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# AODA Compliance

## Interactive readiness guide

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) was enacted in 2005, and is based on the 2001 Ontarians with Disabilities Act. It establishes standards that both public and private organizations must follow to ensure greater access for Ontarians living with a disability. The goal is to create a barrier-free Ontario by 2025.

The AODA is broad in scope, establishing accessibility standards for information and communications, employment, transportation, the design of public spaces, and customer service. Our focus in this piece is on accessible websites and web content, which are included in the information and communications standards. To comply with this section of the AODA, all internet websites and web content must be accessible for individuals with disabilities. This includes any information found on a web page or web application, including text, images, forms and sounds.

**So where do you begin when it comes to AODA compliance, and how do you know if your website and web content meet accessibility standards? Our interactive readiness guide, with an accompanying checklist, will help get you started.**

## Did you know:

The AODA also requires communications supports for people with disabilities. Communication supports include assistive technology (AT). As part of a comprehensive accessibility solution, eSSENTIAL Accessibility offers a downloadable AT that can be used on any website. Our application provides keyboard alternatives, mouse alternatives, text and image zooming, voice recognition, text-to-speech, and more, helping people with disabilities more easily interact with online content.

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## Deadlines, timelines and penalties

The AODA required that as of January 1, 2021, all internet websites and web content had to conform with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 AA standards. WCAG was developed by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C), and is a set of technical success criteria that, when followed, improve the accessibility of websites and web content. WCAG success criteria are categorized into three tiers: A, AA, and AAA, with A representing minimum standards and AAA maximum.

To demonstrate WCAG conformance, organizations must complete and submit an Accessibility Compliance Report, and the deadline to submit that report was June 30, 2021. Failure to comply with the AODA can result in significant financial penalties. In the most severe cases:

- A corporation/organization can be fined up to $100,000 per day
- Directors and officers of a corporation/organization can be fined up to $50,000 per day

## Who must comply with the AODA?

Organizations are required to make their websites and web content conform with WCAG 2.0 AA standards if they are:

- A public sector organization (government, municipalities, educational institutions)
- A private organization with 50+ employees (businesses, non-profits, private educational institutions)

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# Testing against WCAG

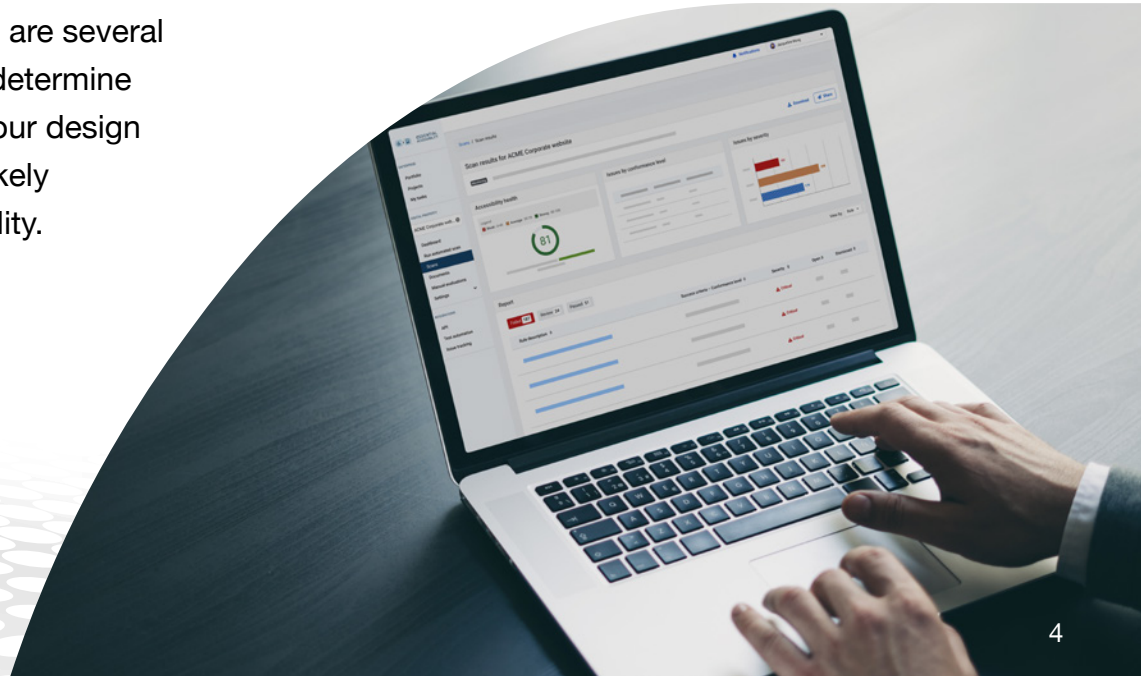
While WCAG itself is not a piece of legislation, it is widely considered the international benchmark for web accessibility and referenced in numerous regulations. When a website or web content conforms with WCAG 2.0 AA standards, it is compliant with the accessibility requirements in the AODA.

To gauge WCAG conformance, first conduct an evaluation of your website or web content. This evaluation can consist of the step-by-step process of thoroughly and diligently testing whether that experience is usable by people with disabilities.

A comprehensive accessibility evaluation typically involves a combination of automated testing as well as extensive manual evaluation.

## Automated testing:

Automated testing (or scanning) is a great first step. There are several tools to conduct automated testing. We recommend you determine which will work with your firewall settings, as well as for your design and developer teams. Quality assurance (QA) teams will likely leverage even more tools to ensure compliance and usability.



**Here is a listing of free automated testing tools for consideration as you get started:**

### Code validation

W3C CSS Validator software was created by the W3C to help web designers and web developers check Cascading Style Sheets (CSS). It can be used via the free web service, or downloaded and used either as a java program, or as a java servlet on a web server. This tool allows a comparison of style sheets to the CSS specifications, and helps find errors, typos, and incorrect uses of CSS. It will also advise when the CSS poses some usability risks.

### Document accessibility

The Document Accessibility Toolbar (DAT) is a dedicated accessibility ribbon menu for Microsoft Word that makes it quicker and easier to create accessible documents. This toolbar features a range of hand-picked and custom-built functions to optimize and validate a document for accessibility.

The PDF Accessibility Checker PAC 3 allows for the checking of PDF accessibility. It works even for those who do not have Adobe Acrobat Professional.

### Mobile accessibility

Two tools serve the mobile accessibility space. Accessibility Scanner checks the accessibility of Android apps. For iOS, Accessibility Inspector can be used. Both apps are utilized by developer and QA teams.

### Color contrast

The Color Contrast Analyzer is a downloadable tool that helps determine the legibility of text and the contrast of visual elements, such as graphical controls and visual indicators.

### Web accessibility

The WAVE tool by WebAIM scans a URL, delivering a report that uses a simple red, yellow, or green icon to show errors, warnings, and elements that pass. It also has a built-in ARIA checker and color contrast analyzer, and enables a user to turn on/off style sheets.

Regardless of the tool you choose, it is important to understand that automated testing is limited in the number of WCAG success criteria it can identify (approximately 30 percent of the total WCAG success criteria). This makes manual evaluation a critical component of any testing you do.

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## Manual and functional testing:

Manual and functional testing build upon automated testing results by evaluating the remaining 70 percent of WCAG success criteria. In this process, accessibility experts, including users with disabilities, check website features and flows using assistive technology. This evaluation will confirm or dismiss any issues reported in an automated scan, as well as identify any new issues that should be resolved.

### Getting started with manual testing:

There are several ways to ramp up manual testing capabilities:

**Option 1**

Build an in-house team of accessibility testers to perform QA on digital assets in development.

**Option 2**

Hire an outside consultant to provide a one-time report outlining issues identified and barriers encountered.

**Option 3 (recommended)**

Work with an accessibility partner on an ongoing basis. A partner should provide automated testing as well as give you access to an expert team to manually check digital assets in multiple environments, using different assistive technologies.

These partners will also work with you to develop a prioritization report outlining critical, high, medium, and low-level issues; monitor your digital properties on an ongoing basis; and integrate seamlessly into your project management sytems for better team collaboration.

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# WCAG 2.0 A and AA checklists

As you test your digital asset for its level of accessibility, or partner with a company to conduct testing, the following checklist will serve as a helpful guide for meeting the WCAG success criteria required for AODA compliance.

## WCAG 2.0 Level A checklist

| Success Criteria | Description | Pass/Fail | Complete |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1.1.1 – Non-text Content | Provide text alternatives for non-text content | ○ ○ | ☐ |
| 1.2.1 – Audio-only and Video-only (Prerecorded) | Provide an alternative to video-only and audio-only content | ○ ○ | ☐ |
| 1.2.2 – Captions (Prerecorded) | Provide captions for video with audio | ○ ○ | ☐ |
| 1.2.3 – Audio description or Media Alternative (Prerecorded) | Video with audio has a second alternative | ○ ○ | ☐ |
| 1.3.1 – Info and Relationships | Logical structures | ○ ○ | ☐ |
| 1.3.2 – Meaningful Sequence | Present content in a meaningful order | ○ ○ | ☐ |
| 1.3.3 – Sensory Characteristics | Use more than one sense for instructions | ○ ○ | ☐ |
| 1.4.1 – Use of Color | Don't use presentation that relies solely on color | ○ ○ | ☐ |
| 1.4.2 – Audio Control | Don't play audio automatically | ○ ○ | ☐ |
| 2.1.1 – Keyboard | Accessible by keyboard only | ○ ○ | ☐ |
| 2.1.2 – No Keyboard Trap | Don't trap keyboard users | ○ ○ | ☐ |

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## WCAG 2.0 Level A checklist *(continued)*

| Success Criteria | Description | Pass/Fail | Complete |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2.2.1 – Timing Adjustable | Time limits have user controls | ○ ○ | ☐ |
| 2.2.2 – Pause, Stop, Hide | Provide user control for moving content | ○ ○ | ☐ |
| 2.3.1 – Three Flashes or Below Threshold | No content flashes more than three times per second | ○ ○ | ☐ |
| 2.4.1 – Bypass Blocks | Provide a “Skip to Content” link | ○ ○ | ☐ |
| 2.4.2 – Page Titled | Helpful and clear page title | ○ ○ | ☐ |
| 2.4.3 – Focus Order | Logical order | ○ ○ | ☐ |
| 2.4.4 – Link Purpose (In Context) | Every link’s purpose is clear from its context | ○ ○ | ☐ |
| 3.1.1 – Language of Page | Page has language assigned | ○ ○ | ☐ |
| 3.2.1 – On Focus | Elements do not change when they receive focus | ○ ○ | ☐ |
| 3.2.2 – On Input | Elements do not change when they receive input | ○ ○ | ☐ |
| 3.3.1 – Error Identification | Clearly identify input errors | ○ ○ | ☐ |
| 3.3.2 – Labels or instructions | Label elements and give instructions | ○ ○ | ☐ |
| 4.1.1 – Parsing | No major code errors | ○ ○ | ☐ |
| 4.1.2 – Name, Role, Value | Build all elements for accessibility | ○ ○ | ☐ |

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## WCAG 2.0 Level AA checklist

| Success Criteria | Description | Pass/Fail | Complete |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1.4.3 – Contrast (Minimum) | Contrast ratio between text and background is at least 4.5:1 | ○ ○ | ☐ |
| 1.4.4 – Resize Text | Text can be resized to 200% without loss of content or function | ○ ○ | ☐ |
| 1.4.5 – Images of Text | Don't use images of text | ○ ○ | ☐ |
| 2.4.5 – Multiple Ways | Offer several ways to find pages | ○ ○ | ☐ |
| 2.4.6 – Headings and Labels | Use clear headings and labels | ○ ○ | ☐ |
| 2.4.7 – Focus Visibility | Keyboard focus is visible and clear | ○ ○ | ☐ |
| 3.1.2 – Language of Parts | Tell users when the language on the page changes | ○ ○ | ☐ |
| 3.2.4 – Consistent Identification | Use icons and buttons consistently | ○ ○ | ☐ |
| 3.3.3 – Error Suggestion | Suggest fixes when users make errors | ○ ○ | ☐ |
| 3.3.4 – Error Prevention (Legal, Financial, Data) | Reduce the risk of input errors for sensitive data | ○ ○ | ☐ |

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## We're here to help

Whether you want help evaluating the state of accessibility for your website or web content, or you're ready to make them accessible, we are here to help. Our team of experts will work with you on a continual basis, equipping you with the tools, technology, training, and legal support needed to make your website and web content compliant, and keep them that way. We'll also help you create and submit an Accessibility Compliance Report—satisfying the AODA requirement, publish a public-facing accessibility statement, and implement an enterprise-wide accessibility policy to maintain compliance with the AODA, ADA, Section 508 and other global requirements.

To learn more about our solution, or to request a demo, visit essentialaccessibility.com.

1-866-333-3909

info@essentialaccessibility.com