

Fall 2011

NEW ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS: PREPARING YOUR COMPANY FOR COMPLIANCE

As of January 1, 2012, companies with at least one employee and that provide goods or services will have to comply with the Customer Service Standards ("CSS"), which has been enacted under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* ("AODA").

Under the CSS, companies will generally have to:

- Establish policies, practices and procedures dealing with providing its goods/services to persons with disabilities.
- Provide training on serving persons with disabilities to all of its staff (i.e. employees, agents, volunteers, etc.) who deal with the public.
- Establish and make readily available a process for the public providing feedback on the manner in which it provides goods/services to persons with disabilities.
- Permit access to the premises to any person with a disability's support person, guide dog or other service animals, if the company's premises are open to members of the public or third parties.
- Provide notice of any access/service disruptions, if the company's facilities are usually used by persons with disabilities.

If a company has at least 20 employees in Ontario, the CSS policies, practices and procedures must be in writing and be made available to the public in an accessible format. The company will also have to file an annual accessibility report with the provincial government.

Persons, corporations, officers, and directors who do not comply with their CSS and AODA obligations may face fines. The fine for a person, director, or officer is a maximum of \$50,000.00 for each day the offence occurs. The fine for a corporation is a maximum of \$100,000 for each day the offence occurs. Wilson Vukelich LLP can help ensure you are in compliance with these new obligations. For more information contact:

Dan Condon
905-940-5505
dcondon@wvllp.ca