



UNIVERSAL
F A B R I C A T I N G

Universal Fabricating Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2023-2028

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Universal Fabricating Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2023-2028

Introduction

Universal Fabricating provides metal fabrication solutions to support the automotive and greenhouse markets. We specialize in the manufacturing and distribution of equipment and structures utilized in the automotive and horticultural industries, including but not limited to transportation systems, automotive parts, and fully structured greenhouses. Universal Fabricating has been operating for over 18 years and has established itself as one of the leading metal fabrication companies in Canada.

The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)* and the *Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulation (IASR)* was enacted to develop, implement, and enforce Accessibility Standards in order to achieve accessibility for Ontarians with disabilities with respect to:

- Information and Communication
- Employment
- Design of Public Spaces
- Customer Service
- Transportation

The requirements of AODA and the IASR are not a replacement or substitution for the requirements established under the Ontario Human Rights Code or the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act. Under the AODA and the IASR, we are required to establish, implement, maintain, and remove accessibility barriers and meet our requirements under the IASR.

In accordance with the requirements set out in the IASR, we will:

- Post the multi-year accessibility plan on our website
- Provide the plan in an accessible format upon request
- Review and update the accessibility plan at least once every five years
- Review and update the accessibility plan in consultation with persons with disabilities
- Prepare an annual status report and post it on our website

Statement of Commitment

We are committed and fully support the AODA. We will treat all people in a way that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence. We believe in integration and equal opportunity. We are committed to meeting the accessibility needs of people with disabilities in a timely manner, and will do so by identifying, preventing, and removing barriers to accessibility and meeting accessibility requirements under the AODA and the IASR. We will work to promote a culture of respect and acceptance for accessibility within Ontario.

Accessibility Plan 2023-2028

Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulation

Part 1 – General

Requirement: Accessibility Policy

Universal Fabricating is committed to maintaining an AODA policy. The policy includes an organizational statement of intent and requirements for employees at all levels of the organization to meet the accessibility requirements for persons with disabilities in a timely manner.

Actions taken:

- The AODA Policy was developed and approved.
- The AODA Policy was reviewed and updated in accordance with internal review processes.
- The AODA Policy will be made available in an accessible format to customers and employees requesting a copy of the policy.

Actions planned:

- Continue to review the AODA Policy at least every three years or whenever Universal Fabricating practices and/or procedures change to ensure it is up to date and all AODA requirements are integrated.
- Continue making the AODA Policy available in an accessible format to customers and employees requesting a copy of the policy.

Requirement: Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

Universal Fabricating is committed to developing and implementing a multi-year accessibility plan to meet the requirements of the AODA and the needs of Universal Fabricating stakeholders with disabilities.

Actions taken:

- A multi-year accessibility plan was developed in 2023.
- The plan was posted to the company's website.

Actions planned:

- The multi-year accessibility plan will be reviewed and updated at least every five years based on changing accessibility requirements and feedback from internal and external stakeholders.
- Updated multi-year accessibility plans will be posted to the Universal Fabricating website.
- Universal Fabricating will provide the plan in an accessible format upon request.
- Annual status updates will be prepared to show what has been done to achieve the accessibility plan, post the update to the website, and make the update available to the public in an accessible format if requested.

Requirement: Training

Universal Fabricating is committed to providing appropriate AODA training to all employees including management, and all people participating in the development and approval of Universal Fabricating's policies. Training content includes the requirements of the AODA, the IASR, and the Ontario Human Rights Code as it pertains to persons with disabilities.

Actions taken:

- All employees have taken the required AODA training.
- AODA training has been added to the Onboarding/Orientation process.
- Mandatory training continues to be provided to all new employees.
- All employees, supervisors, and managers understand how to interact with customers of varying disabilities.

Actions planned:

- Annual refresher training will be instituted to ensure knowledge remains current.

Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulation

Part II – Information and Communication Standard

Requirement: Accessible Formats and Communication Supports

We are committed to making information and communication accessible to people with disabilities. The information we provide and the ways we communicate are key to delivering our services to the public.

We will incorporate accessibility requirements under the IASR information and communication standard to ensure that its information and communications systems and platforms are accessible, and they meet the needs of persons with disabilities.

Universal Fabricating will, upon request, consult with the person requesting the information and provide or arrange for the provision of accessible formats and/or communication supports in a timely manner and at a cost that is no more than the regular cost charged to other persons.

There are situations where accessible formats and communication supports may not be provided. These situations include when:

- it is not technically possible to convert a document to an accessible format. In this case, we will explain why and provide a short summary.
- the information comes from another organization.
- we do not control the information.
- the information is found on products or product labels.

If we determine that information or communications are unconvertable, we will provide the person requesting the information or communication with:

- an explanation as to why the information or communications are unconvertable.
- a summary of the unconvertable information or communications.

Actions taken:

- Customer service feedback process has been implemented.

Actions planned:

- Develop and implement processes to ensure information can be made accessible to people with disabilities upon request.

- Develop guidelines and best practices for creating accessible documents.
- Develop best practices to make email communication more accessible.
- Continually improve accessibility of our information and communications by reviewing feedback received and conducting accessibility audits to identify accessibility barriers and striving for barrier removal.

Requirement: Accessible Websites and Web Content

External-facing websites and web content controlled directly by Universal Fabricating will conform to the World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1, at Level AA in accordance with the schedule set out in the IASR.

Actions taken:

- New public websites, significantly refreshed websites, and any web content posted after January 1, 2024, meets WCAG 2.0 Level AA

Actions planned:

- A governance procedure will be established to ensure websites and web content conform to the appropriate standards.
- Processes and guidance documents will be created to ensure information posted on our websites are accessible.
- Web accessibility audits will be conducted on all existing websites in order to determine whether AODA requirements are met and develop remediation plan if content does not conform to the requirements.
- Ensure any future digital services or computer programs are designed for accessibility, striving for all users to have equal access to information and functionality.
- Ensure forms are designed and conform with accessibility criteria.

Requirement: Emergency Procedures, Plans, or Public Safety Information

Safety is a priority for us, and we strive to ensure that our facilities are safe for customers, visitors, and employees.

Action taken:

- ERP's have been developed and posted throughout the facilities and/or specific areas.
- AODA section on the website allows for customers to make their needs known in advance of their visit so they can be accommodated properly and individual emergency response plans can be put in place.

Action planned:

- Install high visibility pathway markings on shop floors.
- Install flashing lights with fire alarm system.

Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulation

Part III – Employment Standard

Universal Fabricating is an equal opportunity employer, and we are committed to inclusive and accessible employment practices that attract and retain talented employees with disabilities. We recognize that removing barriers across the employment life cycle will create a workplace that is diverse, accessible, and enables employees to reach their full potential.

Requirement: Recruitment

Actions taken:

- All postings to the public-facing careers website include notice about the availability of accommodations for disabilities, where needed, to support their participation in recruitment processes. All postings include the statement:
“Universal Fabricating is an equal opportunity employer. Please contact Human Resources if you require accommodation.”
- Job applicants who are selected for an interview and/or testing will be notified that accommodations are available, upon request.
- When offers of employment are made, we notify the successful applicants of the policy for accommodating employees with disabilities.

Actions planned:

- Establish processes to consult with any applicant who requests accommodation in a manner that takes into consideration the applicants’ unique abilities.
- Continue addressing barriers to recruitment.
- Continue to accommodate employees.

Requirement: Accessible Formats and Communication Supports for Employees

Actions taken:

- Assistive technology in use includes the assistive technology provided in the Microsoft Suite, various keyboards, specialty mice, and ergonomically designed workstations and components.
- All videos used in learning and performance courses are closed captioned.

Actions planned:

- Office design standards will be reviewed to ensure that our offices are accessible.
- Automatic door openers will be installed where required by persons with mobility impairments.
- Continue to provide assistive devices as required.

Requirement: Documented Individual Emergency Accommodation Plans

Actions taken:

- Universal Fabricating has a Workplace Accommodation Policy that includes documented processes and information on accommodating employees with varying abilities.

Actions planned:

- Continue to review current and future documented processes and procedures and look for ways to enhance the accommodation program.

Requirement: Workplace Emergency Response Information

When we are aware that an employee has a disability and that there is a need for accommodation, individualized workplace emergency response information will be provided to the employee as soon as possible if such information is necessary given the nature of the employee's disability.

Actions taken:

- Our AODA policy lists the steps we will take to prepare an Individual Emergency Response Plan.

Actions planned:

- Review and revise individualized workplace emergency response plans on an ongoing and regular basis.
- Canvas employees every two years to identify new employees requiring workplace emergency response assistance and ensure information contained on the intranet site for existing employees is current.

Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulation

Part IV.2 – Customer Service Standard

Requirement: Accessible Customer Service

We strive for service excellence in all of our interactions with our customers. From the very first moment of contact with our employees, customers should feel that we are listening and responding to their needs.

We will meet the requirements of the AODA and IASR. The organization proactively identifies barriers to accessibility and determines appropriate ways to accommodate customer needs in order to provide customer service that is accessible to people with varying abilities.

Actions taken:

- All employees, managers, and senior managers have been trained on interacting with customers of all abilities and we maintain records of the training that is provided.
- Assistive devices and service animals are permitted on all Universal Fabricating premises locations in areas where customers have access.
- Support persons that accompany a person with a disability are welcome in areas where the public or third parties are permitted.
- Customers are informed when accessible services are temporarily unavailable.

Actions planned:

- Emergency procedures will be developed to ensure customers with varying abilities are assisted in building emergencies.
- Continue to train new employees on accessible customer service.
- Continue enabling customers to use assistive devices and welcoming the assistance of service animals and support persons.
- Continue reviewing emergency procedures to ensure customers with varying abilities are assisted in building emergencies.
- Work to ensure all online forms are accessible.
- Develop tip sheets for employees on interacting with persons of various abilities.
- Develop meeting/public information protocols to ensure the needs of persons with disabilities are met.

Requirement: Feedback

Feedback on how services were delivered to people with disabilities will be invited, forwarded to the appropriate personnel, responded to, documented, and tracked. Feedback will be collected by phone, email via the Universal Fabricating website, and in person at any of our locations. Feedback will be accepted in accessible formats and with other communication supports as required. Feedback will be considered to improve services and when reviewing the multi-year plan.

Actions taken:

- Implemented an accessible customer service feedback process. Feedback can be provided in multiple formats including phone and email.
- A Customer Service Feedback form has been developed and is available on our website and other accessible formats, upon request.

Actions planned:

- Continue to use the accessible feedback mechanisms as a means for improving services to persons with different disabilities.
- Ensure any internal feedback mechanisms for employees are accessible.

Measuring Results

Accessibility Status Reports

We will prepare annual accessibility status reports. The report will include how we have met our goals, commitments, and the legislative requirements for that period, as laid out in this plan. The report will be available on our website and will be provided in alternate formats upon request.

Reviewing Feedback

We will monitor and evaluate any feedback the organization has received throughout the year related to accessibility. This information will be used to continuously improve our processes and may be integrated into our accessibility reports and/or the multi-year plan.

Revisions to the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

If, through public consultation, feedback, and our own accessibility action and planning processes, we determine that the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan needs revision, we will update it to reflect these insights. Revisions will be available on our website and will be provided in alternate formats upon request.

Feedback is Welcome

We welcome your inquiries and feedback about accessibility and our efforts at meeting the AODA and IASR.

Please contact us by:

- Email: info@universal-fab.com
- Phone: 519-326-1333