

Reminders of upcoming Ontario AODA compliance deadlines (including confirmation of an extension)

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The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (the “AODA”) sets out the process for developing and enforcing accessibility standards. The goal of the AODA is to make Ontario more accessible and inclusive for people with disabilities. Standards have previously been introduced in a variety of areas, including customer service, employment and information and communication.

There are two deadlines coming up under the AODA relating to accessible websites and accessibility compliance reports.

AODA Compliance Reports

Businesses and non-profits with 20 or more employees are required to submit an accessibility compliance report every three (3) years. These reports are intended to be a self-assessment of an organization’s status in terms of compliance with the provincial accessibility requirements. Failure to submit a report can result in enforcement action, including a compliance order or administrative monetary penalties.

As the initial accessibility compliance report was due on December 31, 2014, the third report was due to have been submitted this December 31, 2020. The government recently announced that the deadline to file the accessibility compliance report has been extended to **June 30, 2021**. As a result, businesses and non-profits with 20 or more employees now have additional time to submit their report to the Ontario Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility.

Electronic copies of the applicable form can be downloaded from the government’s website (see [LINK](#)).

[Accessible websites](#)

Since January 1, 2014, business and non-profits with 50 or more employees (i.e. “large organizations”) have been required by the AODA to ensure that all of their internet websites, and web content posted after January 1, 2012, conform to the WCAG 2.0 Level A guidelines. These guidelines are intended to make websites and web content more accessible to people with disabilities.

By **January 1, 2021**, large organizations will be required to comply with the more stringent WCAG 2.0 Level AA guidelines with respect to their websites and web content (other than the criteria relating to live captions and pre-recorded audio descriptions). The government has provided detailed guidance about how organizations can comply with these upcoming AODA requirements by making their websites accessible (see [LINK](#)).

Takeaways for employers

The most immediate AODA requirements relate to accessible websites. Employers that are subject to these requirements should review the WCAG 2.0 Level AA guidelines (and exceptions) with their web developers to assess if any changes to their websites or web content are required.

Regarding the accessibility compliance report requirements, employers are able to download and begin filling out the applicable forms now. By doing so employers will have more time to determine if there are any accessibility areas they need to address so that they are in a position to file the completed form by the new deadline.

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