

# [Auditing Your Website for Accessibility \(and AODA\) Compliance](#)



4 components of WCAG Principle (website content accessibility guideline) compliance

Although the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (2005) is Ontario specific legislation, it contains valuable groundwork for organizations across Canada seeking to ensure website accessibility. Not only do accessible websites help better attract and retain customers with disabilities, they also tend to be more successful in Google search. Furthermore, the steps being implemented in Ontario may lay the groundwork for future compliance across Canada. Making your website more accessible is good for people and for business.

## **January 2014 Deadlines for Ontario AODA Compliance**

It is time for Ontario organizations to address another round of AODA compliance deadlines. As of January 2014, large private sector employers (50 employees or over), and small public sector organizations (under 50 employees), need to double check several AODA compliance topics. Website accessibility is among the most important of these compliance issues.

### **WCAG 2.0 Principles**

Ontario AODA is in compliance with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines ("WCAG") 2.0 Level A, the internationally accepted standard for internet accessibility. Ontario organizations need to ensure their internal and external websites are prepared to conform. The WCAG contains 12 guidelines organized under 4 principals. Each guideline is testable under three levels of success criteria 'A', 'AA', 'AAA'.

#### **Perceivable:**

- Provides text alternatives for non-text content
- Provides captions and alternatives for multimedia (and video)
- Content presented in different ways, including by assistive technologies without losing meaning
- Easy for a user to see and hear content

#### **Operable:**

- All functionality available from keyboard navigation
- Allows users appropriate time to read and use content

- Does not use content that may trigger seizures
- Helps users navigate and find content

**Understandable:**

- Test is readable and understandable
- Content appears and functions in predictable ways (no surprises)
- Helps users avoid or easily correct mistake

**Robust:**

- Maximizes compatibility with current and future accessibility tools

**7 rules of thumb to keep in mind when auditing your website for accessibility:**

1. Writing web content in clear language with clear explanations
2. Alternative text for images (captions for images and described audio and captions for multimedia) have been provided
3. The site is navigable with only a keyboard
4. Information and progression logical and sensible
5. There is a strong contrast between images and background colours
6. Contains no blinking or flashing images
7. Compatible with accessible technology such as screen readers (without losing meaning)

Not certain how your website stacks up? Try evaluating it with the web accessibility checker. You can also find organizations who will audit and prepare an AODA website compliance report for you. These services will even assist you in correcting problems with your website.

Begin an audit of your website today with these components in mind. Create a website plan going forward that utilizes these standards. Build policies and procedures into your website that deal with regular accessibility compatibility. Ideally, do this annually.

Finally, survey your employees and customers and ask for feedback on their experience using your website. Feedback from real people can help you particularly upgrade the navigability and experience of your website.