways as well as tables and seating for accessibility. Don't forget to ask the person about their specific needs.

Q. If our meeting is not held on OSSTF/FEESO premises, whose compliance guide do we use?

A. The organization that owns the building must have their own compliance guide and we must abide by their procedures.

At OSSTF/FEESO
we believe that
our spaces should
be accessible and
inclusive.

Alternate formats are available upon request.



OSSTF/FEESO represents over 60,000 education workers who are employees of school boards, universities and other educational institutions in Ontario. OSSTF/FEESO has a provincial office in Toronto and hosts provincial and regional events in many venues. The vast majority of our Districts have a local office to provide services to members. Districts and Bargaining Units also host events in other venues.

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), 2005

In 2005, *The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)*, was enacted mandating accessibility standards. The goal of the AODA is to make Ontario fully accessible by 2025. There are five accessibility standards:

- Customer Service
- Transportation
- Information and Communication
- Employment
- Design of Public Spaces

The Customer Service Standard came into effect under the AODA in January 2012. It mandates organizations to address the barriers faced by persons with disabilities when accessing goods and services. This standard requires that OSSTF/FEESO:

- Develop policies, procedures, and practices dealing with customer service
- Provide training to OSSTF/FEESO staff and members who deal with OSSTF/FEESO members
- Document policies and training

* Detailed information on the Compliance Statements can be found at :

<https://www.osstf.on.ca/en-CA/about-us/osstf-feeso-and-aoda.aspx>

As part of our commitment to providing quality services, goods and opportunities to our members and others, OSSTF/FEESO will strive to ensure that its policies, statements, procedures and practices pertaining to providing goods and services to persons with disabilities are consistent with the following guiding principles:

- goods and services will be provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities;
- goods and services will be provided to persons with disabilities in an integrated manner unless an alternative measure is necessary to access the goods or services; and
- persons with disabilities will be given an opportunity equal to others to access goods and services and equal opportunities may require additional accommodations.

OSSTF/FEESO Statement of Commitment

OSSTF/FEESO is committed to fostering an accessible and inclusive environment that includes equal access and meaningful participation for persons with disabilities. Our commitment to accessibility involves identifying, preventing, and removing barriers to participation while challenging ableism and meeting the accessibility requirements established under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)*.



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Tips for Accommodating Persons with Disabilities

- Communication should be centered in respecting the dignity of the persons requiring assistance or services.
- If you are not sure what to do – ask “How may I assist you?”
- Service animals are working animals, and should not be treated like pets.
- Assistive devices (e.g., wheelchairs or walkers) should only be touched or moved with consent of the owner. Consider the devices an extension of a person’s body.
- Making assumptions about someone’s capabilities can be harmful. Involve them in the process.
- Consider clear communications in multiple formats (verbal, print, electronic, editable).
- Be open to new solutions or different ways of doing things. Small changes can be very effective in helping everyone involved, not just the person requesting an accommodation.
- Language matters! Use inclusive language.
- When providing accommodations, it is crucial to remember that not all disabilities are visible, and that persons with disabilities have varying needs.

OSSTF/FEESO AODA Customer Service Standard Compliance

OSSTF/FEESO has developed compliance statements which address the following requirements of the AODA Customer Service Standards:

- The Use of Assistive Devices
- Communication
- The Use of Service Animals
- The Use of Support Persons
- Notice of Temporary Disruptions in Services and Facilities
- Training
- Feedback
- Agents and Others Providing Goods and Services on Behalf of OSSTF/FEESO
- Availability of Required Documents