

Eassons Transport Limited 2023–26 Accessibility Plan 2024, Progress Report



Executive summary

At Eassons Transport Limited, our commitment to accessibility is rooted in our values, which guide us to include everyone. Our efforts to achieve accessibility are deeply connected to, and mutually reinforced by:

- Eassons Transport Limited priorities, including ongoing work in support of equity, diversity and inclusion
- legislation, such as the *Canadian Human Rights Act*, the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, the *Canadian Labour Code* and the *Employment Equity Act*

We recognize that accessibility is an ongoing and central element of being an inclusive organization. That's why the plan we've developed to continue improving our accessibility builds on our inclusive mindset and practices.

Through the plan's development we identified barriers and actions to improve accessibility in seven of the seven priority areas under the *Accessible Canada Act*. We have also looked to leading practices from other organizations, and consulted with Trucking HR Canada to help identify other opportunities for improvement.

While this is Eassons Transport Limited first formal accessibility plan, it builds on previous investments and successes. These include:

- Renovations to Eassons Transport Limited offices and our other physical spaces
- Providing ergonomic workstations
- Improvements to the accessibility of our website and technology platforms and learning opportunities
- Increased focus on mental health awareness, and support as well as mental health first aid training for key leaders.

Change takes time, and this plan will guide us in our efforts to improve accessibility over the next three years.

Statement of Commitment

Eassons Transportation is committed to creating and maintaining an accessible workplace. We recognize that accessibility is an ongoing process, and we are dedicated to continuously improving our policies, procedures, and practices to ensure all employees have equal opportunities to participate in all aspects of our organization. By prioritizing accessibility, we aim to create a culture of inclusion and respect for all individuals

Reporting on our plan

As required by the *Accessible Canada Act*, we will publish a status report every year that shows our progress against our commitments. We will review and update our accessibility plan every three years. We will also measure our overall progress and how the plan influences the culture and experiences of our organization.

The *Accessible Canada Act* includes seven principles.

- Everyone must be treated with dignity.
- Everyone must have the same opportunity to make for themselves the life they are able and wish to have.
- Everyone must be able to participate fully and equally in society.
- Everyone must have meaningful options and be free to make their own choices, with support if they desire.
- Laws, policies, programs, services and structures must take into account the ways that different kinds of barriers and discrimination intersect.
- Persons with disabilities must be involved in the development and design of laws, policies, programs, services and structures.
- Accessibility standards and regulations must be made with the goal of achieving the highest level of accessibility.

Addressing areas identified in the Accessible Canada Act

Eassons Transport Limited has identified ten organizational goals to eliminate barriers in our organization, as well as actions to address them.

Employment

Goal 1: Create a culture of accessibility across all terminal locations and remote workspaces

Desired outcomes.

A culture of accessibility will be established across all terminal locations and remote workspaces, where accommodations are seamlessly integrated into every stage of employment. Employees and candidates will feel supported through accessible policies, practices, and processes, fostering inclusivity and empowerment. This culture will be enriched by shared stories and resources, enhanced understanding through learning materials, inclusive communication, and clear accessibility request procedures, ensuring a welcoming and equitable environment for all.

Barrier 1

Employees and management not fully understanding accessibility needs, creating unintentional biases or resistance.

Progress Update

- Provided regular training for employees and leadership on accessibility principles, unconscious bias, and the value of inclusivity using Training Platforms such as HR Downloads, Trucking HR Canada, Carriers Edge.

- Created an Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Accessibility (IDEA) committee to embed inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility into our organizational culture, creating a more equitable and productive workplace for everyone.
- In progress to Identify and address systemic barriers, ensuring policies, processes, and practices align with IDEA principles.

Employment

Goal 2: Implement accessibility best practices through our Recruitment and Human Resource steam so they may recruit, retain, and support employees who are part of this designated group

Accessibility must be ensured at every stage of employment. This means accommodations must be made available to candidates and employees upon request and accessibility should be embedded into policies, processes and practices, including:

- recruitment
- employee onboarding
- professional development
- business travel
- short- and long-term disability leaves
- return-to-work processes
- redeployment

Desired outcomes

- Eassons Transport Limited attracts qualified candidates with disabilities according to their availability on the labour market for our occupations and reaches our corporate representation goal for employees with disabilities in our workforce.
- Employees with disabilities report being treated with respect at a level that matches those of all employees.

Barrier 2

Our current number of job applicants and employees hired with disabilities is lower than labour market availability.

Progress Update

- In the process of working with our IT department and Indeed.com, to enhance the careers section of our websites to increase visibility of Eassons Transport Limited jobs among Canadians with disabilities and signal our commitment to their inclusion in our workforce.
- Provided education to hiring managers on accessibility and how they can ensure a barrier-free hiring, selection and accommodation process, using the HR Download Training Platform.
- Hiring Ads have included inclusive language.

- Working to benchmark current recruitment, selection and onboarding practices against leading accessibility practices.

Built Environment

Goal 3. Ensure employees have workspaces free of physical barriers.

The built environment comprises human-made structures, features and facilities—it's the physical environments where people live and work.

Desired outcomes

- Eassons Transport Limited buildings are easy for employees and visitors with disabilities to access.
- We identify and remove architectural and physical barriers quickly and effectively.
- Create a suggestion platform to provide feedback on additional proposed design changes to the built environment

Barrier 3

Despite recent renovations, some spaces continue to limit the mobility of employees and visitors with disabilities, specifically in the Belleville and Moncton terminals.

Progress update

- Prioritized and updated the accessibility features of entry doors, washrooms and key meeting rooms.
- Established a standing IDEA committee of internal stakeholders to provide feedback on proposed changes to the built environment with Eassons Transport Limited.
- Created a suggestion platform (safety@eassons.com) to provide feedback on additional proposed design changes to the built environment

Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

Goal 4. Provide accessibility training to management to increase advocacy for accessibility best practices on behalf of their employees

Desired outcomes

Management will gain the knowledge and skills to advocate effectively for accessibility best practices, fostering an inclusive workplace that empowers employees by removing barriers and promoting equal opportunities for success.

Barrier 4

Lack of awareness or understanding of accessibility issues among management, leading to resistance or underestimation of its importance. Additionally, time constraints for training or insufficient resources may hinder the effective implementation of the training program.

Progress Update

- Provided training to all members of management to include the duty to Accommodate, Violence and Harassment, Accessibility, Bias and Unconscious Bias. This was completed through the HR downloads training platform.
- Certificate in Inclusive Leadership program (CIL) Training completed by members of the Leadership team and Human Resources
- Offer multiple training times or self-paced online modules to accommodate management's busy schedules
- Establish a feedback survey to address questions or concerns post-training.
- Set Clear Expectations by communicating the organization's commitment to accessibility and the role of management in promoting these practices.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

Goal.5- Implement a Human Capital Management (HCM) system that is accessible for all employees

Desired outcomes

The Human Capital Management (HCM) system will be fully accessible, enabling all employees, regardless of ability, to seamlessly interact with the platform for tasks such as accessing personal information, managing benefits, and participating in professional development, thereby promoting inclusivity and enhancing user experience across the organization

Barrier 5.

A barrier to implementing an accessible Human Capital Management (HCM) system is limited awareness or expertise in accessibility standards during the selection or customization of the system. Additionally, budget constraints or reliance on legacy systems that are not easily adaptable to accessibility requirements have posed challenges.

Progress Update

- Presented a business case to leadership highlighting the importance of accessibility for compliance, employee satisfaction, and inclusivity.
- Educated IT staff and project managers on accessibility principles to ensure they can configure and test the system effectively.
- Selected a HCM system provider (ADP) with a strong commitment to accessibility, offering features like screen reader compatibility, keyboard navigation, and customizable interfaces.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

Goal 6. Information and communication technologies are various technological tools and resources used to transmit, store, create, share or exchange information.

Desired outcomes

- An increase in available self-serve technology and accessibility features enhances in-person and hybrid meeting experiences and participation.
- Employees, customers and facilitators are more fully able to participate in training, conferences and other events
- Persons with a disability have full access to use our technology

Barrier 6

The Current IT team is not well versed in the accessibility technological tools and does not know how to assist persons with disabilities in the workplace.

Progress Update

- In the process of training IT employees to increase their accessibility knowledge and learn how to adapt services and improve interactions with persons with disabilities.
<https://www.w3.org/WAI/fundamentals/>
- In the process of delivering and promoting end-used training on accessibility features on all various programs. training documents for persons with disabilities (making items larger on a screen, activate reader in windows, activating closed caption on Zoom etc).
<https://www.w3.org/WAI/perspective-videos>.

Barrier 6

The requirement for individuals to request that accessibility features be turned on or activated limits the ability of employees with disabilities to use them

Progress Update

- Working to develop standards for the application of simultaneous interpretation, translation and captioning functions for key Eassons Transport Limited meetings, media engagements and conferences, when appropriate.
- Provide awareness of accessibility features for in-person and hybrid meeting technologies.
- Ensure that Eassons Transport Limited websites continue to meet web accessibility requirements.

Communication (other than information and communication technologies)

Goal 7. Create a process where the employees, customers and the public can request barrier-free alternative formats of communication within a timely manner.

The communication priority area recognizes that people give, receive and understand communication in different ways. An organization is expected to take these differences into account and provide its communications in various accessible formats for people who require them. Some examples of communication products include signs, wayfinding, documents, forms, bills and receipts that are not technologically based.

Desired outcomes

- Eassons Transport Limited ensures the accessibility of key documents, internally and externally, for people who request them in an alternative format.
- Eassons Transport Limited responds to requests for key resources or publicly available documents in an accessible format in the same amount of time as for other document requests or as directed by applicable legislation.

Barrier 7

Eassons Transport Limited standard document templates and formats for its files, reports and presentations do not always meet the accessibility needs of their users.

Progress Update

- In the process of embedding accessibility into Eassons Transport Limited internal and external corporate communications products and templates.

Barrier 7

Eassons Transport Limited does not have a uniform process to ensure alternate formats, such as braille or captioned audio, for the information and communications it issues to employees and Canadians.

Progress Update

- Identify service providers and develop contracts or agreements to create alternate formats, where appropriate and needed.
- Working to create a catalogue and store documents and materials requested in alternative formats along with key accessibility resources in alternative formats so that they are ready to be distributed upon request.

Procurement of goods, services and facilities

Goal 8. Ensure accessibility is considered from the start of our procurement process

The *Accessible Canada Act* requires us to consider accessibility requirements for procurement and include accessibility as part of the provision of goods, services and facilities, where appropriate (e.g., accessible technology, materials and amenities).

Desired outcomes

- Accessibility becomes a part of our procurement expectations, and goods and services we purchase are accessible from the beginning.

Barrier 8

Accessibility considerations are not fully embedded in Eassons Transport Limited procurement framework and tools.

Progress Update

- In process with our Policy Review Committee and the IDEA committee to revise the procurement policy to reinforce that accessibility must be considered when procuring goods and services.

Design and delivery of programs and services

Goal 9. Create and revise current policies, procedures, and processes with the lens of accessibility and support from subject matter experts

When designing and delivering Eassons Transport Limited internal and external programs & services, accessibility considerations must be part of the process.

Desired outcomes

Eassons Transport Limited has a strong culture of collaboration with internal stakeholders

Barrier 9.

Currently there is no standard approach for ensuring all programs and services have taken accessibility into account.

Progress Update

- Leveraged the mandatory requirement to consult with persons with disabilities within the company as well as guidance from Trucking HR Canada to review and provide feedback on our programs, policies and processes during the Top Fleet Application requirements.
- Developed an internal accessibility policy to ensure we meet these standards.
- In process to create an accessibility checklist with our IDEA committee to help ensure key accessibility considerations are considered.

Transportation

Goal 10. Ensure drivers who require an alternative truck seat for motor related disabilities are provided an alternative seat where applicable.

This area of focus in the Accessibility Canada Act covered the transport of people and goods. Vehicles that are used by organizations and regulated by the federal government must take into consideration barriers to operation and provide accommodation to the employee operating the vehicles as needed.

Barrier 10

Driving a tractor trailer is our largest job classification. Many persons with disabilities face barriers to do this job. Looking for accommodations, and alternate roles for those that can no longer physically do the job.

Process Update

- Engaging with industry experts to identify barriers and actions we can take to accommodate and modify our primary job.
- Working with Occupational professionals to identify aids to assist with common repetitive motion or motor disabilities that are common for drivers (ie steps to decrease climbing into cab, additional grab handle to enter vehicle, automatic tractors etc).
- Continue to find jobs, outside of driving, for individuals who can not drive or need to come off the road due to developing a disability.

Our consultation process

Eassons Transport Limited remains committed to building an accessible culture and environment where everyone—including people with disabilities—can participate and grow professionally. Our accessibility plan was developed in consultation with members our health and safety committee, human resources, associates who have identified as a person with disability

- We consulted with our benefits provider.
- We invited employees with disabilities to share feedback
- We have requested feedback and consultation from our Health and Safety team, which consists of employees from across departments and locations.

We also looked at outside sources and feedback from external stakeholders. These include:

- Peers in our industry
- Trucking Human Resources Canada
- Trucking Human Resource Sector Council Atlantic
- Nova Scotia Trucking Safety Association

We will continue to consult with our employees and key partners, including those with disabilities, to ensure that we realize the change we've set out to achieve.

Appendix: Definitions

SOP: Known as a standard operating procedure, is a set of written instructions that describes the step-by-step process that must be taken.

ICT: ICT, or information and communications technology (or technologies), is the infrastructure and software components that enable modern processing

Accessibility: The degree of ease that something (e.g., device, service, physical environment and information) can be accessed, used and enjoyed by persons with disabilities. The term implies conscious planning, design or effort to make sure something is barrier-free to persons with disabilities. Accessibility also benefits the general population by making things more usable and practical for everyone, including older people and families with small children.

Barrier: The *Accessible Canada Act* defines a barrier as “anything—including anything physical, architectural, technological or attitudinal, anything that is based on information or communications or anything that is the result of a policy or a practice—that hinders the full and equal participation in society of persons with an impairment, including a physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication or sensory impairment or a functional limitation.”

Disability: The *Accessible Canada Act* defines a disability as “any impairment, including a physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication or sensory impairment—or a functional limitation—whether permanent, temporary or episodic in nature or evident or not, that, interaction with a barrier, hinders a person’s full and equal participation in society.”

Feedback

Our commitment to inclusion and accessibility incorporates a feedback process so that employees and members of the public can share their ideas and input with us. To provide feedback on accessibility, use one of the contact methods below. If you require support while providing feedback, let us know, and we will do our best to meet your needs. If you provide your contact information, we are committed to responding to your feedback in a timely manner and in the format that we receive it. You may also choose to provide feedback anonymously.

Contact: Kaye McNeil/ VP of Human Resources

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