

AODA Information & FAQ

Ontario Camps Association

***NOTE:** The information provided has been put together by the OCA to help Camp Directors navigate the requirements of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA). The information below is based on material provided by the Ministry of Economic Development, Employment & Infrastructure. While the OCA has done its best to research and summarize AODA's requirements, we cannot guarantee that the information is accurate for your organization. The OCA encourages you to seek legal counsel to ensure you are complying with the current legislations.*

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) was put in place in 2005 to make Ontario accessible by 2025. There are 5 different sections ("Standards") to AODA, each with their own compliance requirements and compliance dates. The staggered compliance dates were used so that organizations have adequate time to adjust and make changes.

The 5 standards of AODA are:

- 1) Customer Service Standard
- 2) Information and Communications Standard
- 3) Employment Standard
- 4) Transportation Standard
- 5) Built Environment Standard

All camps should have submitted a compliance report for the Customer Service Standard by now (due date was December 31st, 2012).

Many people thought their AODA duties were complete after submitting the Customer Service plan, but unfortunately this is not the case. There are compliance requirements and deadlines that relate to the remaining 4 sections that are coming into effect over the next several years.

A FEW THINGS TO NOTE ABOUT COMPLIANCE AND THE REGULATIONS....

1) Compliance dates vary, based on your camps size

AODA differentiates between 5 types of organization, and each type of organization has a different compliance timeline for the regulations and requirements. Most camps will fall under 1 of the 2 following categories:

- 1) Large Organizations (private sector organizations with 50 or More Employees)
- 2) Small Organizations (private sector organizations with 49 or Less Employees)

** "Employees" mean any full-time, part-time and seasonal workers.*

2) Compliance dates do not relate to specific standards. Deadlines are for requirements that are categorized *under* a standard.

In 2012 we had to comply with a few requirements that were all filed under the one "Customer Service" Standard. Given this experience, many people assumed that the remaining 4 standards have their own given deadline. This is not the case unfortunately, which has confused the camp community greatly.

Each of the 5 standards has multiple requirements under its umbrella. Compliance deadlines do not relate to the specific standards- they relate to the requirements. The confusing part is that each requirement has a different deadline. The OCA has put together a chart to help you understand when each requirement has come into effect (please refer to the attached "AODA Summaries").

Frequently Asked Questions

QUESTION: Do I need to make huge changes to my organization just to comply to AODA?

Not necessarily. AODA can seem very intimidating, but a lot of the compliance requirements (especially the early ones) are just asking you to evaluate your services, and make a plan to improve. A lot of the work you may have to do is simply share your current policies and/or add a few additions to your current practices.

Example: Training is a big requirement under AODA, but almost all camps have a pre-camp training period and manual already set up. In certain situations, you can simply chat with your staff about how you've made camp accessible, and add a resource into your manual and presto- you've met a requirement!

QUESTION: What's actually involved in a compliance report?

Simplified answer- "complying" means signing onto a government website and checking boxes that state "Yes, I have complied". You don't have to send in policies or proof showing that you have made changes- you just need to submit an online form saying you have met the requirements.

It is important to note though, by checking "Yes" to a statement on a compliance report, you are making a legal statement that you meet the requirements. This means you have made the necessary changes- its up to you to be honest and truthful.

QUESTION: Do I really need to comply? What's going to happen if I don't?

Yes, legally you have to comply. Will the government check in on you? They may, and if they do, there are big fines for not complying.

It is also in the best interest of your camp to actually consider and implement the encouraged actions of AODA. The process of sending in compliance reports is annoying, yes, but the actual work will ensure that your camp is an inclusive place for *all* types of campers and employees.

Being compliant with AODA doesn't mean you are safe from a Human Rights complaint, but it does put you in a safer position. If you have followed the requirements, your camp will be more accessible, and therefore less likely to hear from the Human Rights Tribunal.

QUESTION: Are we going to be mandated to make physical changes to our camp?

Most of the requirements under the "Design of Public Space" standard do not require you to change your current campground. However, you will have to implement accessible features when you undertake NEW building projects, or if you are undergoing major renovations. This applies to features such as exterior paths, eating spaces, playgrounds, and parking.