

ACCESSIBILITY

Our Responsibility and our Legal Right

All Citizens of Ontario should now know that they have a right to demand fair, democratic access within the built environment, to allow them to conduct their day to day business in an equitable manner.

Ontario's new Accessibility Act, which came into effect on January 1, 2015; was implemented in part to help achieve a deadline of 2025, for "a fully accessible Province". The new legal standards, which we all need to now respect, fall into 5 main areas:

- Accessible Customer Service
- Information Communications,
- Employment,
- Transportation, and
- The Built Environment, (including buildings & public space)

The new standards that relate to the Built Environment have been implemented through an Amendment to the Ontario Building Code. It is important to note that these changes effect both Tenants and Landlords. Landlords will need to make the necessary changes as soon as they plan construction work on a floor. And Tenants will need to ensure that their new or renovated offices also provide increased accessibility by implementing the new rules, as soon as they commence construction work on their floor area. To put it simply: if construction work touches an existing element – that element will need to be upgraded to meet the requirements.

It is wise to understand your obligations before you start negotiations for new space or for expansions, to ensure you get as much financial assistance with compliance as possible.

It is also important to note that Ontario is expecting a new Building Code in 2019. The Ministry responsible is suggesting that this new Code with "ratchet-up" the standards for accessibility, in a quest to meet the 2025 Provincial deadline.

The McGregor Design Group has made an intense study of the new obligations of both Landlord's and Tenants, to allow our team to assist all with their compliance objectives.

