



Canadian  
Transportation  
Agency

Office  
des transports  
du Canada

# Ferry Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities

*Code of Practice*



Making Transportation Efficient and Accessible for All

available in multiple formats

Canada

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## Purpose of the Code of Practice

This Code contains accessibility standards developed to enhance the level of accessibility for persons with disabilities when travelling by ferry, and sets out what the Agency expects of ferry operators when they are interacting with persons with disabilities.

While this Code focuses on the needs of persons with disabilities while they travel, the provisions contained in the Code will benefit most travellers.

The Agency emphasizes that this Code presents minimum standards that those subject to the Code are expected to meet and urges them to strive to exceed these standards wherever possible. The Agency also encourages those subject to the Code to consult with persons with disabilities or disability associations when developing and testing new designs and services.

## Scope

The Code covers five main aspects of accessibility for ferry vessels and services for persons with disabilities:

1. Vessel Accessibility
2. Maintenance
3. Communication
4. Disability-related Services
5. Personnel Training

Provisions related to **ferry terminals** can be found in the Agency's [Code of Practice: Passenger Terminal Accessibility](#), which applies to Canadian ferry terminals which service:

- 10,000+ passengers embarking and disembarking in each of the past two years; and
- Ferries of 1,000+ gross tonnes operating between provinces or territories or between Canada and the United States.

## Who is covered by this Code

This Code applies to companies operating passenger ferries that:

- weigh 1,000+ gross tonnes; and
- travel between provinces or territories, or between Canada and the United States.

The Code only applies to areas of a ferry that may be used by the general public.

## Technical Specifications for Accessibility

The Agency recognizes the expertise of the Canadian Standards Association (CSA) in establishing appropriate dimensions and design features for buildings and other facilities which are meant to ensure access and use by persons with disabilities.

The CSA is an association engaged in the development of standards and certification activities. CSA standards reflect a national consensus of producers and users, including consumers, retailers, unions, governmental agencies, and manufacturers. The standards are used by industry and have been adopted by all levels of government in their regulations, particularly in the fields of health, safety, building and construction, and the environment. Approximately one-third of the CSA standards have been referenced into law by provincial and federal authorities.

The CSA's CAN/CSA-B651, [\*Accessible Design for the Built Environment\*](#) (CSA design standard) is a national, technical standard covering a broad range of building and environmental facilities that can be referenced in whole or in part by adopting authorities.

The CSA design standard contains requirements for making buildings and other facilities accessible to persons with a range of physical, sensory and cognitive abilities. The provisions contained in this standard reflect minimum levels of accessibility and include requirements for, among other things, operating controls (door handles, faucets, etc.), floor and ground surfaces, protrusion hazards, detectable floor and ground surfaces, doors, handrails, stairs, ramps, elevators, signs, washrooms, parking, ticketing machines for parking, drinking fountains, etc.

Although it is recognized that CSA's CAN/CSA-B651 was developed as a standard for buildings, it contains many criteria that are just as applicable to accessibility features on ferries. Therefore, ferry operators are encouraged to refer to this standard and, where it is appropriate to do so, to adopt the technical specifications in it.

As such, ferry operators should specify in requests for proposals, contracts and other governing documents for the design and construction of a new ferry vessel or when planning a major retrofit or the replacement of equipment, that there should be compliance with the applicable provisions of the CSA's design standard. That is, as new ferry vessels are built, existing ferry vessels are retrofitted, or equipment covered under the CSA's standard are replaced, the construction, retrofits, and equipment purchased should comply with the provisions contained within the CSA's standard.

The Agency emphasizes that the CSA design standard presents minimum standards, which ferry operators are encouraged to exceed.

# Section 1: Vessel Accessibility

## 1.0 Signage

Signage provided on a ferry to aid passengers should satisfy the criteria set out below. (As safety and crew signage are regulated by Transport Canada, they are not covered by these specifications).

**Note:** Additional information on signage can be found in the Agency's [Code of Practice: Removing Communication Barriers for Passengers with Disabilities](#).

- 1.0.1** Signage should be positioned at key decision-making points, such as washrooms, emergency exits, elevators, doors, stairs or passageways off main corridors, where there is no impediment. It should be positioned over the path of travel at a height well above head level in high pedestrian traffic, but in a manner that it can be seen easily by a person in a wheelchair<sup>1</sup> (at least 230 cm (2300 mm) from the floor). Signage should be positioned to avoid shadow areas and glare.
- 1.0.2** Where an impediment is present, signage is to be placed in the nearest logical alternative place.
- 1.0.3** If signage is located at a doorway, it should be on the wall to the right of the door, with its centre at a height of 150 cm (1500 mm) plus or minus 2.5 cm (25 mm) above the floor. If there is no door, signage should be placed on each side of the opening.
- 1.0.4** Letters, numbers, symbols and pictographs should be glare-free and presented in high contrasting colours (e.g. a light colour on a dark background or a dark colour on a light background, with light on dark being preferable for signage); there should be at least a 70% contrast between the letters, numbers, symbols or pictographs and the background.
- 1.0.5** Illuminated signs where the text is lighted through a dark background should not be used.
- 1.0.6** Letters and numbers should be sans serif, and numbers should be Arabic. Letters and numbers should have at least a width-to-height ratio between 3:5 and 1:1 and a stroke-width-to-height ratio between 1:5 and 1:10. Fonts that use bold, rounded, very thick, very thin or condensed styles should be avoided. Upper- and

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<sup>1</sup> "Wheelchair" means a passenger-owned wheelchair that requires a minimum clear floor area of 75 cm by 120 cm (750 mm by 1200 mm) to accommodate a wheelchair and its occupant and a minimum clear turning space of 150 cm (1500 mm) in diameter.

lower-case lettering is encouraged and the use of all caps (except when tactile signs are used) should also be avoided.

- 1.0.7** For general orientation and specific information signage, letters, numbers, symbols and pictographs should be at least 20 cm (200 mm) high for a maximum viewing distance of 600 cm (6000 mm), 10 cm (100 mm) high for maximum viewing distance of 250 cm (2500 mm), and 5 cm (50 mm) high for a maximum viewing distance of 150 cm (1500 mm).
- 1.0.8** When tactile signage or markers are used, letters, numbers, symbols and pictographs should be raised at least 0.08 cm (0.8 mm) and should be between 1.6 cm (16 mm) and 5.0 cm (50 mm) high. If a tactile sign is mounted on a wall, its centre should be at a height of 150 cm (1500 mm) plus or minus 2.5 cm (25 mm) above the floor.
- 1.0.9** If signage is supplemented with braille, it should be located at the bottom of the sign and presented in Grade One Braille that meets the standards of Braille Literacy Canada in English and in *Braille intégral* that meets the standards of the *Code braille français uniformisé pour la transcription des textes imprimés* (CBFU) in French.
- 1.0.10** If electronic signage is used, letters, numbers, symbols and pictographs should be slowly scrolled across the screen. Red letters on a black background should not be used.
- 1.0.11** Where glass door markings are used, they should include contrasting decals and etching.

## 1.1 Lighting

- 1.1.1** Lighting on a ferry, except reading and other lighting under the control of a passenger, should be directed and controlled so as to minimize glare and shadows.
- 1.1.2** Lighting should not result in any sharp contrasts in intensity throughout a ferry, but should be used to accentuate stairs and their handrails.

## 1.2 Stairways

- 1.2.1** Stairs on a ferry should have closed risers of uniform height and uniform tread depths. Tactile, colour contrasting warning surfaces should be provided at the top of stairs and at landings.
- 1.2.2** Tactile warning surfaces should extend the full width of the stairs and have a length between 60 and 65 cm (600 and 650 mm), commencing one tread depth from the edge of the stair.



- 1.2.3** Colour contrasting of at least 70% with the surrounding surface is preferable; except, if the colour is yellow, when a contrast of at least 40% with the surrounding surface should be used.
- 1.2.4** The tread surfaces of the stairs and the landings should be firm and non-slippery and should not create glare. The top outer edge of each step should be marked by a contrasting colour strip that runs the full width of the leading edge of the tread and the vertical face of the nosing.
- 1.2.5** Stairways should have handrails on both sides, including at the landings.
- 1.2.6** If structural limitations of a ferry prevent any of the criteria concerning handrails and uniform riser heights and tread depths from being satisfied, and where an elevator is not provided or not available, a ferry operator should provide assistance, if requested, to a passenger with a disability in ascending and descending the stairs.

## **1.3 Handrails**

- 1.3.1** Handrails on a ferry should be sturdy and of a height and length that permit use by all passengers, including a person using a wheelchair, when these are situated along ramps, corridors and passageways.
- 1.3.2** Handrails should be continuous through the length of stairs, ramps, corridors or passageways, except where interrupted by other paths of travel or doorways.
- 1.3.3** Handrails should be rounded and free of any sharp or abrasive element. They should be easily graspable and provide a firm and comfortable grip for the hand to slide along the rail without obstruction. They should have a diameter of not more than 4 cm (40 mm), so that the thumb and fingers can lock around the handrail. They should have a clearance from the wall surface to which they are attached that permits easy grasping. They should not have any obstructions that could break a handhold.
- 1.3.4** Handrails should be colour contrasted from their surrounding areas or marked with a contrasting colour strip that runs the full length of the handrail.
- 1.3.5** Handrails should also return to the wall, floor or post in a smooth curve or have a tactile cue at the end. The method used should be consistent throughout the vessel.

## **1.4 Corridors and Passageways**

- 1.4.1** Corridors and passageways on a ferry should have a minimum clear headroom of 203 cm (2030 mm) from the floor. They should also have a minimum clear

width of at least 150 cm (1500 mm) that is manoeuvrable by a person in a wheelchair and not reduced by protruding fixed objects.

**Note:** This Code deals with accessibility requirements of persons with various disabilities. Their spatial requirements may vary, but are included within the area allowance that accommodates a person using a wheelchair.

- 1.4.2 Any barriers, obstacles or projections should be colour contrasted from their surrounding area.

## 1.5 Floors

- 1.5.1 Floor surfaces on a ferry should be slip-resistant. Glare from floor surfaces should be reduced as far as practicable.
- 1.5.2 If carpeting is used on a ferry, it should be securely attached. It should have a short pile and a firm underpad or no underpad at all.

## 1.6 Doorways and Doors

- 1.6.1 Doorways on a ferry should be wide enough (at least 81 cm (810 mm)) to accommodate a person in a wheelchair and should have enough space on both sides of the door to manoeuvre a wheelchair.
- 1.6.2 Full length glass doors or windows should be marked with colour contrasting decals.
- 1.6.3 Doors to cabins, washrooms and other enclosed spaces that have no other exit doors should not be equipped with deadbolts or other means of security that can only be manipulated from the inside. As an alternative they should be equipped with an easily manipulated push-lock door knob that can be released from the outside with a special tool or lock.
- 1.6.4 If door sills are necessary, they should be beveled or ramped on a permanent or movable basis and should be marked with a colour contrasting strip.
- 1.6.5 Door handles, pulls, latches, locks and other operational devices should be operable with one hand and with a force not to exceed 22 Newtons of force, and should not require fine finger control, tight grasping, pinching or twisting of the wrist. Knob and thumb-latch handles are not acceptable.
- 1.6.6 Door handles, pulls, latches, locks and other operational devices should be mounted at a height between 80 and 120 cm (800 and 1200 mm) from the floor, which permits use by a person in a wheelchair, and be colour-contrasted from their surrounding area.

**1.6.7** If sliding doors are used, these operational devices should be exposed and usable from both sides when in a fully-open position. Crew members should be available to assist passengers with the use of watertight doors, and fire rated doors designed to meet Transport Canada standards.

## 1.7 Counters

**1.7.1** If counters for serving the public are provided on a ferry, they should have at least one section that is of a height between 73 and 86 cm (730 and 860 mm) and have a centered knee clearance of at least 75 cm wide x 48 cm deep x 68 cm high (750 mm wide x 480 mm deep x 680 mm high) to permit use by a person in a wheelchair. This section should not have any obstructions that could impede verbal or visual communications between the person and the counter personnel.

**1.7.2** Counter surfaces should have a non-glare finish and be colour contrasted from their surrounding area (e.g. a colour-contrasted front edge on the counters will help define user space).

## 1.8 Operator-provided Wheelchairs

**1.8.1** Each passenger deck on a ferry should be equipped at all times with at least one wheelchair provided by the ferry operator.

**Note:** The Agency recognizes that many passengers have different requirements, such that a "one-size-fits-all" approach to wheelchairs is not reflective of today's society. Ferry operators should consider different sizes of wheelchairs for their customers when purchasing new, or replacing existing, wheelchairs.

## 1.9 Elevators

**1.9.1** If a ferry has more than one deck, it should have at least one elevator that is accessible to persons with disabilities, including persons who use a wheelchair, which provides service from a vehicle deck to all possible passenger decks.<sup>2</sup>

**1.9.2** Signs should be posted at each elevator explaining that there may be times when the elevator is not operational due to conditions where the vessel's roll exceeds the elevator manufacturer's safe operating criteria. Travellers should be directed to alternative routes or to locations where assistance is available.

**1.9.3** An accessible elevator should satisfy the following criteria:

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<sup>2</sup> Elevators as a rule do not go to the uppermost, open observation deck, given that the elevator cab must have a housing to enclose it completely to protect it and the mechanical lifting device from the elements.

- a) The elevator should have its location indicated by directional signage and by a sign positioned perpendicular to the path of travel. It should also be identified by the international symbol of access (consists of a blue square overlaid in white with an image of a person using a wheelchair) in pictograph and tactile form by the door.
- b) The gap between the elevator sill and the deck floor should not interfere with the movement of a wheelchair.
- c) The elevator should have doors that remain fully open for at least five seconds in response to a call, which time may be altered through the use of a door-opening or door-closing button. It should also have a device to stop and reopen the doors before they encounter an obstruction while closing.
- d) The elevator should have a floor space that permits manoeuvring of a wheelchair.
- e) Each wall in the elevator should have a handrail.
- f) The control panel in the elevator should be located at a maximum of 122 cm (1220 mm) above the floor or ground measured to the centreline of the buttons that permits use by a person in a wheelchair. The buttons on the panel should be colour contrasted from their surrounding area and operable with minimal force. They should also have colour tactile markers to their left to indicate their purpose. Buttons should be arranged in ascending order. When two or more columns of buttons are provided, they should read from left to right.
- g) Visual, audible and tactile deck indicators should be provided. A visual indicator inside the elevator should show in contrasting colours which deck the elevator is passing or stopped at. An audible indicator should sound inside the elevator as the elevator passes or stops at a deck. Audible signals should sound once for the UP direction and twice for the DOWN direction, or should have verbal annunciators that state the word UP or DOWN. The audible signal should be at least 10 dBA (decibels) minimum above ambient, but should not exceed 80 dBA, measured at the annunciator. A tactile indicator should be placed outside the elevator on both sides of the door jambs to identify the deck.

If structural limitations of a ferry prevent the installation of an accessible elevator as described above, the ferry operator is encouraged to explore the possibility of installing another type of elevating device, such as a stair lift, that would permit persons with disabilities to access the various decks on the ferry. In any event, the ferry operator should provide assistance, if requested, to a person with a disability in accessing any deck that is open to the public.

## 1.10 Vehicle Decks

**1.10.1** A ferry operator should ensure that a person who uses a wheelchair is able to freely exit their vehicle and access the wheelchair-accessible elevator or elevating device when they board a vehicle deck equipped with one.

## 1.11 Passenger Lounges

**1.11.1** If there are any passenger lounges on a ferry, at least five percent of the seating in each lounge should have a design and an adjacent clear floor space that permit easy transfer of a person to and from a wheelchair. The floor space should be large enough for a service animal to lie down in a manner that will ensure that the person with a disability and the animal can share the space safely and without extreme discomfort.

**1.11.2** This seating should be designated by signage for use by persons with disabilities.

Passageways in a passenger lounge should satisfy the criteria in section 1.4. Counters in a passenger lounge should satisfy the criteria in section 1.7.

## 1.12 Cafeterias

**1.12.1** If there are any cafeterias on a ferry, at least five percent of the tables in each cafeteria should have a height between 73 and 86 cm (730 and 860 mm) from the floor and a surface that permits use by a person in a wheelchair. These tables should be designated by signage for use by persons who use wheelchairs.

**1.12.2** If the layout permits, a handrail should be provided along each side of a food service counter which should be situated to provide a minimum clear floor width of at least 150 cm (1500 mm) to allow persons using mobility aids to pass.

**1.12.3** Menu display boards should be large enough and positioned to avoid shadow areas and glare and in a manner that they can be easily seen by a person in a wheelchair. Letters, numbers, symbols and pictographs on the board should be glare-free and presented in contrasting colours.

Passageways and counters in a cafeteria should satisfy the criteria set out in sections 1.4 and 1.7.

## 1.13 Cabins

If cabins are provided on a ferry, at least five percent of them, with a minimum of one cabin, should be accessible to persons with disabilities, including persons who use a wheelchair. This means that these cabins should satisfy the criteria that follow.

- 1.13.1** The room should be identified by the international symbol of access in pictograph and tactile form, by or on the door.
- 1.13.2** The cabin should have doorways and doors that satisfy the criteria set out in Section 1.6.
- 1.13.3** The floor space should have a minimum clearance of at least 75 x 120 cm (750 x 1200 mm) to allow persons using mobility aids to enter the cabin and use all the facilities in the cabin.
- 1.13.4** The cabin should include a washroom that satisfies the criteria set out in Section 1.14 (c) to (k) and (p) to (t).
- 1.13.5** The cabin should have a call button that sends a signal that can reach staff at all times.
- 1.13.6** Controls and outlets, such as call buttons, thermostats, electrical switches and electrical and communication wall outlets, should be located adjacent to a clear floor space and the centerline of the operating controls should be located in a range between 40 and 120 cm (400 and 1200 mm) from the floor, thereby permitting use by all passengers including a person in a wheelchair. They should be operable with one hand and minimal force and not require fine finger control, tight grasping, pinching or twisting of the wrist. They should also be colour contrasted from their surrounding area and capable of being adequately illuminated. Finally, the call button and the thermostat should be identified by a tactile marker.

As for the remaining cabins on a ferry, operators are encouraged to incorporate the accessibility criteria listed above into their designs for these cabins on new ferries and as part of the refurbishment plans for cabins on existing ferries.

## **1.14 Washrooms**

- 1.14.1** If public washrooms are provided on a deck of a ferry, at least one washroom for each gender with one toilet and one sink, or one gender neutral washroom with one toilet and one sink, on that deck should be accessible to persons with disabilities, including persons who use a wheelchair or who may require an attendant. This means that these washrooms should satisfy the criteria set out below.
  - a) The washroom should have its location indicated by directional signage and by a sign positioned perpendicular to the path of travel.
  - b) It should also be identified by the international symbol of access (consists of a blue square overlaid in white with an image of a person using a wheelchair) in pictograph and tactile form by or on the door, preferably mounted beside the

latch edge of the door. Where double-leaf doors are used or no wall space adjoins the door's latch edge, the sign should be mounted on the nearest adjacent wall. If no doors are used, signs should be mounted on the outside walls, on each side of the entrance opening.

- c) The washroom should afford privacy to a person in a wheelchair.
- d) The washroom should have a doorway and door that satisfy the criteria set out in Section 1.6.
- e) The washroom should have a clear area of at least 150 x 150 cm (1500 x 1500 mm) to permit manoeuvring of a mobility aid.
- f) The top of the toilet seat should be between 40 and 46 cm (400 and 460 mm) from the floor. The area around the toilet should provide an adequate transfer space of at least 90 cm (900 mm) to accommodate space for a person in a wheelchair.
- g) The toilet should have a flush control that is colour contrasted from its surrounding area. The flush control should be operable on the transfer side of the toilet with a closed fist and minimal force, or be electronically or automatically controlled.
- h) The toilet should have a back support where there is no seat lid or tank, and a toilet paper dispenser within reach that does not interfere with the grab bars.
- i) The washroom should have fixed or flip-up grab bars that are sturdy, non-obstructive and conveniently located – on the wall behind the toilet and on the wall closest to the toilet. They should be mounted horizontally at a height between 75 and 85 cm (750 and 850 mm) from the floor. If mounted on the wall adjacent to the toilet, they should extend at least 45 cm (450 mm) in front of the toilet seat. If mounted on the rear wall, they should extend at least 60 cm (600 mm) along the wall or, in the case of two grab bars, each should extend at least 30 cm (300 mm) along the wall, positioned on either side of the flush valve and located not further than 15 cm (150 mm) from the flush valve. Flip-down grab bars can be added on the same side of the toilet as the transfer space.
- j) Grab bars should be rounded, free of any sharp or abrasive element and slip-resistant. They should have an exterior diameter between 3 and 4 cm (30 and 40 mm) and a clearance from the wall surface (between 3.5 and 4.5 cm (35 and 45 mm)) to which they are attached that permit easy grasping.
- k) Grab bars should be colour contrasted from their surrounding area or marked with a contrasting colour strip that runs the full length of the bar. They should also return to the wall in a smooth curve.

- l) The washroom should have a coat hook that has rounded edges. It should be mounted on a side wall, no more than 120 cm (1200 mm) from the floor, and positioned such that it is usable by a person using a wheelchair.
- m) The washroom should have a call button that is colour contrasted from its surrounding area and identified by a tactile marker.
- n) The call button should be positioned such that it is usable by a person in a wheelchair. It should be operable with one hand and minimal force and not require fine finger control, tight grasping, pinching or twisting of the wrist.
- o) The call button should send a signal that can reach staff at all times.
- p) The sink should be positioned such that it is usable by a person in a wheelchair. The trap should be offset to the rear to ensure that the knee-space is clear of obstructions. If this is not possible, the trap should be insulated to prevent heat injuries to the legs.
- q) Faucets and other controls on the sink should be colour contrasted from their surrounding area. They should have handles of the lever type that are operable with a closed fist and minimal force, or they should be electronically or automatically controlled. Knob and push handles are not acceptable.
- r) Accessories, such as soap dispensers, towel dispensers and waste receptacles, should be easy to use and positioned no more than 110 cm (1100 mm) from the floor and within a 50 cm (500 mm) reach, such that they are usable by a person using a wheelchair. Accessories such as towel dispensers and waste receptacles should not protrude into the route of travel.
- s) These accessories should be colour-contrasted from their surrounding area and identified by tactile markers.
- t) The mirror should be mounted with its bottom edge not more than 100 cm (1000 mm) from the floor.
- u) If a washroom has toilet stalls and is accessible to persons with disabilities, including persons who use a wheelchair, at least one toilet stall should have an outward-swinging door with inside and outside pulls, a floor space, a toilet, grab bars, a coat hook and a call button that satisfy the criteria set out in subsections (d) to (o) above. If a washroom has more than one sink, at least one sink should satisfy the criteria set out in subsections (p) and (q). In addition, at least one of each type of washroom accessory and at least one mirror should satisfy the criteria set out in subsections (r) to (t).

**1.14.2** As for the other public washrooms on a ferry, operators are encouraged to incorporate the accessibility criteria listed above into their designs for these



washrooms on new ferries and as part of the refurbishment plans for these washrooms on existing ferries.

## **1.15 Relieving Areas for Service Animals**

People travelling with service animals need to relieve their animals regularly, particularly during lengthy trips. Ferry terminals are already expected to follow guidance on relieving areas for service animals in section 2.5 of the *Code of Practice: Passenger Terminal Accessibility*. However, the Agency recognizes that a passenger travelling with a service animal may also require a relief area for their animal on board a ferry, depending on the length of the journey. To this extent, the following section provides guidance for ferry operators operating vessels that travel over a period of four consecutive hours or more.

- 1.15.1** Ferry operators should ensure that there is a designated area available for service animals to relieve themselves on board the vessel.
- 1.15.2** Where designated relieving areas are provided, they should be clearly identified and accessible directional signs to these designated relieving areas should be provided. Signs should comply with section 1.0 of this Code. In addition, ferry operators should ensure that there is a safe path of travel to and from the relieving areas.
- 1.15.3** Ferry operators should ensure that staff - including contractors and volunteers - who may interact with the public, are made aware of the location of the designated relieving areas onboard the vessel, so that they may make known to the public, upon request, where service animals may relieve themselves.
- 1.15.4** Designated relieving areas should be adequately maintained.

## **Section 2: Maintenance**

- 2.0.1** A ferry operator should have procedures in place to ensure that all accessibility features on a ferry are maintained in good working order.

## **Section 3: Communication**

### **3.0 Provision of Transportation-related Information in Multiple Formats**

Multiple formats are formats that substitute or complement conventional print and video products and that address the communication needs of persons with visual, hearing or cognitive disabilities. These can include: accessible electronic text formats, large print, audio formats, braille, captioned video, sign language video and described video.

- 3.0.1** Ferry operators should develop and follow a multiple format policy to ensure that information related to the successful execution of a trip is available to all travellers in a format that is accessible to them. The Agency has a webpage containing [useful information on multiple formats](#).

## **3.1 Information on Vessel Accessibility and Disability-Related Services**

- 3.1.1** A ferry operator should have a means to make vessel accessibility features and services (e.g. information on elevators, accessible seating, and complaint resolution service) known to passengers.

This allows passengers with disabilities, including those who may travel infrequently or who may be uncomfortable travelling, to be aware of what accessibility features and services are available on board a vessel prior to travel.

This also allows passengers to familiarize themselves with any required accessibility information independently, prior to travel. In addition, it helps to ensure that if ferry operators expend resources to provide accessible features and services, the intended users will be aware of their existence and be able to make use of them.

## **3.2 Website Accessibility**

This section pertains to ferry operators who have websites.

- 3.2.1** Websites should be made accessible to persons with disabilities by following the World Wide Web Consortium's (W3C) [WCAG 2.0 standard](#). Web-based information related to the successful execution of a trip should also be made available by other means of communication upon request. The Agency has a webpage containing [useful information on website accessibility](#).

## **3.3 Means to Communicate Messages**

- 3.3.1** If a ferry operator makes announcements to passengers, such as announcements concerning delays, schedule changes, and onboard services, the operator should have the means on board the vessel of visually and verbally providing these announcements to persons with disabilities.
- 3.3.2** Pen and paper should be made available at all points of contact between carrier staff and passengers in order to facilitate communication with persons who are deaf, deafened or hard of hearing.

## 3.4 Supplemental Passenger Safety Briefing Cards

- 3.4.1** Where supplemental safety briefing cards are used, a ferry operator should provide large print and braille supplemental passenger safety briefing cards on a vessel. If a ferry operator gives pre-travel safety briefings, it should ensure that passengers with disabilities receive an individualized pre-travel safety briefing and demonstrations, if needed.
- 3.4.2** A sufficient number of these cards (at least two per deck is recommended) should be made available in: 14 point or larger font sans serif type; use dark characters on a light background; and in Grade Two Braille that meets the standards of Braille Literacy Canada in English and in *Braille intégral* that meets the standards of the *Code braille français uniformisé pour la transcription des textes imprimés* (CBFU) in French.

## 3.5 Communication of Equipment Features

- 3.5.1** Upon request, crews onboard ferries are to give oral, written or visual information about the equipment features of the vessel (such as the location and function of call or control buttons at seating and washroom features) to passengers with disabilities. This information should also be made available in multiple formats, where possible (see Section 3.0 for additional information on multiple formats).

## 3.6 Telephones

- 3.6.1** If modular jack public telephones are provided on a ferry, at least one telephone should be installed at a height of 120 cm (1200 mm) (for telephones with a seat feature) and 137 cm (1370 mm) (for telephones without a seat feature), including its operable parts and the coin slot, and with a shelf, and handset cord length that permit frontal access by a person in a wheelchair. The shelf should be large enough to accommodate a TTY<sup>3</sup>. Although it is recognized that it is now common for persons with disabilities to use cellular telephones or “smartphones” to communicate, for example, by sending text messages, ferry operators may want to install at least one TTY on a ferry.
- 3.6.2** The telephone and TTY should be situated such that the instructions and shelf are adequately illuminated, and noise from the surrounding environment is minimized.

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<sup>3</sup> Teletypewriters or “text phones” are used as an alternative communication system by some persons who are deaf, deafened, hard of hearing or speech impaired.

- 3.6.3** The telephone and TTY should have their location indicated by directional signage and by a sign positioned perpendicular to the path of travel.
- 3.6.4** The telephone and TTY should also be identified by the international TTY symbol (consists of a traditional telephone receiver over a keyboard) in pictograph and tactile form.
- 3.6.5** All telephones and TTYs should be situated so as not to obstruct the path of travel. In case of existing banks of telephones, it is recognized that structural limitations of the vessel may prevent relocation. In these instances, operators are urged to at least provide colour contrasting on the outer edge of the bank of telephones in order to help distinguish them from their surroundings.
- 3.6.6** Telephones should have audible operational instructions and push-button dialing controls, a flux coil on the handset, and a volume control.

## **3.7 Alarms**

- 3.7.1** If a ferry is equipped with an alarm system, the system should be visual and audible and, when activated, display continuously in all public places.
- 3.7.2** Visual alarms should be a flashing light that is strategically placed and significantly brighter than the ambient light.

Additional provisions related to communication can be found in the Agency's [Code of Practice: Removing Communication Barriers for Travellers with Disabilities](#).

## **Section 4: Disability-related Services**

### **4.0 Passenger Assistance**

The Agency recognizes that the availability of some of the services described in this Code can only be provided when passengers communicate their needs. Passengers with disabilities may need to self-identify to take advantage of services that may be available.

- 4.0.1** A ferry operator should provide a means for passengers to get information or assistance once onboard the ferry.
- 4.0.2** Where there are any cafeterias on a ferry, a ferry operator should provide assistance, if requested, to a person with a disability by either reading the menu display board or making available a large print and/or braille version of the display board. The large print version should be in 14 point or larger sans serif type with dark characters on a light background. The braille version should be in Grade Two Braille that meets the standards of the Canadian Braille Authority in

English and in *Braille intégral* that meets the standards of the *Code braille français uniformisé pour la transcription des textes imprimés* (CBFU) in French.

## 4.1 Carriage of Service Animals

**4.1.1** Ferry operators should accept a service animal for carriage without charge if the ferry operator is satisfied that the animal is required by a person for assistance, has been trained to assist a person by a professional animal institution, and is properly harnessed.

## 4.2 Carriage of Mobility Aids as Baggage

**4.2.1** Passengers with disabilities should be permitted to retain their disability aid while on board a ferry at no additional charge.

# Section 5: Personnel Training

## 5.0 Disability-Related Training

**5.0.1** Every ferry operator subject to this code of practice must ensure that they train their employees and contractors who provide transportation-related services and who may be required to interact with the public or to make decisions in respect of persons with disabilities, in accordance with the [\*Personnel Training for the Assistance of Persons with Disabilities Regulations\*](#) (SOR/94-42).

The Agency has developed a training resource tool, entitled “[\*Accessibility for All\*](#),” which ferry operators may find helpful when conducting training sessions for employees and contracted personnel.

## About the Agency

### Our role in accessible transportation

The Canadian Transportation Agency is a quasi-judicial administrative tribunal and economic regulator of the Government of Canada.

Under Canadian legislation, the Agency has the responsibility for ensuring that persons with disabilities obtain access to this country’s federal transportation system by eliminating unnecessary or unjustified barriers. One way to achieve this goal is to develop and administer accessibility standards covering the transportation system under federal jurisdiction. Other ways include resolving disputes through facilitation, mediation or adjudication, and by consulting with stakeholders.

Under subsection 170(1) of the *Canada Transportation Act*, the Agency may make regulations to eliminate undue obstacles in the transportation system under federal jurisdiction. For example, the Agency may regulate:

- the design, construction or modification of means of transportation and related facilities and premises and their equipment;
- signage;
- the training of personnel interacting with persons with disabilities;
- the tariffs, rates, fares, charges and terms and conditions of carriage of persons with disabilities; and
- communication of information for persons with disabilities

**Note:** The Agency has developed a resource tool that provides information on [how to file a complaint](#) experienced by a person with a disability and that also explains the approaches the Agency uses in resolving accessible transportation complaints.

## How we monitor compliance

The Agency will monitor compliance with this Code using a variety of means. For example, the Agency may monitor via site visits, discussions with ferry operators, information available on the operator's website, or other methods deemed appropriate to obtain information. In addition, the Agency will undertake periodic reviews of the Code. Any problems identified will be addressed by the Agency.

It should be kept in mind that safety on board vessels is not the responsibility of the Agency. Ferry operators must continue to comply with the provisions of any safety regulation included in or made under the *Canada Shipping Act* and any applicable Transport Canada or international safety regulation as well as any applicable Health Canada directive.

## How this Code of Practice was developed

### Consultations

This Code has been developed and updated in consultation with representatives of the Agency's Accessibility Advisory Committee, including ferry operators and associations representing persons with disabilities.

## Research and additional resources

### [Accessible Transportation Complaints: A Resource Tool for Persons with Disabilities](#)

This Resource Tool provides information on how to file a complaint regarding an "undue obstacle" experienced by a person with a disability in the federal transportation system.

### [Accessible Transportation Complaints: A Resource Tool for Service Providers](#)

This Resource Tool provides information on how to resolve a complaint from a person with a disability who believes they have encountered an undue obstacle with respect to transportation-related services in the federal transportation system.

### [Carriage of Mobility Aids On Board Planes, Trains and Ferries](#)

This Resource Tool will assist passengers and ferry operators in the planning of and preparation for travel involving mobility aids, and includes a new reservation checklist that can facilitate the planning of carriage of mobility aids.

### [Travelling with an Attendant in the Federal Transportation System: A Resource Tool for Persons with Disabilities and Carriers](#)

This Resource Tool provides information to assist passengers with disabilities who either wish or require to travel with an attendant, to do so while understanding their rights and responsibilities.

This Resource Tool also provides information to help ferry operators facilitate travel for their passengers with disabilities when this may entail travel with an attendant.

### [Travelling with Animals that Provide Disability-Related Assistance: A Resource Tool for Persons with Disabilities, Carriers and Terminal Operators](#)

This Resource Tool contains information about:

- Canadian standards for the carriage of assistance animals;
- How assistance animals help persons with disabilities;
- Factors for carriers to consider when determining under what conditions assistance animals may be accepted for carriage;
- How persons with disabilities should plan their travel with an assistance animal; and
- Relieving areas for assistance animals at terminal facilities.

## Universal Design

Barrier-free design generally refers to design that incorporates specific elements to make buildings more accessible, focussing on disability and accommodating persons with disabilities in the environment.

In contrast, universal design results in design that is useable by the widest range of users, not just an “average” user. This means that a design is intended for use by all users, not just persons with disabilities. For example, a lift at staircases is a barrier-free design solution that provides a means to change levels for persons who use wheelchairs. A ramp or an elevator in addition to stairs, however, allows all persons an alternative to using the staircase, including persons who use wheelchairs and persons with strollers or luggage.

Universal design benefits all travellers, including persons with disabilities, persons who are elderly, persons travelling with suitcases, and persons travelling with young children in strollers. This may result in an increased use of public transportation as transportation becomes more accessible for all.

Consideration should be given to these design principles whenever a ferry operator is involved in the procurement of a ferry vessel or when planning a major retrofit.

Additional information can be found on the Centre for Excellence in Universal Design website, which includes a list of the [Principles of Universal Design](#) and examples of their implementation.