



## Tip Sheet: Helping employees with disabilities stay safe

As an employer, you want to keep your employees safe. Ontario's Accessibility Standard for Employment can help you do that.

### Does this apply to my organization?

It applies to **all** organizations in Ontario with at least one employee, including:

- private companies
- non-profit organizations
- public sector organizations
- the Government of Ontario

### What is individualized emergency response information?

A plan to help an employee with a disability during an emergency, or emergency information that's formatted so an employee with a disability can understand it.

### What do I have to do?

As of **January 1, 2012**, if you know an employee with a disability might need help in an emergency:

- Give them individualized emergency response information
- Get their consent, then share this information with anyone designated to help them in an emergency
- Review the emergency response information when:
  - the employee changes work locations
  - you review the employee's overall accommodation needs
  - you review your organization's emergency response policies.

Disabilities can be temporary or permanent, and "employee" includes paid staff, but not volunteers or unpaid staff.



## How do I do it?

### 1. Review your emergency information

Ask yourself, how do staff learn about an emergency and what are they expected to do?

### 2. Determine who needs help

Employees with disabilities may not think about the information they need to deal with an emergency; but you should. What might help them to stay safe? If you don't know if your employees need customized information, ask them by making the offer to everyone.

### 3. Prepare and provide emergency information

Find out what kind of information employees need and if they need it in an accessible format. Give it to them as soon as you can.

You can make a document accessible by recreating it in a different format; for example, printing it in large print for someone with vision loss. But you can also help someone to use the original document or resource; for example, by reading it aloud.

Some employees may need more than an accessible format. For example, if someone can't hear a fire alarm, making the fire evacuation plan accessible won't help, but creating a customized evacuation plan will.

If they need another person's help in an emergency, get the employee's consent, then share the emergency information with the people who will help them. Don't share details of the employee's disability, just what kind of help they need.

### 4. Follow up

Revisit the information if the employee moves, or if you review their accommodation needs or your emergency procedures.

### Example

- Solmaz has a mental health disability and gets anxious in crowds. She is worried that evacuating through narrow corridors with too many people could make her panic and put herself and other employees at risk. So Solmaz talks to her manager. They walk the evacuation route and identify places where she could safely step out of the crowd if she feels anxious.