TECHNICAL SAFETY BC

Accessibility Plan 2023–2026

Prepared by Meaningful Access Consulting

Executive Summary

This report outlines Technical Safety BC's commitment to further accessibility and inclusion in our organization and meet the Accessible BC Act (the Act) requirements. We are focused on creating an environment where all individuals, including those with disabilities, can fully participate in various aspects of life. The Accessibility Plan aligns with the Accessible BC Act and aims to identify, remove, and prevent barriers, ensuring equitable access for all.

Barriers to Accessibility

The Accessibility Plan (the Plan) identifies the following six types of barriers:

- Attitudinal barrier
- Systemic barrier
- Physical barrier
- Informational and communicative barrier
- Technological barrier
- Sensory barrier

Technical Safety BC continues to remove these barriers to create a more inclusive environment for our employees and clients.

Legislation

Enacted in 2021, the Accessible BC Act aims to eliminate barriers for individuals with disabilities. This legislation mandates the creation of an Accessibility Plan updated at least every three years, involving collaboration with government agencies, the disability community, and guidance provided by the Provincial Accessibility Committee.

Technical Safety BC's Role

As a prescribed organization under the Act, Technical Safety BC must create an Accessibility Committee, an Accessibility Plan, and mechanisms for public feedback. For this phase of implementation, the Plan focuses on accessibility in the built environment, employment, and information technology and communications.

Goals Related to our Focus Areas:

1. **Built Environment:** Technical Safety BC aims to enhance physical accessibility in its offices by enhancing wayfinding, ensuring access to ergonomic assessments, and integrating universal design principles.

2. **Information Technology & Communication:** Technical Safety BC seeks to improve communication and accessibility by updating guidelines, websites, and content to meet modern accessibility standards.

3. **Employment:** The organization will further the development of inclusive employment opportunities by reviewing human resource policies, inclusive hiring practices, and accommodation procedures.

Implementation and Monitoring

The Accessibility Committee comprises of employees with diverse perspectives, who are leading the Plan's development and implementation. Progress will be tracked and actions will be reported annually, ensuring continuous improvement in accessibility and inclusion practices.

Feedback and Participation

Technical Safety BC values feedback and encourages engagement from the community, providing individuals a way to share their thoughts by email.

By adhering to the principles of inclusivity, accessibility and what is outlined in the Accessible BC Act, Technical Safety BC is committed to fostering a more inclusive environment that removes barriers, respects diversity, and promotes equal participation for all individuals, regardless of ability.

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Introduction

On June 17, 2021, the Government of British Columbia enacted [the Accessible British Columbia Act (the Act)](#), marking a historic milestone as the first provincial accessibility legislation in BC. Creating more accessible communities across BC, the Act's primary objective is to enhance accessibility throughout the province by eliminating barriers and fostering inclusion of individuals with disabilities.

The Act establishes a legal framework for the formulation, execution, and enforcement of accessibility standards targeted at eliminating barriers in various aspects of the community, including the built environment, program and service delivery, employment, procurement, communications, and technology. As one of over 750 public-sector organizations bound by the Act, Technical Safety BC must create an accessibility advisory committee, develop a three-year accessibility plan, and engage the community with a feedback mechanism to gather input regarding our accessibility plan.

Technical Safety BC's Accessibility Plan (the Plan) will guide the advancement of accessibility in our industry over the next three years and beyond. In collaboration with the licensed professional community, we are committed to advancing accessibility and inclusion for our employees and clients.

About Technical Safety BC

Technical Safety BC is an independent, self-funded organization that oversees the safe installation and operation of technical systems and equipment across the province. In addition to issuing permits, licences, and certificates, we work with industry to reduce safety risks through assessment, enforcement, research, education, and outreach.

We see safety as a shared responsibility as we assess what protections are in place at every stage: design and manufacturing; installation; operation and maintenance; repair and alteration; transfer of ownership, including reuse to disposal.

Our Values and our Commitment to Accessibility

Technical Safety BC is committed to advancing accessibility and inclusion for our employees, contractors, and licensees so that those with disabilities can fully and equally participate in the professional trades that oversee safety for all British Columbians. We value diversity in perspective, making safety accessible for everyone and adapting to a changing world.

Two of the six strategic areas of focus for Technical Safety BC, Client Success and Cultural Leadership, speak directly to our commitment of excellence to our clients and to our employees. Investing in people, being adaptable, and stimulating a culture of creativity and willingness to adapt are central themes for the work we do.

- Client Success: "We deliver value to clients, lower barriers to participation, and pursue a level playing field."

- Cultural Leadership: "We invest in the expertise of people and stimulate a culture that is willing and able to innovate."

These specific areas outlined in our Strategic Plan align with our drive to not only meet the requirements of the Act, but also to provide accessible and inclusive services to the regulated industries and professionals across BC.

Our Accessibility Journey

Technical Safety BC has begun our accessibility journey by having our Vancouver office audited for accessibility. This audit considered the perspectives of individuals who have mobility, auditory, visual, learning, sensory, and cognitive disabilities. We were provided a comprehensive report acknowledging the areas of success, as well as a number of suggestions on how to increase accessibility. These recommendations may be used to inform plans for building modifications and future renovations for our locations across the province. We have taken steps to build confidence and enhance our mutual understanding of the needs of the disability community by training for our employees on disability awareness. Additional social media and accessible communication training was also provided for our marketing and communications team members.

Technical Safety BC also provides internal ergonomic assessments for our employees, ensuring that their work spaces, not only meet their accessibility needs, but are also designed to identify and prevent health risks, such as strains and sprains that could lead to more complex pain or musculoskeletal injuries.

These experiences have helped us begin and guide our accessibility journey, and further the commitment of Technical Safety BC to continue to provide the best service to our staff and clients.

Territorial Acknowledgement

As a province-wide organization, Technical Safety BC respectfully recognizes that its employees live and work on the traditional and unceded territory of the many Indigenous nations that have thrived throughout British Columbia since time immemorial.

Acknowledgements

Technical Safety BC Core Staff Team

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Key Terms and Definitions

The terms of accessibility and disability are complex and ever-changing as we grow and develop. Moving from a previous medical model of disability to the current social model, the BC government, defines "accessibility" as follows:

> **"Accessibility means that all people can take part in their communities through work, play, and other daily activities."[1]**

Barrier: "Anything that hinders the full and equal participation in society of a person with [a disability]. Barriers can be caused by environments, attitudes, practices, policies, information, communications, or technologies, and affected by intersecting forms of discrimination."[2]

Built Environment: The constructed aspects of physical surroundings, "including homes, communities, schools, workplaces, parks/recreation areas, business areas, roads and green spaces (that can vary) in size from large-scale urban areas to smaller rural developments."[3] For the purposes of the Plan, the built environment applies to all buildings, including staff-only areas and public-facing areas.

Disability: A complex term that is based on a person's body experiencing barriers created by the environment that prevent a person from fully participating in the community to the greatest extent possible. Many members of the disability community prefer the term disability; however, this is not necessarily the case for everyone and other terms may be preferable for some members of the community.

Equity: "Equity is the fair treatment and access to equal opportunity (justice) that allows the unlocking of one's potential, leading to the further advancement of all peoples. The equity pursuit is about the identification and removal of barriers to ensure the full participation of all people and groups.[4]"

Inclusion: "Inclusion is a universal human right and its objective is to accept, welcome, and embrace all people irrespective of race, gender, disability, medical, or other need. Inclusion consists of the efforts and practices to ensure groups or individuals with different backgrounds are culturally and socially accepted and treated equally."[5]

Universal Design: "The design and composition of an environment so that it can be accessed, understood, and used to the greatest extent possible by all people regardless of their age, size, ability or disability."[6]

Wayfinding: "Wayfinding has the function to inform people of the surroundings in the (unfamiliar) built environment, it is important to show information at strategic points to guide people into the right directions."[7] This includes elements like signage, acoustics, illumination, and surface finishes.

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[1] AccessibleBC: B.C.'s Accessibility Plan 2022/23–2024/25. Government of British Columbia, 2022.
[2] Accessible British Columbia Act. Government of British Columbia, 2021.
[3] Healthy Built Environments. Government of British Columbia, 2017.
[4] Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility, Canadian Commission for UNESCO, 2021
[5] What is Inclusion? Inclusion Ontario. 2022
[6] Centre for Excellence in Universal Design. National Disability Authority, 2020.
[7] Introduction to Wayfinding. Design Workplan. 2023

Guiding Framework
Accessibility and Inclusion Principles

The core principles that underpin the rights of people with disabilities as stated by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) include:

- Respect for inherent dignity, individual autonomy (including the freedom to make one's own choices, and independence of persons),
- Non-discrimination,
- Full and effective participation and inclusion in society,
- Respect for difference and acceptance of persons with disabilities as part of human diversity and humanity,
- Equality of opportunity,
- Accessibility,
- Respect for the evolving capacities of children with disabilities and respect for the right of children with disabilities to preserve their identities.[8]

Accessibility means making sure that people of all abilities and disabilities can engage meaningfully in their communities, including the places where we work, learn, or obtain services. Historically, individuals with disabilities, along with other marginalized communities, have been largely excluded from the planning and delivery processes. Technical Safety BC's commitment to the Accessible BC Act is our opportunity to identify, remove, and prevent barriers to accessing services as informed by our staff and client community.

> **Equity is treating everyone fairly by acknowledging their unique situation and addressing systemic barriers. The aim of equity is to ensure that everyone has access to equal results and benefits.[9]**

What is Meant by Accessibility?

An accessible community is barrier-free and does not limit anyone's participation in everyday life. In accessible communities, people with disabilities can be active participants. As a prescribed organization, Technical Safety BC is an active participant in helping to build a more accessible and inclusive British Columbia.

Accessible organizations and communities:

- Allow for the interaction and engagement of all members,
- Reduce social isolation and improve mental health for people with disabilities,
- Increase economic gains for local businesses, and
- Improve physical health opportunities and outcomes for all.[10]

> **"We want to be inclusive of all experiences. We have the spirit, everyone has the intention. We want to see and hear from the people who are excluded."**
> - Committee Member

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[8] Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner. 2006

[9] Ottawa Equity & Inclusion Lens Handbook, 2018

[10] The Upside of Accessible and Inclusive Communities, Rick Hansen Foundation Blog, 2018

Creating an accessible organization is a process that considers the needs of individuals with disabilities, their lived experience and uses that input to address the barriers they have faced in accessing Technical Safety BC services, buildings, information, and employment opportunities.

Accessibility and Accommodation

Accommodation involves making specific adjustments or modifications to meet the unique needs of individuals with disabilities. Personal accommodation is required when accessible systems or programs are not yet provided. Accommodations can be options that support an individual in overcoming a particular barrier and can be a reasonable approach in some instances, particularly if the request is rare or temporary.

Accessibility systems are designed from the outset and are always preferable to accommodations.

Understanding Accessibility and Disabilities

In 2017, Statistics Canada reported that one in five Canadians, aged 15 years and over, have a disability and further to that, Canadians aged 65 and older represent over one third (38%) of individuals living with a disability, even if they don't identify as having a disability.[11] This means that the disability community and those who require accommodations or supports represents the largest minority population in British Columbia.

The understanding of disability has changed over time. Previously, the medical model of disability was the prevailing mindset, which emphasized disability as an individual medical problem or deficit that prevented participation; however, this has now shifted towards a social model of disability.[12] The medical model of disability places the ownership on the person while the social model of disability identifies disability as being caused by social, attitudinal and physical barriers within society that prevent full and equal participation of people with disabilities. The social model of disability recognizes that social change is necessary and ever-evolving to address the often-unintended consequences of unconscious bias, prejudice, stigma, and social exclusion of people with disabilities that result in the creation of these barriers.

The social model of disability also recognizes that at any given moment, an individual has varying levels of abilities, limitations, and strengths. Given this, the "disability" is caused by barriers within society, rather than being the result of a person's individual circumstance. Disability can be defined as follows:

> **When the features of a person's body and mind meet a barrier created by the design of the society in which they live, preventing their full and equal participation. These individual features can be permanent, temporary or episodic; visible or invisible; range in severity; and include physical, sensory, mental health-related, developmental, cognitive and multiple features.**[13]

Generally, disabilities are generally categorized the following areas:

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[11] Canadian Survey on Disability Reports. Statistics Canada, 2018.
[12] AccessibleBC: B.C.'s Accessibility Plan 2022/23–2024/25. Government of British Columbia, 2022.
[13] Federal Disability Reference Guide. Government of Canada, 2022.

- Vision or seeing disabilities (people who are blind or who have low vision)
- Hearing disabilities (people who are deaf or hard-of-hearing)
- Mobility, flexibility, and dexterity disabilities (this includes, but is not limited to, people using mobility devices)
- Pain-related disabilities
- Learning disabilities
- Developmental disabilities
- Cognitive disabilities (including memory and intellectual disabilities)
- Sensory processing disabilities (including Autism, though people who have Autism and other sensory processing disabilities are often labeled as Neurodiverse)
- Mental health-related disabilities

By addressing the access needs of the disability community, we are also simultaneously supporting the inclusion of diverse and unique perspectives in our workforce, bringing about opportunities for greater creative thinking and problem-solving as we adapt to a changing and evolving safety landscape in BC.

Barriers to Accessibility

Accessible BC's current Accessibility Plan categorizes barriers in the social and physical environments into six (6) main types of barriers. With this Accessibility Plan, Technical Safety BC aims to address these barriers in a way that supports meaningful access for our employees and clients[14]:

1. **Attitudinal Barriers:** When people think and act based upon assumptions and misconceptions that limit how a person with a disability can participate (including making decisions about people with disabilities without including them or by not believing that a person with a disability can contribute to the workforce).
2. **Systemic Barriers:** When policies or procedures are not inclusive. For example, a process that only allows individuals to submit or access information through an online system without alternative methods being provided, or a job requirement that includes a driver's license when another form of transportation could be used.
3. **Physical Barriers:** When obstacles in an environment make access difficult, such as a washroom with an accessible stall, but there is no automatic door opener or a meeting that is hosted in a space with no wheelchair access.
4. **Information and Communication Barriers:** When communication methods are not accessible by people with disabilities. For example, information that is communicated using complex language, acronyms, technical jargon, or materials that are only available in small print without large print options.
5. **Technological Barriers:** When technology cannot be accessed by people with disabilities (including self-service kiosks without accessibility features like auditory output or touch screens without screen reader software or tactile keyboards).
6. **Sensory Barriers:** When sensory information, such as lights, sounds, smells, etc. prevent participation in the environment, co-workers wearing perfume in the workplace or the use of fluorescent lighting in the workplace.

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[14] AccessibleBC: B.C.'s Accessibility Plan 2022/23–2024/25. Government of British Columbia, 2022.

Legislation

The Government of British Columbia is striving to create an accessible and inclusive province, emphasizing the value of participation by everyone, including those with disabilities. The legislation effort has led cities, municipalities, and other prescribed organizations, such as Technical Safety BC, to take up the task of promoting accessibility within our organizations.

The Honourable Nicholas Simons, Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction, states:

> **"The new law provides the legal framework by which the government, in partnership with people with disabilities and the broader community, will continue to work to identify, remove, and prevent barriers to the full and equal participation of people with disabilities in BC."** [15]

Enacted in June 2021, the Accessible BC. Act establishes a comprehensive legal structure designed to recognize, eliminate, and prevent barriers impeding the complete and fair engagement of individuals with disabilities.

Under the Act, the provincial government is mandated to create an accessibility plan that is regularly updated at minimum once every three years. When developing this plan, the provincial government involved close cooperation and consultation with various government agencies, the disability community, and insights brought forward by the Provincial Accessibility Committee.[16]

The legislation requires that when developing or updating your plan, you must follow these principles:
- Inclusion,
- Adaptability.
- Diversity,
- Collaboration,
- Self-determination; and
- Universal design.

The Purpose of the Accessibility Plan:

When the Accessibility B.C Act was enacted, it provided guidance on the purpose behind organizational Accessibility Plans. The purpose for these plans is to:

- Identify, remove, and prevent barriers experienced by people with disabilities and those who have additional access needs when interacting with the organization;
- Ensure that Technical Safety BC is a place where people of all abilities, backgrounds, and ages are able to fully participate in and contribute to all aspects of community life in the manner of their choosing; and
- Foster a community that recognizes and values the contributions of people with disabilities and collaboratively works to promote accessibility across sectors.[17]

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[15] AccessibleBC: B.C.'s Accessibility Plan 2022/23–2024/25. Government of British Columbia, 2022.
[16] AccessibleBC: B.C.'s Accessibility Plan 2022/23–2024/25. Government of British Columbia, 2022.
[17] AccessibleBC: B.C.'s Accessibility Plan 2022/23–2024/25. Government of British Columbia, 2022.

Technical Safety BC as a Prescribed Organization

As a prescribed organization, along with other crown corporations, tribunals, and provincial agencies, Technical Safety BC, must meet the requirements of the Act. Much like the province, Technical Safety BC must create an Accessibility Committee, an Accessibility Plan and offer a mechanism to the public to obtain feedback from the community. Our Accessibility Committee is providing guidance to the development and implementation of the Plan, which will be reviewed and updated at minimum every three years.

Our Approach

Technical Safety BC is taking a phased approach to the development of our Accessibility Plan to ensure that the Plan is not only tangible, but achievable, creating a framework to develop further actions. Working with Meaningful Access Consulting, we have engaged our Accessibility Committee of internal staff to determine the goals and direction for the initial phase of the Plan to address barriers in the following areas:

- Built Environment;
- Information Technology and Communications; and
- Employment

Removing barriers from these three areas requires a structured approach to improve accessibility across infrastructure, services, and communications. Technical Safety BC also sees an opportunity to demonstrate leadership in accessibility and has an important role to improve access to trades for people with disabilities in meaningful ways, particularly in supporting the breaking down of attitudinal barriers.

Development of our Plan

About our Committee

Our Accessibility Committee is an internal committee made of employees representing a variety of departments and perspectives from the disability community, either through direct and lived experience or through their support of someone with a disability. Committee members were invited to participate on the committee due to their acknowledged experience, as well as interest in advancing accessibility for the organization.

Our Accessibility Committee is intended to be flexible in nature as the needs of the Accessibility Plan will develop and change over time. As we move forward over the next three years, the makeup of the committee may change to reflect the changing, varied, or evolving perspectives of our clients and industry leaders.

To develop our Plan, the Technical Safety BC Accessibility Committee met over the summer for a working session that began by addressing the question; **"What does an accessible Technical Safety BC look like to you?"**

The committee was then asked to focus on current policies and business plans where accessibility is already being developed, or can be further integrated, along with the accessibility successes of the organization. Finally, in each of the focus areas, the committee was asked to review the current barriers to access, as well as develop actionable solutions to address each barrier.

In addition to the conversation with the committee, this plan is informed by our current policies, procedures, and strategic plans, ensuring that the Accessibility Plan is in alignment with and elevates Technical Safety BC's current operational goals and objectives.

Key Themes

What We Heard
The Accessibility Committee expressed concern that they are not sure who is currently being excluded due to current policies, procedures, and the collective limited understanding of disability. A clear desire to ensure that we are hearing everyone's experience was expressed, as well as a fear that many people with disabilities who are unknowingly being left out because they are not aware that we can meet their accessibility needs.

We heard the need to provide information in a variety of ways, as people have varying levels of access to technology and communications put out by the organization, as well as, being neurodiverse or having learning disability. In-person education and communications is important to Technical Safety BC, while also acknowledging the complexity of being a province-wide service provider with a number of sites that may or may not be currently open to the public.

What We Found
Technical Safety BC already has some accessibility best practices in place such as providing ergonomic assessments, selecting building site locations that have ground level access, and allowing staff to work remotely, even pre-pandemic, with remote work agreements.

A lot of adjustments to communications have been made, including an employee newsletter published in an accessible format, ongoing updates for accessibility to the website (while acknowledging that some elements are still in the process of remediation), and the implementation of a new style guide. Departments such as Marketing and Communications have excelled in adapting to the needs of the disability community. For example, using closed captioning, ALT-text, and upgrading their knowledge and capacity with accessibility awareness training.

Technical Safety BC is the process of upgrading core systems software, including customer relationship management software and other software that directly impacts the client and employee experience. In addition to increased efficiency and a human-centric design, the new software platform being implemented in a phased approach is also a universally-designed product. The upgrades in software, as part of the 2023-2025 Business Plan, also directly supports increasing accessibility for our employees and clients. This change will have a direct and positive impact on the accessibility of Technical Safety BC's processes of certification, licensing, permits, and assessments.

Focus Areas

In alignment with the focus areas put forward by the BC government, our Accessibility Plan's focus areas are crucial for ensuring that we meet the needs of our clients and employees, now, and into the future. The focus of this phase of our accessibility journey includes accessibility in the Built Environment, Employment, Information Technology, and Communications as these areas are ones where we foresee creating the greatest impact for our organization.

Built Environment
Physical access in the built environment is important for everyone to create thriving, inclusive communities as it directly impacts the places where people live, work, learn, and play. For the purposes of this Plan, the Built Environment includes our physical offices across the province.

Physical access looks at how people can walk or wheel through the space, as well as their ability to interact with staff independently. This also includes how someone can safely and effectively navigate our facilities to obtain permits, licensing, certifications, and assessments at our offices.

Employment
As a significant employer across the province, we feel that providing inclusive employment opportunities creates diverse perspectives and an opportunity to have members of the community see themselves reflected in the workforce. Accessibility in employment includes ease of access to Technical Safety BC's: hiring processes, procedures for providing accommodations, and the types of accessible accommodations that are provided throughout the hiring process and overall employment cycle. Understanding these elements is crucial in supporting the overall success of a potential candidate or employee.

Information, Technology & Communication
As technology advances, there are more opportunities for individuals with disabilities to obtain information and participate in community discussions. Ensuring accessible information formats and diverse communication methods are being used is important in improving access to information for everyone.

Closed captioning, American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters, accessible websites and PDFs should be considered when looking at access to r all printed, digital, and in-person communication.

Our 3 Year Plan

Access in the Spaces We Work

Wayfinding is an area identified as a priority by the committee. It was also highlighted in the accessibility audit completed of the Renfrew site. Wayfinding is an integral feature of an accessible built environment, as it supports people in not only identifying their route, but also ensuring they can take the most efficient and accessible route to meet their individual needs. Wayfinding includes signage and other identifying colours or design elements that can help an individual navigate the space around them and identify where they are going. Indoor signage should be consistent, comprehensive, and, where it makes sense, include tactile letters, braille, and icons.

The availability of cleaning supplies and kitchen items was an expressed concern, as well as the distance and distribution of waste receptacles. Other priorities discussed include the need for contrast on the stairs, automated access for washrooms, and increasing hearing access in the training room.

Recommended Actions

1. Utilize the accessibility audit of the Renfrew location to determine priorities for the inclusion of universally designed features, such as wayfinding, automatic access for washrooms and the training room, as well as other priority elements that can be either upgraded or integrated into the budget for future upgrades.

2. Complete an audit of wayfinding in facilities that are open to the public, particularly the Renfrew location, and determine where additional wayfinding elements could be supportive for visitors and staff. Best practices are to have comprehensive and consistent signage in facilities, including on the latch-side of room doors, at decision points, and noting the address and facility name on the exterior of the building. Interior signage should include braille, tactile letters, and icons, particularly washrooms, elevators, and other public utilities.

3. Balance the accessibility in frequency and placement of supplies, such as paper towels and disposal units with sustainability best practices, ensuring that cleaning supplies are functionally available for staff.

4. Develop a plan for increasing the physical accessibility at other locations, prioritizing sites that are either highly staffed, accessed by clients frequently, or have very limited current accessibility.

5. Draft an accommodation policy and accessibility information package for clients coming in to write exams.

6. Seek ways that Technical Safety BC can support with the safety of accessibility equipment, such as developing recommendations for the review of residential lifts and elevators.

Developing Technical Safety BC as an Inclusive Employer and Industry Leader

An inclusive workplace helps create a sense of identity for employees, and is more likely to attract and retain a diverse workforce. A priority for this Accessibility Committee is to address

the need for additional and ongoing disability awareness training for employees in order to increase their comfort and competencies with disability and accessibility. There is a shared desire to ensure that anyone who has the necessary skills can participate in employment opportunities with Technical Safety BC. To do this well, Technical Safety BC can review human resource policies and current hiring practices for opportunities to include inclusive hiring best practices.

Recommended Actions

7. Develop an Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility (IDEA) statement that is then integrated into human resource policies, procedures and forms to further Technical Safety BC's commitment to advancing inclusion, diversity, equity and accessibility.

8. Create and implement an inclusive employment strategy to foster a workplace that is reflective of the diverse community, including the evaluation of recruitment and hiring practices.

9. Seek ways to expand accessibility and disability awareness education opportunities to identify, prevent and remove accessibility barriers as well as support with providing excellent customer service.

Creating Accessible Information Technologies and Communications

The Committee's main focus was sharing information with a mobile workforce and remote communities, given our status as a provincial organization. A key challenge is making sure we all voices are heard, as some may be left out due to communication barriers and inaccessible technologies. The Committee set a goal to establish a common understanding of accessible communication while considering the fact that different departments handle their own content creation.

Recommended Actions

10. Review Communications and Marketing standards, including the Content and Brand Style Guideline using a lens of accessible communications best practices (plain language, ALT-Text, Closed Captions, enabling transcriptions, etc.) and identify opportunities to increase information access for people with disabilities.

11. Continue to remove barriers to accessing information on the Technical Safety BC website by updating webpages to meet modern accessibility standards and establish content guidelines.

12. Develop an accessibility storytelling strategy to highlight best practices, integrate information about internal resources, and normalize the experience of disability within the organization. It is advisable to integrate information both internally for employees and externally for the public, particularly leveraging AccessAbility Week.

13. Create an internal accessibility and diversity digital resource centre populated with tools and documents designed to support the advancement of accessibility across the organization. Examples may include software accessibility best practices, creating

accessible presentations, sharing how to turn on closed captioning, and writing in plain language.

Developing an Integrated, Mutual Understanding of Accessibility and Disability

Removing attitudinal barriers is crucial for the making of a friendly and accessible community. Helping employees better understand and handle accessibility and disabilities is a way for Technical Safety BC to improve its ability to meet the diverse needs of our community.

Recommended Actions

14. When reviewing policies and strategic plans annually, integrate opportunities to improve accessibility into Technical Safety BC's business practices.

15. Review the Accessibility Plans put forth by similar organizations for opportunities for partnership and collaboration.

16. Build in an inclusion, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility lens into procurement policies.

How to Give Feedback
Ways to Connect

Your feedback is important to our ongoing efforts. If you have feedback about this phase of the Plan and/or about accessibility at Technical Safety BC, you can share your thoughts by contacting **accessibility@technicalsafetybc.ca.**

Implementation and Monitoring

Accessibility Plan feedback will be evaluated and monitored on an ongoing basis. Progress on our actions will be tracked and reported annually. The Plan will be updated, at minimum every three years, to further address gaps in accessibility within our community.

Appendices
Appendix A: Glossary

accessibility: A barrier-free experience that offers the same opportunity for everyone to participate in their .

accommodations: An alteration of environment, program format, or equipment that allows an individual with a disability to gain access or participate in a space, place, event or program in a way that meets their needs.

ALT-Text: Also known as 'alternative text,' this description explains the look or purpose of an image, chart, or other visual information. Screen readers, used by individuals who are blind read the ALT-text aloud, allowing them the full experience of the information provided that is otherwise only available to those with full vision.

attitudinal barriers: "When people think and act based upon [assumptions and misconceptions that limit how a person with a disability can participate], such as making decisions about people with disabilities without including them or not believing that a person with a disability can contribute to the workforce."[18]

barrier: "Anything that hinders the full and equal participation in society of a person with [a disability]. Barriers can be caused by environments, attitudes, practices, policies, information, communications or technologies, and affected by intersecting forms of discrimination."[19]

Braille: "A form of written language for [people with sight loss], in which characters are represented by patterns of raised dots that are felt with the fingertips."[20]

built environment: The constructed aspects of physical surroundings, "including homes, communities, schools, workplaces, parks/recreation areas, business areas, roads and green spaces, [that vary] in size from large-scale urban areas to smaller rural developments."[21]

Deaf / Deaf: We use the lowercase deaf when referring to the audiological condition of not hearing, and the uppercase Deaf when referring to a particular group of deaf people who share a language – American Sign Language (ASL) and culture.[22]

disability: When the features of a person's body and mind meet a barrier created by the design of the society in which they live, preventing their full and equal participation. Individual features can be permanent, temporary or episodic; visible or invisible; range in severity; and include physical, sensory, mental health-related, developmental, cognitive and multiple features.[23]

disability supports: "A wide range of goods and services that assist a person with a disability in overcoming barriers to carrying out everyday activities. These include adaptive office equipment and work environments; information technology; assistive technologies; sign language interpretation, captioning or other assistive communication; flexible work

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[18] AccessibleBC: B.C.'s Accessibility Plan 2022/23–2024/25. Government of British Columbia, 2022.
[19] Accessible British Columbia Act. Government of British Columbia, 2021.
[20] Braille – The Reading Fingers. Translate Plus, 2015.
[21] Healthy Built Environments. Government of BC, 2017.
[22] Community and Culture, FAQs. National Institute for the Deaf. 2023
[23] Federal Disability Reference Guide. Government of Canada, 2022.

arrangements; attendant care support; and formalized assistance from a [colleague, friend and/or family member]."[24]

Hard of Hearing: "Refers to people with hearing loss ranging from mild to severe. People who are hard of hearing usually communicate through spoken language and can benefit from hearing aids, cochlear implants, and other assistive devices as well as captioning."[25]

equity: "Equity is the fair treatment and access to equal opportunity (justice) that allows the unlocking of one's potential, leading to the further advancement of all peoples. The equity pursuit is about the identification and removal of barriers to ensure the full participation of all people and groups.[26]"

IDEA: Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility

inclusive employment: Inclusive employment refers to a work environment that actively seeks to accommodate and integrate individuals with disabilities into the workforce. It involves providing equal opportunities for everyone to access and engage in meaningful employment.

information and communication barriers: When communication methods are not accessible by people with disabilities, such as information that is communicated using complex language or jargon or materials that are only available in small print without large print options.[27]

Medical Model of Disability: A historical, deficit-based approach to understanding disability that views disability as "a medical problem that needs to be cured (that) focuses on labeling and treating people's symptoms."[28]

physical barriers: "When obstacles in an environment make access difficult, such as a washroom with an accessible stall but no automatic door opener"[29] or a meeting that is hosted in a space with no wheelchair access.

plain language: "A communication is in plain language if its wording, structure, and design are so clear that the intended audience can easily find what they need, understand what they find, and use that information."[30]

Social Model of Disability: A contemporary approach to understanding disability that views disability as "a consequence of environmental, social, and attitudinal barriers that prevent people with [a disability] from a maximum participation in society. This model centers on social barriers that keep persons with a disability from participating actively in all political and social institutions. This model places the source of the problem on society. Solutions must focus on social change and not solely on the individual with the disability. This model focuses not only on physical or environmental but also other barriers of a social nature such as prejudice, stereotyping."[31]

systemic barriers: When policies or procedures are not inclusive, such as a process that only permits individuals to submit or access information through an online system without

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[24] CIHR Glossary of Terms used in Accessibility and Systemic Ableism. Government of Canada, 2023.
[25] Deafness and Hearing Loss. The World Health Organization. 2023
[26] Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility, Canadian Commission for UNESCO, 2021
[27] AccessibleBC: B.C.'s Accessibility Plan 2022/23–2024/25. Government of British Columbia, 2022.
[28] Annex: Understanding Disabilities. Government of Canada, 2022.
[29] AccessibleBC: B.C.'s Accessibility Plan 2022/23–2024/25. Government of British Columbia, 2022.
[30] What is Plain Language? Plain Language Network. 2023
[31] CIHR Glossary of Terms used in Accessibility and Systemic Ableism. Government of Canada, 2023.

alternatives being provided or a driver's licence being required for a job when another form of transportation could be used.[32]

tactile: Tactile information, signals and wayfinding provide the means for individuals to access information through touch, either by input through their hands (e.g. raised print) or information received by tapping a white cane.

technological barriers: "When technology can't be accessed by people with disabilities,"[33] such as self-service kiosks without accessibility features, touch screens without screen reader software, or tactile keyboards.

Universal Design: "The design and composition of an environment so that it can be accessed, understood and used to the greatest extent possible by all people regardless of their age, size, ability, or disability."[34]

wayfinding: "Refers to information systems that guide people through a physical environment and enhance their understanding and experience of the space." [35] This includes elements like signage, acoustics, illumination, and surface finishes.

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[32] AccessibleBC: B.C.'s Accessibility Plan 2022/23–2024/25. Government of British Columbia, 2022.
[33] AccessibleBC: B.C.'s Accessibility Plan 2022/23–2024/25. Government of British Columbia, 2022.
[34] Centre for Excellence in Universal Design. National Disability Authority, 2020.
[35] What is Wayfinding? The Society of Experiential Graphic Design, 2022.

Appendix B: Resources

Communications
- **Accessibility Features of Microsoft Teams** Making Teams meetings more accessible.
- **Inclusive Design for Social Media** offers best practices from the Hootsuite team.
- **Hemmingwapp** is a website that offers tools to helps writer be aware of the language level of their writing and provides suggestions on how to simplify the language into plain English.
- **Microsoft 365 Accessibility Features** Support for making Word, PowerPoint and Excel documents more accessible.
- **Zoom** Making Zoom more accessible.

Grants
- **Disability Alliance of BC** DABC grants These grants are for community-based projects focusing on one of the prescribed service areas to increase accessibility for people with disabilities.
- **Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification Training** Tuition grants for individuals to take the RHFAC training to be able to fully audit the built environment.

Inclusive Employment
- **Hire for Talent** provides resources to help employers tap into the talent pool of people with disabilities during their search for skilled workers. They offer a free employer toolkit with resources on the hiring process, providing accommodations, customized employment and more.
- **The Neil Squire Society** services are designed to assist individuals to stay in the workforce or re-enter the workforce with suitable workplace accommodations and technologies.
- **The Presidents Group** is a B.C. based network of 25 change-driven BC business leaders who are champions for more accessible, inclusive workplaces. They provide free inclusive hiring training courses as well as downloadable resources created by employers for employers.

Training
- **Accessible Spaces 101** On completion of the course, participants will understand how people with disabilities interact with the built environment, to communicate in a respectful and inclusive manner, and to apply universal design principles to designing, operating, and delivering services in physical spaces.

Universal Design
- **Rick Hansen Foundation Tip Sheets**