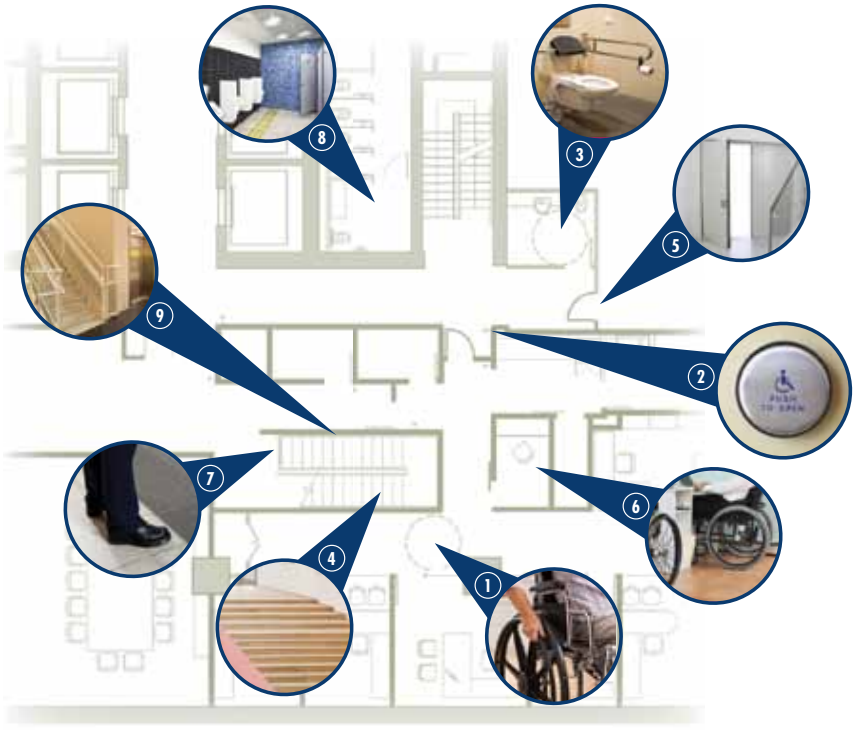
THE ACCESSIBLE OFFICE OF 2025

By now, every HR professional knows that Ontario has regulated new accessibility standards to provide more democratic and convenient access for all. Already developed are regulations in five areas: customer service, employment, information and communications, transportation and design of public spaces.

Ontario has decided to handle all necessary changes to the built environment through amendments to the Building Code. Most individuals responsible for office space are anxious to know what these amendments will mean to the way they are able to use their space and what it will cost them. Lynn McGregor of the McGregor Design Group (www.mcgregordesigngroup.com), a Canadian leader in professional corporate interior design with significant experience in creating accessible office space, says "fear not."

A contributor to several key committees reviewing the impact of the proposed changes, McGregor has verified through test cases that any need for increased space can be dramatically offset with the use of strategic, creative design. Here, she offers a sneak peek into just a few of the new code standards that may result from meeting the AODA's Built Environment requirements.

"Embrace these changes and allow yourself to benefit from them. It's not really about how much space you have. It's about how you use the space," McGregor says.



1. **Larger Wheelchair Turning Spaces:** The accepted turning radius to change from 1500mm to 1800mm to accommodate manual and motorized wheelchairs and scooters
2. **More Automatic Door Openers:** Automatic door openers may be mandatory on all doors that anyone moves through to access the work environment
3. **Washrooms with Space for Assistants:** Co-ed private washrooms to be provided for individuals with personal assistants who may be of the opposite sex
4. **Easier-to-Climb Stairs and Ramps:** Stairs and ramps to become less steep, stairs having longer "runs" and shallower "rises"
5. **Clear Door Widths Increasing:** Minimum clear door widths will increase to accommodate those with assisting devices
6. **Larger Spaces Between Workstations:** Minimum passage ways increase to 34", to allow those with assistive devices to easily enter any workstation
7. **Floor Warning Strips:** Tactile strips with directional indicators are being proposed for use in offices to warn of an upcoming level change, floor opening or other hazard
8. **Larger Communal Washroom Stalls:** Handicapped washroom stalls will likely be bigger and will be better equipped for those with scooters
9. **Double Stair Hand Rails:** Hand rails on both sides of a stairwell are also being proposed to ensure individuals can be supported on either side of the stairwell

Source: McGregor Design Group (www.mcgregordesigngroup.com).