

# **Niagara Energy Products Multi-Year Accessibility Plan**

**2015 - 2022**

The Niagara Energy Products Multi-Year Accessibility Plan outlines strategies and actions to identify, remove and prevent barriers by increasing accessibility to our services, employment opportunities and access to our facilities, for those with disabilities. The Plan details our commitment to meeting Ontario's accessibility legislation, the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA).

## **Objectives of the Plan**

In accordance with each of the standards, under the AODA, Niagara Energy Products will review and update our Plan every five years. Our Plan will be accessible via our website to ensure the public is aware of our commitment and efforts in attaining our goals.

The 2015 - 2022 Accessibility Plan includes:

- Description of the AODA's five Standards
- Niagara Energy Products' Philosophy & Statement of Commitment
- Initiatives implemented and completed up to the date of the Plan implementation;
- Targets and Actions Niagara Energy Products will be taking from 2015 – 2021 to identify, remove and prevent barriers to persons with disabilities

## **Description of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)**

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 is legislation designed to make Ontario barrier-free to people with disabilities by 2025. Businesses and organizations that provide goods and services to people in Ontario will have to meet certain accessibility standards in five areas:

### **Customer Service - Ontario Regulation 429-07**

Passed in January 2008. As a private sector organization, Niagara Energy Products met the requirements of this standard and filed with the government in 2014

### **Information & Communications, and Transportation - IASR**

Combined into the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) which came into effect July 1, 2011. Requirements are to be phased in over time. Organizations are expected to:

- Make their websites and web content accessible
- Provide accessible formats and communication support as quickly as possible and at no additional cost when a person with a disability requests it.
- Make feedback processes accessible by providing accessible formats and communication supports, when requested
- Make public emergency information accessible, when requested

### **Employment -**

Required to help businesses and organizations make accessibility a regular part of recruiting, hiring and supporting employees with disabilities. Organizations are expected to:

- Let job applicants know that recruitment and hiring processes will be modified to accommodate their disability, if requested
- Build the accessibility needs of employees into their human resources practices
- Create a written process for developing and documenting individual accommodation plans for employees with disabilities
- Help employees stay safe in a emergency by providing them with individualized emergency response information, when necessary

### **Built Environment -**

This standard is designed to remove barriers applying to public spaces and buildings. The standard for the design of public spaces only applies to new construction and major

changes to existing features. Enhancements to accessibility in buildings will happen at a later date through Ontario's Building Code, which governs new construction and renovations to buildings.

## **Niagara Energy Products Philosophy & Statement of Commitment**

### **Philosophy:**

Consistent with our commitment to our various policies - Employment Policy & adherence to the Human Rights Code; The Respectful Workplace; Workplace Violence and Harassment; and Accessible Customer Service Standard, it is the policy and practice of Niagara Energy Products to treat customers, employees, suppliers, business partners and visitors fairly through dignity, respect and courtesy.

Niagara Energy Products Managers and Employees are not exempt from fully supporting the above policies and their implementation as they relate to carrying out their roles and responsibilities.

### **NIAGARA ENERGY PRODUCTS COMMITMENT TO ACCESSIBILITY**

Niagara Energy Products is supportive of the fact that accessibility offers people with disabilities the opportunity to achieve their potential. We are therefore committed to providing a respectful, welcoming, accessible environment where those people with disabilities are treated with dignity and respect.

Our goal is to become a barrier free environment and meet the requirements of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA). These efforts will be accomplished by identifying, removing and preventing barriers to people with disabilities as they relate to our policies, recruiting practices and treatment of employees.

Niagara Energy Products' commitment to training, implementation and complaints process is outlined in its Customer Service Standard Policy. Employees, who require training, will be trained to the level appropriate to their needs and in accordance with our policy in identifying, breaking down and preventing barriers to accessibility.

Together we will ensure those people with disabilities have the same opportunities available to them as those without disabilities.

Niagara Energy Products is committed to helping make Ontario a barrier free Province.

*Gabriel Bonenfant*

General Manager

## **Completed Initiatives, Targets & Actions to Meeting The Standards**

### **The AODA Customer Service Standard:**

- Implemented throughout Niagara Energy Products in 2014.
- Training on the Standard was conducted for all who have access to the public.
- Training remains on-going as new employees are hired and/or promoted to roles whereby they would deal with the public.
- The Policy is available and a mechanism for the public to launch a formal complaint exists and will be available on our website in 2016.
- Filing of the AODA Customer Service Standard Certification to the government took place in 2014.
- Niagara Energy Products will review the contents of this Standard every five years to ensure compliance.

### **Action Plan:**

Niagara Energy Products will ensure on-going training on the Customer Service Standard

### **Accessible Emergency Information:**

- Emergency evacuation questionnaires were distributed to employees and are included as part of our New Employee Orientation.
- Questionnaires will be provided to customers and clients, in an accessible format, upon request.
- Individual emergency response information will be provided to those with disabilities, including employees and the public, when necessary or as requested.
- Accessible computers are placed in such a way as to accommodate those with physical disabilities

### **Action Plan:**

Niagara Energy Products will enact an Emergency Evacuation Questionnaires as part of our New Employee Orientation.

Our office employees will be trained on understanding and meeting the accessible needs of customers and clients in regards to emergency evacuations. They will further be equipped to provide documentation or verbal instruction for their use, should an emergency evacuation occur during their visit to Niagara Energy Products.

**Kiosks:**

- No kiosks currently exist, however, should that change, Niagara Energy Products will ensure they are accessible to those persons with disabilities, as required.

**Action Plan:**

While there are no plans to implement kiosks, should that change IT will be made aware of the need to implement in such a way that consideration for the needs of people with disabilities are met through design, acquiring or implementing of self-service kiosks.

**Training:**

- Training, as appropriate to the individual's duties, was provided and will continue, as necessary to ensure compliance with all Standards.

**Action Plan:**

With the implementation of Niagara Energy Products 'Multi-year Accessibility Plan, employees who require training and/or awareness of the Plan will receive it initially and whenever a change in the Plan occurs.

**Information & Communication:**

- The Niagara Energy Products IT Group will publish information on Niagara Energy Products' website, as necessary, to ensure compliance with AODA.
- Should a person with a disability be disadvantaged in any way by Niagara Energy Products or someone in Niagara Energy Products 'employment, feedback and/or complaints can be submitted to the Director and Human Resources as necessary

**Action Plan:**

Niagara Energy Products will consult with people with disabilities, as requested, to ensure we meet their information and communication needs.

Information will be provided in a format that is easily accessible to those with disabilities.

By January 1, 2016 a formal complaint can be processed via Niagara Energy Products website.

**Employment:**

- Niagara Energy Products will take the following steps to notify the public and staff that, when requested, Niagara Energy Products will accommodate people with

disabilities during the recruitment and assessment processes when people are hired:

1. Accommodate various methods of interviewing and testing, where applicable.
2. Provide access to our facilities and accommodate, where feasible.
3. Allow support people to attend with the disabled person, where feasible.
4. Where necessary, Niagara Energy Products will work with a disabled employee in designing the workstation, materials or making other accommodation, based on the person's disability.
5. Disabled employees will not be disadvantaged in regards to career development or advancement.
6. Return to work program after an absence due to a disability.

### **Action Plan:**

Niagara Energy Products will review all policies and procedures in regards to recruitment to ensure that those persons with disabilities are not disadvantaged in any way in regards to opportunities at Niagara Energy Products.

Internally Niagara Energy Products will review and make modifications to work stations, etc. in order to accommodate a person with a disability.

Niagara Energy Products' Health and Safety Manual will be updated to include clear communication on what to do in case of an emergency.

Training will be provided to existing and new Managers on how to assist persons with disabilities in the event of an emergency.

Niagara Energy Products' Health and Safety Coordinator will communicate, as needed with those that have identified themselves as requiring assistance e.g. letting them know of an up-coming drill.

When a job advertisement is posted, it will contain the following: Niagara Energy Products is an Equal Opportunity Employer'

During the recruitment process, applicants with disabilities will be advised that, when requested, accommodations are available in regards to materials or processes to be used.

Niagara Energy Products' Return to Work Policy will be reviewed to ensure it is in compliance with AODA.

**Design of Public Spaces:**

Niagara Energy Products will meet the Accessibility Standards for the Design of Public Spaces when building or making major modifications to public spaces. Public spaces include:

- Outdoor public areas i.e. break or eating areas;
- Outdoor paths of travel i.e. sidewalks, ramps, stairs, curb ramps & accessible pedestrian signals;
- Accessible off-street parking;
- Service related elements i.e. counters and waiting areas.

**Action Plan:**

Niagara Energy Products will identify handicap parking for all employees and visitors with disabilities.

Any additions or remodeling of Niagara Energy Products' facility will take into consideration needs of persons with disabilities, however, the building code will dictate requirements and laws that are to be adhered to.

Should, working through our Multi-Year Plan, Niagara Energy Products identify barriers that would adversely impact those individuals with disabilities we will engage the appropriate internal/external parties and work to remove those barriers in a timely manner.

In the event of a service disruption, Niagara Energy Products will notify the public of the service disruption to its accessible parts of its public spaces via a notice on our website or a posting in the Reception Area of the facility.

For more information on Niagara Energy Products' Accessibility Plan, please contact:

Niagara Energy Products  
905-371-2500

## Appendix A

For the purposes of AODA (as taken from the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005) disability means:

- (a) any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes, mellitus, epilepsy, brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical co-ordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device;
- (b) a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability;
- (c) a learning disability or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language;
- (d) a mental disorder; or
- (e) an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997.

### **Types of Disabilities:**

Visual - a disability that reduces a person's ability to see clearly;

Hearing - profound hearing loss (deaf); has become deaf later in life (deafened); and some hearing loss (hard of hearing);

Deaf-blind - a combined vision and hearing loss;

Physical - many types and not all require a wheelchair;

Speech or Language - problem communicating due to cerebral palsy, hearing loss or other condition;



Mental Health - not as visible and include mental illness, anxiety disorder or mood disorder;

Intellectual or Developmental - can mildly or profoundly limit one's ability to learn, socialize or take care of their everyday needs;

Learning - information process disorders that affects how a person acquires, organizes, expresses, retains, understands or uses verbal or non-verbal information.

**Types of Barriers:**

Attitudinal - thinking disabled people are inferior or assuming one who has a speech impediment can't understand;

Information or Communication - print is too small to read, websites that can't be used by people who can't use a mouse or signs that are not clear or easily understood;

Technology - a website that doesn't support screen-reading software;

Organizational - barriers in policies, practices or procedures results in hiring processes that are not open to people with disabilities;

Architectural and Physical - hallways and doorways that are too narrow for wheelchair, electric scooter or walker, counters that are too high, poor lighting, doorknobs not easy to grasp, narrow parking spaces, telephones not equipped with telecommunication devices.

APPENDIX B

**INDIVIDUALIZED EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN CONSENT FORM**

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) states that every employer shall provide individualized workplace emergency response information to employees and visitors who have identified to the employer that they have a disability that requires accommodation. In order to fulfill our duty to accommodate, we must be made aware of any needed accommodations so that we can respond with an appropriate, individualized emergency plan.

The collection of this information will only be used in developing a Workplace Emergency Response Plan.

**Employee Visitor Information**

**I may need some assistance in evacuating the building or coping with a workplace emergency.**

First name: \_\_\_\_\_

Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Department (If applicable) : \_\_\_\_\_

Employee ID (If applicable) : \_\_\_\_\_

**All individualized workplace emergency response documentation is available in an accessible format upon request.**

**Submission Method**

Please forward this form to Reception. We will then contact you to determine how to meet your needs.

**Notice of Collection**

The personal information on this form will be used to implement an individual response plan and will only be shared with your supervisor/escort. Further disclosure of the information will only occur with your consent. If you have any questions or concerns about the information collected or how it will be used please contact Reception.