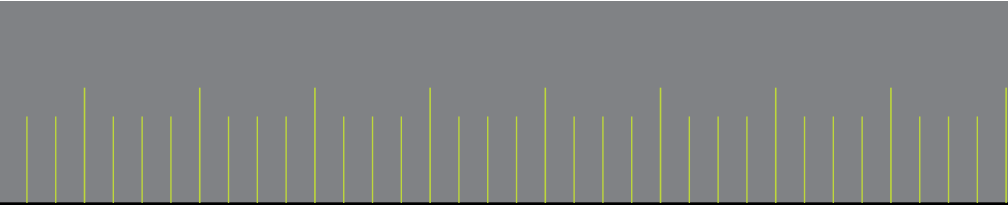




# ACCESS AWARENESS

This booklet describes a few key elements that make a business accessible and welcoming for everyone



# I SEE OPPORTUNITY

In the coming years people with disabilities will represent 20 to 25 per cent of the recreation, retail, entertainment, workplace and housing markets. Persons with disabilities in Canada contribute \$25 billion in purchasing power.

Most persons with disabilities are seniors with age-related disabilities, not young people. The numbers and trends all point towards the next generation of seniors as a new driving economic force. The “baby boomer” cohort is a relatively large and affluent demographic group.

Are you ready for this market?

Persons with disabilities comprise a large consumer market and providing accessible services, and products can help your bottom line.

Improving your business' accessibility is attractive to all consumers because well designed spaces and services welcoming for everyone, not just persons with disabilities.

Access is everyone's business: keep reading to find out how you can make your business more accessible!



# I HAVE SPACE

A wheelchair needs at least 36" (91.5 cm) to get through aisles, doors, and hallways. Measure your paths of travel to make sure they are at least 36".

Accessible seating and eating areas include tables and chairs that can be moved out of the way of a wheelchair or stroller and have arms so they can be grasped by the person trying to sit down.

Accessible parking spots need to be close to the front entrance and need to be monitored. It also helps to have an accessible passenger loading zone in front of your business.

Would someone with low upper body strength or uneven balance be able to open your door? Door handles that have levers or loop style handles are much easier to grasp and pull open. If you do not have a door that opens automatically, test your door tension to make sure that it has very little resistance

Wide paths of travel that safely link your building to public transportation stops, passenger loading zones, public streets, and sidewalks can help make your business more accessible.

Wheelchairs, scooters, and strollers need curb cuts and curb ramps wherever a path of travel crosses a curb.



# I HAVE AMENITIES

A low service counter makes business interactions easier for someone in a wheelchair. The maximum recommended height is 34" or 86 cm.

Ramps make it easier for all people to access buildings and levels. You can have permanent or portable ramps, but be sure to be conscious of the design. A gradual slope and handrails is important; 1" of rise needs at least 12" of ramp.

Accessible washrooms have paper towel and soap dispensers within reaching distance for persons in wheel chairs; wash basin fixtures that are easy to grab and don't require twisting the wrists; grab bars; and hooks that are not higher than 51" or 130cm from the ground.

Drinking fountains should come in pairs; one fountain with space underneath to clear a wheelchair, but not so high that someone sitting can't reach the spout; and a higher one for persons who have difficulty bending or stooping.

Accessible telephones are at the height where someone in a wheelchair can reach them. A text telephone, such as TTY or TTD, and equipped with volume control is recommended for people with hearing impairments.



# I HAVE SERVICE

There are a variety of disabilities, and some are invisible. It is advisable to ask someone if they need help, and ask them how they would like to be helped. Every person will have different needs.

Access Guide Canada has tips for “Disability Friendly Service”. Provide your staff training on how to serve persons with disabilities. Post the Access Guide Canada’s tips for “Disability Friendly Service” in your staffroom.

If your business is accessible, advertise your business as being accessible.



# I HAVE HEART

An inclusive society is one where we have removed barriers that prevent full participation in community life. We all have the right to be full participants in mainstream society and access goods, services, amenities, as well as education, employment, and recreation.

Many of the access barriers that are created by our society could be easily prevented at minimal cost if we took into consideration the needs of persons with disabilities when designing spaces and services.

If we take the time to listen and take action to make spaces more accessible, persons with disabilities will be able to live a more independent life, fully contribute to communities socially and economically, be less reliant on outside assistance, and enjoy a high quality of life.

In the end, accessible environments make a positive difference for everyone.



# ABOUT ACCESS AWARENESS DAY

Access Awareness Day is an annual campaign led by SPARC BC to promote the value of accessibility in communities.

The Union of BC Municipalities endorses Access Awareness Day every year has assists SPARC BC in communicating with every municipality and regional district in the province to emphasize the role of local government in making communities accessible and inclusive for all of their residents. This year we are partnering with the Better Business Bureau, BC Transit, Translink, the Union of BC Municipalities and VanCity ABLED Program to communicate our message throughout the province.

For more information about Access Awareness Day, accessibility consulting by SPARC BC, or to support our work please visit our website: [www.sparc.bc.ca](http://www.sparc.bc.ca)

**Vancity**



**BC Transit**

**TRANS LINK**



Western Economic  
Diversification Canada

Diversification de l'économie  
de l'Ouest Canada

Vancity is proud to support SPARC BC in creating access awareness for all community members. With support from Western Economic Diversification, the Vancity ABLED loan program provides entrepreneurs with disabilities mentoring and support to launch or expand their small business.



# ABOUT SPARC BC

SPARC BC is a registered non-profit society and has been a leader in research, public education and consulting regarding issues of accessibility, population health, social justice and community development for 42 years.

Our mission statement is: SPARC BC works with communities in building a just and healthy society for all.

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