



Changes to Ontario's Accessible Customer Service Standard

Restaurant owner Greg Boyle says there is a rich and growing market in Ontario any business can tap into if they just follow some simple advice.

"It really is just a matter of listening and talking to your guests," says Boyle, who has made accessibility for customers with disabilities a cornerstone of the three Tim Hortons stores he operates with his partner in Sarnia, Ontario.

"There are improvements that can be achieved at minimal costs to business owners who wish to reach a market that otherwise could be lost to them."

To help you create a more accessible customer service experience, the government has made changes to the [Customer Service Standard](#). Starting July 1, 2016:

- All employees must be trained on accessible customer service
- More types of regulated health professionals can provide documentation of the need for a service animal.
- An organization can only require a support person to accompany someone with a disability for the purposes of health or safety, and in consultation with the person. If it's determined a support person is required, any fee or fare for the support person must be waived.
- All accessibility standards — including the accessible customer service standard — are now part of one [Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation](#), making it easier for organizations to understand their obligations.
- Private sector and non-profit organizations with 20-49 employees no longer need to document policies. But this does not remove compliance or reporting requirements.

Certain terms and definitions have also been updated, but these changes **do not** affect your existing requirements.

The reporting schedule for organizations also remains the same. All public sector organizations, and businesses and non-profits with 20 or more employees must submit their 2017 accessibility compliance report by **December 31, 2017**.

The 2017 report will include questions about complying with these new customer service standard changes. So learn more at ontario.ca/accessibility or you can view the [Quick Reference Guide](#).