

## Accessibility Policy and Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

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This 2024-28 Accessibility Plan outlines the policies and actions that Siskinds will put in place to improve opportunities for people with disabilities.

### Statement of Commitment

Siskinds is committed to the principles of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (Ontario) (the "AODA") and to fulfilling its obligations under the AODA. This commitment includes ensuring that all clients, guests, business professionals, lawyers and partners of Siskinds with disabilities are treated in a manner that respects their dignity and independence and providing all people with disabilities an equal opportunity to access our services in a timely manner.

While we are strongly committed to these principles, we are also bound by legal and ethical obligations, including client confidentiality, which may at times affect the manner in which clients with disabilities can access our services. Where that is the case, we will endeavour to ensure that due consideration is given to the needs of clients with disabilities and that appropriate alternative arrangements are in effect.

### Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

Under the AODA, Siskinds is required to establish a Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (the "Plan"). This Plan outlines Siskinds' strategy to ensure compliance with its current and future obligations under the AODA, in accordance with the requirements outlined in the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulations ("IASR") made under the AODA. Also, in accordance with its obligations, Siskinds will ensure that the Plan is available to the public, can be provided in alternate formats upon request, and will be reviewed and updated at least once every five years.

Set out below are the details of how Siskinds intends to fulfill its obligations under the AODA over the coming years.

### Customer Service Standard Requirements

**Compliance Deadline:** January 1, 2012

**Status:** Completed – January 1, 2012

Siskinds has been in compliance with its obligations under the AODA Customer Service Standard since January 1, 2012 and will continue to ensure ongoing compliance.

Siskinds is dedicated to providing the highest level of service to all clients, including clients with disabilities. In support of our objective of providing excellent client service to all clients, we will endeavour to communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their specific disability, and will ensure that the premises of Siskinds which are open to the public are accessible to such individuals. This includes (without limitation) taking the following measures, where appropriate:

- Offering to communicate with clients and/or answer questions in person, by e-mail or telephone relay services where telephone communication is not appropriate or available;
- Permitting clients with disabilities to use assistive devices on Siskinds' premises;
- Making documents prepared by Siskinds, and to which clients are entitled, available in accessible formats upon request, including hard copy, large print, e-mail or other appropriate formats;
- Welcoming people who are accompanied by a service animal or a support person in the areas of our premises that are open to the public, and ensuring that staff are properly trained in how to interact with people who are accompanied by a service animal or a support person;
- Ensuring that all workplace policies respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities;
- In conjunction with Client or Building Services, providing clients with notice in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in the facilities usually used by people with disabilities. Where known, this notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative facilities, if available, and will be placed at all public entrances;
- Creating and maintaining a feedback process to respond to any questions or comments regarding the manner in which we provide services to persons with disabilities. Feedback on the accessibility of our services can be provided in a variety of ways, including through our Accessibility Feedback form at [www.siskinds.com](http://www.siskinds.com), by requesting a copy of the form in hard copy, or by emailing [humanresources@siskinds.com](mailto:humanresources@siskinds.com), or by phone at 226-213-7384.
- Training all Siskinds' members who deal with the public, and all those who are involved in the development and approval of client service policies, practices and procedures. Siskinds members are trained on an ongoing basis when changes are made to the Siskinds' policies, practices and procedures and new Siskinds members are trained within one week of their arrival at Siskinds.
- The content of such training includes the following:
  - The purposes of the AODA and the requirements of the AODA Customer Service Standard.
  - How to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities.
  - How to interact with people with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or a support person.
  - General information regarding the types of assistive devices that may be used by people with disabilities on Siskinds' premises.
  - What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing Siskinds' services.
  - Siskinds' policies, practices and procedures relating to the Customer Service Standard under the AODA.

## **Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation**

### **Emergency Response Plans:**

**Compliance Deadline:** January 1, 2012

**Status:** Completed – January 1, 2012. And updated again March 2019 And updated again in August 2023

Members of Siskinds with disabilities will be provided with individualized emergency response plans to ensure they are aware of the processes in place to safely evacuate from Siskinds' premises during an emergency.

Also, Siskinds' new Safety Manual includes Evacuation Planning, Fire Safety and an Emergency Response Plan (with specifics to support persons with a disability). This material is available in hard copy and on our intranet and can be produced or posted in large font when requested. These plans are reviewed and updated as changes occur to ensure the information remains current and accurate.

### **Training:**

**Compliance Deadline:** January 1, 2015

**Status:** Completed

In compliance with the deadline of January 1, 2015, Siskinds has and will continue to provide training to business professionals and partners on Ontario's accessibility laws and on the Ontario Human Rights Code as it relates to people with disabilities. This includes:

- Siskinds will ensure training is provided in a way that best suits the specific duties and responsibilities of the business professionals, lawyers, and partners.
- A Human Resources Orientation for new business professionals/lawyers will train business professionals/lawyers on Siskinds' AODA policies and commitment to persons with disabilities.
- AODA policies will be available to business professionals/lawyers in writing and online and a quiz is available in both formats also.
- Siskinds will ensure that any further AODA training is provided on newly prescribed policies on an ongoing basis and will keep and maintain a record of the training provided, including the dates and the individuals to whom it was provided.

## Information and Communications:

Siskinds is committed to meeting the communication needs of people with disabilities. Siskinds has provided access for our business professionals/lawyers to stay current on our AODA policies through our Learning Management System, SiskindsU. Such information is also available publicly at [www.siskinds.com/accessibility](http://www.siskinds.com/accessibility). We will consult with people with disabilities to determine and validate that their information and communication needs are met.

Siskinds ensured that its website design and content will conform with the Worldwide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG).2.0, Level A by January 1, 2014, as indicated when and where necessary.

- In January 2012, Siskinds ensured the following process for receiving and responding to feedback.
  - There is an AODA Feedback Policy and Procedure available to business professionals/lawyers in Dayforce under Forms, Business Professional Handbook, or to the public at our website [www.siskinds.com/accessibility](http://www.siskinds.com/accessibility) as well as will be provided in hard copy when requested.
  - Wherever possible, Siskinds will also use digital, hard copy, email, voice activated, or in-person avenues to share necessary information to persons with disabilities.
  - Siskinds will ensure the process for feedback is welcoming and responses to correspondence are completed in a timely manner and again in an accessible format upon request.
  - Siskinds' feedback process is and will continue to be established in accordance with the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service (O Reg. 497/07).

Siskinds took the following steps to make sure all publicly available information is made accessible upon request by January 1, 2016.

- Siskinds public information resides on our intranet for business professionals and on our website [www.siskinds.com](http://www.siskinds.com) for external clients. All such information can be requested through the Human Resources Manager and printed in hard copy as applicable to the parties requesting.

Siskinds ensured that its website and content will conform with WCAG 2.0, Level AA by January 1, 2021, and as such will adhere to the standards dictated by the World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG).

## **Employment:**

**Compliance Deadline:** January 1, 2016

**Status:** Completed

Siskinds is committed to employment practices that are fair, accessible and welcoming throughout the entire period of employment. Steps will be taken to ensure that business professionals and members of the public are notified of the availability of accommodations throughout the recruitment process. All Siskinds members will be informed of Siskinds' policies used to support individuals with disabilities, including providing appropriate accommodations, and will ensure that all required information is provided in accessible formats upon request. For example:

- Recruitment advertising will contain a statement outlining that Siskinds is an equal opportunity employer and will work with and accommodate persons with disabilities throughout the entire recruitment, selection, and on-boarding process.
- During employment, Siskinds will work with the individual member to provide materials, information and feedback in a manner that supports the member's needs and success.
- Managers and staff will be provided with the appropriate policies and guidance on accommodating persons with disabilities and that discrimination will not be tolerated.

Siskinds will develop and implement a process for creating individual accommodation plans and Return-To-Work policies for business professionals who have been absent due to disability and will ensure that the accessibility needs of business professionals with disabilities are taken into account throughout any internal processes, including the performance review process. For example:

- Individualized plans are developed according to the specific needs of the business professional (taking into consideration any directive from medical experts), and the accommodation required as appropriate for the role.
- Managers and staff will be provided with the appropriate guidance on how best to accommodate/integrate persons returning to work/to their team with a disability and that discrimination will not be tolerated.
- Siskinds' Human Resources Manager will ensure active consideration be given to the needs of business professionals with disabilities relative to performance management, career development and redeployment processes. For example:
  - Provide accessible formats for the Performance Review document as required (larger font, read together with the business professional). Performance Management discussions will be conducted in an accessible manner for the business professional.
  - Ensure zoom text and job aids are enlarged and laminated for persons with visual disabilities to secure their performance, or whatever information is needed to help the business professional perform their role.

- Invite active participation in the development of the accommodation and return-to-work plans, e.g. through in-person feedback from business professionals/lawyers for career development and redeployment efforts to ensure the suitability of the support provided.

Any further accessibility barriers identified regarding Employment will be brought to the attention of Siskinds' Human Resources Manager for appropriate review to ensure resolution where possible.

### **Design of Public Spaces:**

Siskinds will meet the Accessibility Standards for the Design of Public Spaces when building or making major modifications to public spaces. Siskinds' public spaces that are accessible for persons with disabilities today include:

- Accessible off-street parking
- Ramp entrance/exit to main reception
- Automatic Door Opener Switches
- Ample reception room area for disability chairs, equipment and such
- Large client elevators for same
- Large client boardrooms and waiting and meeting areas.
- Sufficient lunchroom space

Siskinds will put the following procedures in place to prevent service disruptions to its accessible parts of its public spaces.

- In the event of a service disruption, Siskinds will take immediate steps to restore service in the quickest timeframe possible. Siskinds will notify the public of the service disruption as soon as possible and the avenue(s) under pursuit to rectify. For example:
  - Siskinds will advise that Property Management and vendors are working on site to rectify, and will advise on progress and other particulars as necessary through a publicized email to all, posting large font bulletins on coffee stations and entrance/exit doors, or in person (speaking to clients or persons with disabilities if deemed necessary).

For more information on this Multi-Year Accessibility Plan or for any other information relating to Siskinds' Accessibility policies:

Visit – [www.siskinds.com/accessibility](http://www.siskinds.com/accessibility) (for our policies, procedures and feedback form)

Or please contact:

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