

## What is a Barrier?

A “barrier” is “anything that prevents a person with a disability from participating in all aspects of society because of his or her disability.” (Ontarians with Disabilities Act)

Accessibility is more than physical access. Accessibility planning, means looking at a variety of barriers.

## Why Become Barrier Aware?

- The Ontario government has passed the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) with the goal of making all public buildings and businesses barrier-free on or before January 1, 2025.
- Approximately 1.9 million Ontarians have disabilities – that is 16 per cent of the population (Statistics Canada).
- Canadians with disabilities have the consumer spending power of approximately \$25 billion a year. The market is too large for organizations to ignore.
- By 2026, the majority of people with disabilities will be 65 years of age or older.
- Haliburton County has the highest population of seniors, per capita, in Ontario.



## What is the Barrier Aware Program?

The goal is to create a barrier-free community and make Haliburton County a safe, convenient, comfortable and accessible place for individuals to visit and reside.

Small steps towards accessibility can make a big difference. The Barrier Aware Program works to increase public awareness on the need for a barrier-free community and acknowledge and reward local businesses that are taking vital steps towards making this happen.

## How the Barrier Aware Program Works

When a business volunteers to participate in the program, that business will be evaluated. If it meets the required accessibility standards, the business will be given a window decal.

This seal of approval will distinguish this business from others that are not accessible and will alert the general public and individuals with disabilities that this facility is considered barrier-free.

Businesses that pass the assessment only need to apply every two years.

## Who Benefits From This Program?

Everyone benefits from accessible buildings!

- Parents with young children in strollers
- Seniors
- People with a mobility disability who may use a wheelchair, cane, walker or who have arthritis
- Businesses - Helping business owners to plan ahead to reduce barriers will save them money in the long- term and will work towards the goal of a barrier-free Ontario by 2025.

## How to Improve Accessibility Within Your Community

- Focus on people's abilities, not disabilities
- Help raise awareness of the issue by talking with people
- Do your best to make everyone welcome in your community
- Give positive feedback to organizations and businesses and that have made their facility accessible



## Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)

### Why does Ontario have this legislation?

Ontario needs to be more accessible to people with disabilities. Ontario's population is aging. The AODA provides a way for Ontario to become barrier-free.

### What is an accessibility standard?

It is a rule that persons and organizations have to follow to identify, remove and prevent barriers.

### How long will it take to make Ontario accessible?

The goal is to achieve accessibility for Ontarians with disabilities by 2025. But 2025 is an end point, not a starting point. There are many changes that organizations can make easily to help remove barriers, such as installing ramps or providing publications in large print.

### How will we know if Ontario is making progress in becoming barrier-free?

Persons and organizations must comply with the standards that apply to them. It is the law. They must also send a report to the government.



Provided by  
The Haliburton County Joint  
Accessibility Advisory  
Committee  
[www.haliburtoncounty.ca](http://www.haliburtoncounty.ca)



**Together we can  
break down barriers!**

To learn more about the  
Barrier Aware Program,

County of Haliburton  
11 Newcastle St  
Minden, ON K0M 2K0  
705-286-1333



For more information on the AODA  
contact:  
Accessibility Directorate of Ontario  
1-888-520-5828

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## Barrier Aware Program

**This is a sign  
of the future**



**By 2025, all  
public buildings and  
businesses in Ontario  
must be accessible  
and barrier-free  
to all.**



**Get with the program  
and make barrier-free  
part of your business!**