



New role for local governments proposed under Accessible B.C. Act

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The provincial government has advised that it plans to move forward with a regulation under the *Accessible B.C. Act* in September 2022 that would identify local governments as a prescribed organization under Part 3 of that Act. Local governments will be required to establish an accessibility committee, have an accessibility plan and have a mechanism for providing feedback on accessibility.

The *Accessible B.C. Act* was passed in June 2021, and aims to identify, remove, and prevent barriers for people with disabilities in B.C. by enabling the development of accessibility standards and introducing new accessibility requirements for government and prescribed organizations.

More information about the requirements of prescribed organizations in the new *Act* is available on the Ministry [website](#). Please contact Ministry [staff](#) for questions about the proposed regulation.

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Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Requirements under Part 3 of the *Accessible B.C. Act*

What is the *Accessible B.C. Act*?

The *Accessible B.C. Act* is a new provincial law, passed in June 2021, that establishes a legal framework to identify, remove, and prevent barriers to the full and equal participation of people with disabilities in B.C. by enabling the development of accessibility standards and introducing new accessibility requirements for government and prescribed organizations.

What are the new requirements for government and prescribed organizations in the *Accessible B.C. Act*?

Part 3 of the *Accessible B.C. Act* requires government and prescribed organizations to establish:

1. an accessibility committee
2. an accessibility plan
3. a mechanism for feedback on accessibility

If prescribed, when will my organization be required to comply with Part 3 of the *Accessible B.C. Act*?

We anticipate that organizations will be prescribed by regulations in phases. Organizations will have at least one year to comply after they are prescribed by regulations.

When are you planning to prescribe my organization?

We are working towards having the first regulation listing the prescribed organizations in place in 2022. We are using the feedback gathered from the survey to help determine which organizations should be prescribed first and to determine what resources they may need to comply with the Act.

Are there strict requirements regarding the composition of accessibility committees?

The legislation requires that accessibility committees, to the extent possible, have at least half of its members be persons with disabilities or represent a disability-serving organization, represent the diversity of British Columbians and have Indigenous representation. Organizations have different capacities, priorities, and requirements, so committees also need to be tailored to meet the organization's context.

What should the accessibility plan contain?

An accessibility plan should outline how the organization will identify, remove and prevent barriers to people in the organization or interacting with it. The plan must be reviewed and updated at least once every three years.

In developing or updating their plan, an organization must consult with its accessibility committee and consider specified principles (inclusion, adaptability, diversity, collaboration, self-determination, and universal design). In updating their plan, an organization must also consider comments received through its public feedback mechanism.

Will organizations be required to submit accessibility plans to government?

No. Organizations are not required to submit accessibility plans to government. However, organizations must make their accessibility plan available to the public, for example by publishing it on their website.

What happens if my organization does not meet the targets it sets in its accessibility plan?

Organizations will set their own targets for accessibility in their accessibility plans. Organizations are encouraged to set ambitious targets that can be progressively realized over time.

What strategies are available to help organizations tailor Part 3 requirements to their organizational context?

There are several strategies the organization could use to come into compliance, including:

- organizations that have an existing accessibility committee, plan or public feedback mechanism may use them
- organizations may adapt an existing plan (such as a diversity and inclusion plan), committee, or feedback mechanism; or,
- two or more organizations could work together to develop an accessibility plan, committee, or public feedback mechanism jointly.

The intent is to avoid potential duplication of work and encourage collaboration among prescribed organizations. For example, some local organizations may already be pooling accessibility resources and merging related advisory committees (e.g.: [North Shore Advisory Committee on Disability Issues](#)).

What support or resources will be available to help my organization comply with Part 3 requirements?

We are committed to working with our partners to ensure they are supported in the identification, removal and prevention of barriers. Resources, such as toolkits and templates, will be available to support organizations to meet legislated obligations.

Does being prescribed automatically mean that future accessibility standards will apply to our organization?

No. The requirements under Part 3 of the Act are for an accessibility committee, an accessibility plan and a feedback mechanism.

The *Accessible B.C. Act* establishes a process for accessibility standards to be developed and adopted as regulations. Each regulation will clearly identify which organizations or class of organization it applies to.

Will being prescribed require our organization to make physical upgrades to our building(s)?

No. While organizations are encouraged to make upgrades that will enhance accessibility, physical upgrades are not a requirement of Part 3 of the *Accessible B.C. Act*.

Where can I learn more about the *Accessible B.C. Act*?

For more information about the *Accessible B.C. Act* please consult:

- BC Laws (legislation as it currently applies): <https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/21019>
- *Accessible B.C. Act* Third Reading (includes content of sections to be brought into force by regulation): <https://www.leg.bc.ca/parliamentary-business/legislation-debates-proceedings/42nd-parliament/2nd-session/bills/third-reading/gov06-3>
- Plain Language summary of the *Accessible B.C. Act*: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/about-the-bc-government/accessibility/legislation/summary>
- Timeline for implementation: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/government/about-the-bc-government/accessible-bc/accessibility-legislation-gantt.pdf>