



## ICES Glossary of Accessibility Terms

### Accessibility

The term accessibility means giving people of all abilities opportunities to participate fully in everyday life. Accessibility can be seen as providing the ability for as many people as possible to access and benefit from a system, service, product, device, facility, or environment.

### Assistive Device

An assistive device is any device that is designed, made, or adapted to assist a person to perform a particular task. For examples, canes, crutches, walkers, wheelchairs, and scooters are devices to assist with mobility. Hearing aids are assistive devices to help people hear or hear more clearly. Certain types of computer software and hardware, such as voice recognition programs and screen readers, are assistive devices for people with various types of disabilities.

### Barrier

Barriers are obstacles that limit access and prevent people with disabilities from fully participating in society. While many barriers are not intentional, barriers often arise because the needs of people with disabilities are not considered from the beginning of a planning or design process. Types of barriers include the following.

- a) Attitudinal barriers may result in people with disabilities being treated differently than people without disabilities.
- b) Informational and communication barriers arise when a person with a disability cannot easily receive or understand information that is available to others.
- c) Technological barriers occur when technology or the way it is used does not meet the needs of people with disabilities.
- d) Systemic barriers in policies, practices and procedures can result in people with disabilities being treated differently than others or sometimes excluded altogether.
- e) Physical and architectural barriers in the environment can prevent access for people with disabilities.

## Disability

The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA) adopts the definition for disability that is in the *Ontario Human Rights Code*. It defines disability broadly:

- 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, a 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.

## Service Animal

An animal is a service animal for a person with a disability if:

- a) the animal can be readily identified as one that is being used by the person for reasons relating to the person's disability, as a result of visual indicators such as the vest or harness worn by the animal; or
- b) the person provides documentation from one of the following regulated health professionals confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability:
  - i. A member of the College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists of Ontario.
  - ii. A member of the College of Chiropractors of Ontario.
  - iii. A member of the College of Nurses of Ontario.
  - iv. A member of the College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario.
  - v. A member of the College of Optometrists of Ontario.
  - vi. A member of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario.
  - vii. A member of the College of Physiotherapists of Ontario.
  - viii. A member of the College of Psychologists of Ontario.
  - ix. A member of the College of Registered Psychotherapists and Registered Mental Health Therapists of Ontario. O. Reg. 165/16, s. 16.

## Support Person

A support person, in relation to a person with a disability, is another person who accompanies the person with a disability in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care, medical needs, or access to goods, services or facilities. O. Reg. 165/16, s. 16.