



Marine Atlantic Inc. Accessibility Plan 2023-2025

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General

Executive Summary

Marine Atlantic is a federal Crown Corporation tasked with fulfilling the constitutional mandate of offering freight and passenger ferry service between Port aux Basques, Newfoundland and Labrador (NL), and North Sydney, Nova Scotia (NS). The Corporation also offers a non-constitutional seasonal service to Argentia, Newfoundland and Labrador. Marine Atlantic's service is vital to connecting the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador with the rest of Canada. The organization is guided by the corporate vision of being an essential, progressive transportation system that people trust to deliver, as well as the corporation's values of safety, teamwork, diversity, integrity, excellence, and commitment.

Preventing and removing barriers for both its customers and employees is important to Marine Atlantic, with the Corporation striving to create an environment in which everyone is treated with dignity and can fully participate. As a transportation service provider, the Corporation's goal is to provide a positive, accessible transportation experience for persons with a disability regardless of physical or sensory impairments. Marine Atlantic's leadership continues to include objectives to support accessibility, diversity, and inclusion in the annual strategic plans for the organization, highlighting their ongoing value to the organization.

Marine Atlantic takes seriously the responsibility to remove barriers to travel for persons with disabilities and is proud of the achievements to date. The Corporation will continue working to remove additional barriers and make the organization and its services even more accessible into the future.

Feedback and Alternative Formats

Marine Atlantic welcomes feedback on any accessibility-related items. The Manager of Customer Relationships is the designated contact to receive accessibility feedback on behalf of the Corporation and informs and involves other departments as required by the content of the feedback.

Contact:

Phone	1-800-341-7981
Relay services	SRVS Canada VRS Dial 9050 within the app support@SRVSCanadaVRS.ca
TTY	1-877-820-9252
Email	customerrelations@marineatlantic.ca

Address	Marine Atlantic Inc. 10 Fort William Place, Suite 302 Baine Johnston Centre St. John's, NL A1C 1K4
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This plan is also available in alternative formats: print, large print, braille, audio format, and an electronic format. Requests for one of these alternative formats, or the submission of feedback, may be made through the contact information above or through any of the Corporation's social media channels which include Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, and YouTube.

Key Areas

The Built Environment

Accessible facilities are a key component of Marine Atlantic's operational infrastructure and vital to supporting the achievement of its mandate. The Corporation operates four vessels and three terminals, as well as various administration office spaces.

Terminals are maintained in Port aux Basques, NL, and North Sydney, NS, with a seasonal terminal operated in Argentia, NL. Each terminal has accessible parking, entrances and washrooms, signage that includes tactile and/or braille where applicable, as well as elevators where occupied spaces are on more than one level. At terminals where the curbside area cannot be seen by staff, a video intercom system is available to allow persons who require assistance to contact staff inside the buildings. Service dog relief areas are established in both the secure and non-secure areas at each terminal along with associated directional signage. There is accessible parking at terminals for visitors, employees and travelling passengers that links to accessible paths to terminal buildings.

In addition to its terminal facilities, Marine Atlantic leases corporate office space in St. John's, NL, that includes elevators, as well as accessible parking, entrances, and washrooms. In North Sydney, NS, the corporation has an administration building as well as two operations buildings, all of which are owned by Marine Atlantic. Accessible parking is available at all locations. One of the operational buildings, an older structure, is not accessible, while the other two facilities have accessible entrances and washrooms, and elevators where multiple levels exist.

Currently, the Corporation rents or owns a variety of administrative and operational facilities in Port aux Basques, NL. The accessibility features of these locations vary, with some barriers existing at older buildings. A multi-year project began in 2021 to construct a new administration building to address

current space and infrastructure challenges and consolidate administrative functions currently located at several of these locations. Working with design professionals, Marine Atlantic ensures that applicable accessibility code requirements are implemented in a manner that supports and enhances physical, social, and psychological barrier-free design to improve accessibility, inclusion, and equity for all.

Marine Atlantic's current vessels include the MV *Highlanders*, the MV *Blue Puttees*, and the MV *Leif Ericson*, which are owned and operated by the Corporation, as well as the MV *Atlantic Vision*, which is leased. All vessels are maintained to strict regulatory and safety standards and must comply with Transport Canada Marine Safety Statutes and Regulations. They are inspected by Transport Canada Marine Safety and DNV, a world-leading classification society, to ensure compliance with these regulations and codes. The Safety Management System of the vessels is audited independently by Class Society, Lloyd's Register, to verify compliance with the requirements of the International Safety Management Code for the Safe Operations of Ships and Pollution Prevention.

Each vessel has various accessibility features including elevators, signage that includes tactile and/or braille where applicable, service dog relief areas, accessible public washrooms, and adapted cabins and seating. Both mobility and hearing adapted cabins are available and each type has specific features, such as a washroom and shower that can accommodate mobility aids and visual doorbells respectively.

Marine Atlantic has entered into a 5-year charter agreement with Stena North Sea Ltd. to supply a new Ro-Pax vessel for the fleet. Following the charter agreement, Marine Atlantic will have an option to purchase the vessel. The ice-classed vessel will be approximately 200 metres in length and carry up to 1,000 passengers, along with commercial and passenger vehicles. It will incorporate the latest accessibility standards, energy efficient green ship technology, and enhanced maneuvering ability. The ship will be compatible for use on both the Port aux Basques and Argentia services and is expected to enter service in the 2024-25 fiscal year.

Barriers in Marine Atlantic's built environment are largely related to older infrastructure that was constructed or procured prior to the existence of current accessibility standards. As facilities are upgraded or replaced, accessibility requirements receive significant attention. There are also some potential barriers related to vessel safety or class requirements that cannot be changed. Efforts are made to mitigate the impact of these requirements, often by providing assistive devices or individual assistance

Actions, Timelines, and Responsibilities

Some accessible features in public buildings, such as automatic door openers and call buttons, are not used on a regular basis. It is possible that potential issues with these devices may go undetected until they are required for use. To better ensure these features are maintained in proper working order and any issues are identified promptly so they may be rectified, a checklist of accessibility features will be developed for each site. The Manager of Customer Relationships will oversee the development of these

checklists by end of Fiscal Year 2022-23 and work with appropriate managers as required to have them completed monthly.

By the end of 2024, the Manager of Maintenance will undertake a review of existing owned administration and operations buildings to inventory existing physical barriers and begin exploring options to improve accessibility to and within at least two of the structures. This review will provide Marine Atlantic a clear understanding of the current state of its owned infrastructure in terms of accessibility and allow additional planning for future improvements.

Design and Delivery of Programs and Services

Marine Atlantic operates ferry services on two routes, a year-round 96 nautical mile daily ferry service between Port aux Basques and North Sydney and a seasonal 280 nautical mile ferry service between Argentia and North Sydney. Marine Atlantic transports a diverse assortment of traffic daily, including passengers, passenger vehicles, tractor trailers and their drivers, drop trailers, and many others. From shipping large volumes of freight to offering modern passenger amenities, Marine Atlantic strives to provide a safe, reliable, and quality travel experience that is accessible for all.

Marine Atlantic is governed by various acts and regulations including the Canada Labour Code, *Transportation of Dangerous Goods Act* and Regulations, International Maritime Dangerous Goods Code, *Marine Liability Act* and Regulations, *Canada Shipping Act* and Regulations, *Financial Administration Act*, Domestic Ferries Security Regulations, and Sulphur Emission Control Areas Regulations.

The Corporation has two committees, the passenger focused Accessibility and Inclusion Advisory Committee and the internally focused Equity, Diversity, Accessibility, and Inclusion Advisory Committee. The mandate of both groups is to grow relationships with internal and external stakeholders, including members of the disability community. The committees provide insight and feedback on Marine Atlantic's current programs, services, and accessibility approaches, helping to identify potential areas for improvement to the benefit of employees and customers. Cross-committee participation and multi-functional representation in these groups provides for communication flow, consistency of training and activities, and better outcomes overall.

The Marine Atlantic Accessibility and Inclusion Advisory Committee will participate in consultative processes in relation to various regulations and requirements, especially those relating to the Corporation as a transportation service provider, including this Accessibility Plan.

Transportation Services

Marine Atlantic has long been committed to providing all customers with a comfortable and enjoyable journey regardless of any physical or sensory impairment. Over the years, the corporation has incorporated accessibility into its services so that all customers are treated equitably, and it continues to look for new and innovative ways to provide a barrier-free service as much as possible. Post-travel

customer satisfaction surveys are conducted regularly, and passenger feedback is reviewed for potential improvement ideas, including accessibility services.

At all points during the journey, staff members are available to provide assistance. Passengers are asked to advise Marine Atlantic of any assistance or accessible services they may need when making their booking. They are asked to provide a minimum of 48 hours notice; however, efforts are made to provide services even when advance notice is not supplied.

Once accessibility-related services or assistance is requested and confirmed for a passenger, details are added as additional resources on their booking and show on their travel itinerary. Employees at terminals will also add these resources if requests are made at check-in. Available resources include:

- Requires accessible parking
- Travelling with support person
- Travelling with service dog
- Travelling with emotional support animal
- Assistance with boarding/disembarkation
- Reserved accessible accommodations
- Requires individual safety briefing
- Requires assistance during travel
- Requires assistance with baggage
- Requires extra space
- Requires terminal wheelchair
- Requires vessel wheelchair
- Notification of severe allergy

Both service dogs and emotional support animals are accepted for travel and documentation is requested for both types of animals. Approved service dogs that are leashed or harnessed may accompany passengers to all public places on shore and on board. Passengers are asked to submit documentation in advance of travel that is issued by an organization or person specializing in service dog training. Documentation must identify the person with a disability and show that the service dog has been individually trained to perform a task to assist them with a need related to their disability. Documentation from online, paid certification sites that do not include animal training is not accepted. If a dog's certification cannot be verified, the areas it can visit may be restricted.

Marine Atlantic recognizes emotional support animals (ESAs) are different than certified service dogs; they provide support through their presence and may be trained or untrained. To travel with a support animal, passengers must submit documentation from a medical doctor or licensed mental health professional that includes the passenger's name; verifies their requirement to have the animal with them during travel; is dated within 36 months from the intended travel date; includes the professional's type of license and their full contact information; and is signed by the medical professional. Passengers

travelling with a support animal must book cabin accommodations, where the animal must remain for the duration of travel. Support animals are not permitted in public areas that are not pet friendly.

Marine Atlantic requests documentation for some accessibility-related requests including travelling with support persons or service and support animals to verify and facilitate the service. Documentation can be provided and approved in advance via physical or electronic means to provide certainty during travel. Upon the request of a customer, documentation can be kept on file for up to three years for use during subsequent travel. Exceptions are considered on a case-by-case basis.

Preboarding for reserved passengers with disabilities is available upon request as is assistance through all parts of the check-in and security screening process. Passengers can maintain the possession and use of their mobility aids at all points during their journey, meaning there is no time that a mobility aid must be disassembled or packaged. Wheelchairs are available for customer use onboard all vessels and in terminals. Extra space is available for service dogs or mobility aids in general lounge areas at terminals and onboard vessels. On occasion, employees also make use of the transportation service for work and personal reasons and may avail of the same accessibility features and services available to all customers.

Employee Services

Employees are widely dispersed both geographically and chronologically given the nature of a 24-hours-a-day, 365-days-a-year service operating in multiple locations, including on board working vessels. The Corporation's Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan includes the objectives of creating a workplace which is fair, safe, and inclusive of persons with disabilities. The plan also includes strategies to foster diversity and inclusion in our workforce, helping us make positive contributions to social inclusion and workforce participation.

Delivery of programs to employees, including employment information, training, employee support programs, job information, etc., takes many forms including in-person, virtual connections, print items, and various electronic means. Support and alternatives are provided on an as-needed basis to employees accessing any program or service. Marine Atlantic provides all employees with an Employee Family Assistance Program, a confidential support service that can help employees and their family with a wide range of challenges relating to physical/mental health, wellness, diversity and much more, at no cost to employees.

Marine Atlantic regularly highlights and celebrates accessibility-related events in its employee newsletter and through organized events to help educate employees on the subject and show the commitment of the organization toward accessibility.

Work is also ongoing to further develop and implement Marine Atlantic's Equity, Diversity, Accessibility, and Inclusion strategy. A vision, mission and objectives were developed from an engagement process that included employees and external organizations, and following this, division specific action plans and evaluation processes are being developed. These initiatives are regularly monitored and reported to the Executive and the Board of Directors.

Actions, Timelines, and Responsibilities

The Manager of Customer Relationships and the Organizational Effectiveness Specialist will coordinate on a plan to survey employee engagement with accessibility topics, both as it relates to their job duties and their own employment. Consideration will also be given to the possible inclusion of select external resources such as vendors and consultants who also perform work for Marine Atlantic. A draft proposal for a survey will be developed by the end of 2023 and submitted for budgetary consideration for the following fiscal year. A formal survey will provide first-hand information about real or perceived barriers faced by employees, and those they see as the front-line providers of service to customers, allowing action to be taken to remove or lessen those barriers. It will also provide key metrics to allow ongoing measurement of progress on accessibility issues from an employee perspective.

Communication, Other Than ICT

Communication to internal and external audiences is carried out in many ways depending on the purpose and circumstances with the overall goal of providing the information in a manner that is most useful to the intended recipients.

Marine Atlantic's accessibility awareness training helps educate employees about ways to communicate that considers the needs of the person they are communicating with, such as clear, concise, and plain language, gestures, large print, writing, or various other means including electronic options. Employees are educated on the importance of seeking information from the person about their preferred method of assistance, whether that is alternative forms of communication or any other type of assistance that may be required.

When offering various services to passengers, staff are prepared with alternatives that provide accessible options. For example, the safety video that is shown at the start of each crossing is closed captioned. Each vessel also has an iPad which allows the passenger to watch, pause and play the video and adjust the volume. A large text print version of the dialogue is also available upon request in either print or electronic format. Crew members can also provide an in-person, individual safety briefing upon request to ensure all important safety information is communicated and questions addressed.

Customers making reservations for travel are engaged about their needs in relation to their disability once they self-identify to a reservations agent. Currently, customers utilizing the online booking engine are asked to contact a reservations agent to discuss or confirm requests for accessibility services. Improvements are under development to our online booking engine that would allow customers to include most accessibility-related requests they may have as part of the online booking process.

Actions, Timelines, and Responsibilities

Marine Atlantic's policy on Travel-Related Information in Multiple Formats was last updated in 2007 and is outdated on current requirements, processes, and technologies. The Manager of Customer

Relationships will review the policy and present the Executive with a recommendation by end of Fiscal Year 2022-23.

Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)

Marine Atlantic utilizes numerous information and communication technologies both internally and externally. In general, the Corporation's telecommunication, computer and network systems use industry standard equipment and software.

Digital signage is used for communication to employees, as well as directly to customers. Screens are available in public and employee areas and display various messages. Currently, these screens display visual content only and there is no alternative format available.

Onboard vessels, a television-based entertainment system is provided in public and employee areas, including most cabin accommodations. A large capital project was completed in 2022 to upgrade the systems on the MV *Highlanders* and the MV *Blue Puttees*. The new system provides a mix of live television and on-demand entertainment content. In crew and passenger cabin accommodations, users can control the choice of channel, audio options, as well as start, stop and pause playback. In main passenger lounges, several large screens display different entertainment content. No sound is broadcast, and passengers use earphones connected to jacks in the seats to access the sound and closed captioning is always broadcast as a standard feature. Passengers wishing to avail of described video options, or who wish to control the playback in other ways, can opt to view content via their own or a loaned personal electronic device.

The current entertainment systems on the MV *Atlantic Vision* and MV *Leif Ericson* are pre-existing and do not offer all the accessible features, such as playback controls or described video in either crew or passenger areas. There is limited internet connectivity on board our vessels while at sea, which eliminates streaming content to individual devices as a viable option. Marine Atlantic continues its search for available options to provide comparable entertainment content via personal electronic devices.

Externally focused

The Marine Atlantic websites (MarineAtlantic.ca and MarineAtlantique.ca) are routinely evaluated in accordance with AA guidelines. New functionality is vetted against accessibility guidelines during the requirements gathering phase of development. Additionally, the identification and resolution of guideline issues is set forth in the Service Level Agreement with the contractor. A number of manual and automated screenings are completed using software to establish compliance with the guidelines. Specifically, an AA audit is completed, along with a Lighthouse Scan of the Drupal Operating System.

Social media provides an opportunity to share information and interact with customers in a manner that best meets their needs. The Corporation's social media presence continues to grow each year through its Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and LinkedIn accounts as well as the Marine Atlantic blog.

Whether there is a schedule advisory or other important information regarding upcoming travel, customers with impacted reservations receive direct communications via e-mail and SMS advisories that can be read on the users' device of choice.

Where supplementary, or publicly available information about transportation-related services, safety or facility is available in an electronic format, the organization has ensured that the format is compatible with adaptive technologies. Materials are available for viewing on personal devices using the customers' adaptive technology or available using a company loaned device for the purposes of reviewing transportation-related information. Information provided on the company loaned device is compatible with the Apple suite of adaptive services and Adobe text-to-speech to ensure multi-level access. The electronic devices are configured and tested prior to being placed in service to ensure that adaptive functionality is enabled and in working order.

Marine Atlantic provides telephone access to customers via a toll-free line, which is able to accept all types of relay services. A TTY phone number and various email addresses are also made available for public use.

Public announcements in terminals and onboard vessels are made using a mixture of pre-recorded and live voice. In both cases, when making announcements employees activate flashing amber lights to indicate to passengers that a verbal announcement is being made. Passengers can receive information about the announcement from a staff member at the ticket counter or reception desk including in large print. This procedure is described for passengers on the Marine Atlantic website. The text of all announcements is made available in accessible formats such as large print or electronic format. A project is ongoing that will see the text of announcements also be displayed on digital screens in public terminal areas which is anticipated to be complete by October 31, 2022.

Internally focused

Marine Atlantic is committed to sharing information and educating its employees through various channels. In addition to internal e-mail and print notices, the Corporation uses its branded mediums such as MyPort Intranet, MyPort TV (digital signage) and MyPort Magazine, in addition to in-person communication methods such as team meetings or one-on-one conversations. Important messages are rarely communicated via a single medium.

Content for the MyPort Intranet site is developed with consideration of accessibility principles such as contrast and font size. It is hosted on the SAP Jam platform and has built-in accessibility features; however, a full review of the site has not been undertaken to date. The internal magazine is available in print, as well as in an electronic version that supports screen reader and other adaptive technologies.

Generally, when an employee accessibility need is identified, a positional-based review of the technologies that they may use would be completed and any gaps or accommodations addressed up to the point of undue hardship.

Actions, Timelines, and Responsibilities

Under the guidance of the Director of Communications, an internal review of employee facing intranet resources will be undertaken. This work, anticipated to be completed by the end of Fiscal Year 2023-24, will identify ways to improve the current offering of information and lead to the drafting of accessibility guidelines for internal information distribution in future periods.

Marine Atlantic is aware of several adaptive technologies that are available to assist persons with disabilities navigate public spaces. In 2023, the Manager of Customer Relationships will research the options available to determine potential benefits that may be provided by the use of such technologies in shore-based locations. A recommendation will be put forward by the end of the year to Marine Atlantic's executive team.

Transportation

Most Marine Atlantic passengers access the service using their own vehicles, which they drive onboard themselves. The Corporation also provides a shuttle bus service to take foot passengers between terminal buildings and vessels. All Marine Atlantic owned shuttle buses are accessible, featuring a wheelchair lift in the rear of the vehicle.

Employees are generally responsible to arrange their own transportation to and from the workplace and when travelling for business purposes. In less common instances when other types of transportation are contracted, such as external taxi or bus services, the accessibility needs of the user group are considered.

*See also **Design and delivery of programs and services** for information about transportation services provided by Marine Atlantic.*

Actions, Timelines, and Responsibilities

As the Corporation renews its fleet of shuttle buses, accessibility is a key consideration. New all electric shuttle buses are being purchased that will have improved accessibility features compared to current models in use. These vehicles are expected to arrive by end of Fiscal Year 2022-23 and should be in service later in 2023.

Employment

Marine Atlantic employs approximately 1,300 individuals, approximately 1,100 full-time equivalent employees, over 90% of whom are unionized across six separate bargaining units. Marine Atlantic aims to have a workforce reflective of the diverse communities it serves. To that end, the Corporation has identified persons with disabilities as one of five under-represented groups as a focus for our diversity and inclusion initiatives.

The Corporation has several ongoing diversity and inclusion initiatives with objectives of creating a workplace which is fair, safe, and inclusive of persons with disabilities. Strategies are being developed to foster diversity and inclusion in our workforce, helping us make positive contributions to social inclusion and workforce participation. Marine Atlantic also has an Employment Equity Policy, which strives to reach equality in the workplace through a program to correct the conditions of disadvantage in employment experienced by persons with disabilities and other underrepresented groups.

All job postings include a statement affirming our commitment to the principles of equitable employment for all and strongly encourage applications from persons with disabilities, and other identified groups. Applicants that identify as a member of one or more of these groups, are encouraged to voluntarily state to which group(s) they identify in their cover letter, resume or application. As part of its recruiting process, the Corporation continues to reach out to 46 organizations to post jobs and advertise Career Fairs. These organizations offer employment services to clients from employment equity designated groups to encourage submission of application for employment from their clients. The strategic targeting of these organizations has raised the profile of Marine Atlantic as an equity employer and helps maintain positive relationships.

Through our Employment Equity Surveys, we receive information from our employees to determine plans and strategies to address potential barriers. This information helps us review our processes to ensure they are fair and transparent and do not have an adverse impact on any particular group and helps measure our progress. In 2021, Equity, Diversity, Accessibility, and Inclusion was added to the Human Resources divisional section of the Corporation's risk profile. This will integrate this lens in our Corporate Risk Strategy review process.

Marine Atlantic has a dedicated Occupational Health and Wellness team within the Human Resources Department. In addition to core responsibilities for the Disability Management Program, Early and Safe Return to Work planning, and promoting health and wellness resources to employees, team members are key in workplace accommodation processes. The goal of these accommodation processes is to create and maintain a barrier-free environment and to ensure full participation for employees and external candidates for employment by:

- identifying and removing barriers to employment, career development and promotion of persons with disabilities unless doing so would result in undue hardship;
- designing all employment systems, processes and facilities to be accessible by building accommodation into workplace standards, systems, processes and facilities;
- providing individual adjustments in the workplace that respond to the needs of a specific employee or candidates who may need to be accommodated under the prohibited grounds of discrimination of the Human Rights Act; and
- accommodating individuals when such barriers cannot be removed to the point of undue hardship taking into consideration issues of health, safety, and cost, and respecting an individual's right to privacy and confidentiality.

Marine Atlantic strives to make its workplace environments diverse and inclusive where all employees are valued, engaged, and can thrive. This goal is supported by various policies, procedures, and initiatives, including those specifically relating to Workplace Harassment and Violence and Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace.

Transport Canada requires that all our vessel employees, which number over 700, have a valid Marine Medical Examination. This medical requires that vessel employees be able bodied in order to respond to potential emergencies. This limits the ability of the company to hire persons with disabilities for onboard positions, but there are less restrictive regulations for shore-based positions.

The Corporation continues to implement key accessibility objectives. These include education opportunities, employee awareness, customer awareness, policy reviews and involvement of stakeholders from target groups in the program. As our Diversity, Inclusion, Accessibility and Equity Strategy is developed and matures, annual action plans for key initiatives will be developed. The strategy is part of our goal to build a comprehensive Psychological Health and Safety Workplace Program at Marine Atlantic.

Actions, Timelines, and Responsibilities

Marine Atlantic uses national AccessAbility Week as an opportunity for activities to build awareness within our employee groups around accessibility topics. Led by the Manager of Customer Relationships and the Organizational Effectiveness Specialist, Marine Atlantic will increase these activities over the coming years for both ship and shore-based employee groups. Aligning with the 2023 event, at least two new employee-focused activities will be planned for the week.

Procurement of Goods, Services, and Facilities

Accessibility requirements for various purchases are included in the stated requirements of the good or service provided by the departmental representative initiating the purchase.

Marine Atlantic most often uses two methods to post contracts with committed values over \$50,000; one is the federal government procurement online platform, and the other is an internal legal review and contract process. For contracts at this level, there is a form that the initiator must sign indicating they have considered accessibility requirements. This is a reminder to purchasers within the organization of the need to account for accessibility considerations as part of the initial requirements for any large purchases.

Smaller purchases are completed through a purchase order process and some employees also have procurement credit cards, both with several levels of oversight. Accessibility considerations may be included by the purchase initiator as part of the stated requirements for the good or service. The current procurement process, for all but large purchases, currently depends on the initiator to remember accessibility considerations when submitting requirements for goods and services.

Actions, Timelines, and Responsibilities

Led by the Procurement and Strategic Sourcing Manager, Marine Atlantic will investigate the potential to implement a form or checklist, similar to the one used for significant purchases, at other purchasing levels to indicate that accessibility requirements are considered and addressed. This will enhance current practices to help ensure accessibility considerations are reviewed and addressed in initial purchase requirements for goods and services. A recommendation will be provided to purchasing management by the end of 2023.

Training

Marine Atlantic has provided a full day of accessibility training as part of its new employee orientation for more than a decade. Nearly 90% of our approximately 1,300 employees have completed this course, which gives an overview of accessibility and its importance, the prevention and removal of barriers, and provides employees with the language and the tools needed to assist customers who require assistance while using our service. Refresher sessions are also provided to employees in customer-facing roles every three years. The content and delivery of this training was reviewed in 2020 by the Accessibility and Inclusion Advisory Committee whose members provide subject matter expert level feedback.

Employees at all levels in the organization are also provided with new or revised information about accessibility requirements, services, programs, or best practices any time it becomes available. Various means are used to communicate depending on the circumstances, including virtual training, newsletters, email, in-person discussions with supervisors, and more. Managers and supervisors also have access to high-level accessibility guidelines compiled to support best practices within the organization to create working environments that respect diversity and promote accessibility, equity, and inclusion. The information is also intended to provide guidance to managers to integrate and adapt accessibility, diversity, equity, and inclusion principles into their specific work environments, culture, procedures, and policies. Supporting reference material and documentation is provided to employees through the company intranet, via the Manager of Customer Relationships or from the Organizational Effectiveness Specialist.

Actions, Timelines, and Responsibilities

The Manager of Customer Relationships will lead a re-organization of Marine Atlantic's accessibility training program into a content-based modular system, with support from the organization's training department. A project plan, including budgets and timelines, will be created by the end of Fiscal Year 2023-24. These changes to Marine Atlantic's internal training will allow content to be better tailored to specific employee groups and also provide opportunity for more frequent and meaningful refresher training using various combinations of modules as applicable.

Provision of CTA Accessibility-Related Regulations

As a federally regulated marine transportation service provider, Marine Atlantic is subject to the Accessible Transportation for Persons with Disabilities Regulations from the Government of Canada, which has the goal of removing barriers to transportation for persons with disabilities.

As the Corporation is both a carrier and a terminal operator, sections of the regulations applicable to Marine Atlantic include: 1–25, 28, 31–35, 37–39, 42, 46, 48–61, 134–138, 140, 142–144, 153, 163/164, 178, 212–223, 225–231, 236–238, and 243. Information on the activities and services covered by these sections has been presented in the preceding sections.

Marine Atlantic maintains an open dialogue with representatives of the CTA and participates in its ongoing consultative processes.

Consultations

Current external members of the advisory committee include representatives from CNIB, Guide Dogs of Canada, Canadian Council of the Blind, NL Association of the Deaf, People First NS, Coalition of Persons with Disabilities NL, Canadian Hard of Hearing Association, and Spinal Cord Injury NL.

In March 2022, the advisory committee was asked for initial feedback on the Corporation's upcoming accessibility plan during a regularly scheduled committee meeting. Early feedback included the suggestion to focus on practices and processes already in place at Marine Atlantic, as well as continuing to include input from persons with disabilities at early stages of new initiatives. Committee members were advised additional feedback would be requested from them once a draft plan was available for review and welcomed to contact the Manager of Customer Relationships with any additional thoughts or suggestions.

The advisory committee was again engaged to review the draft of this plan on June 22, 2022. Copies of the draft documents were circulated in advance of a virtual meeting where discussion took place. Several follow-up contacts were made with all committee members, including those who were unable to attend the meeting. Recommendations from committee members included providing additional detail about travelling with service dogs and emotional support animals, referencing CSA standards for the built environment as a way to go beyond meeting current building codes, considering uses for new adaptive technologies, and ensuring that lived experience is represented in training. These suggestions were incorporated into this document, as well as used to help inform the applicable initiatives.

Summary of Action Items

	Action item	Responsible	Timeline	Estimated Budget Commitment ¹
The built environment	A monthly checklist of accessibility features will be developed and implemented for each site to assist in the identification and prompt repair of any issues.	Manager of Customer Relationships	End of Fiscal Year 2022-23	\$325
	Review existing MAI-owned administration and operations buildings to inventory existing physical barriers and begin exploring options to improve accessibility to and within at least two of the structures.	Manager of Maintenance	End of 2024	\$1250
Programs and services	Develop a proposal for an employee engagement survey on accessibility topics, both as it relates to their job duties and their own employment.	Manager of Customer Relationships and the Organizational Effectiveness Specialist	End of 2023 for budgetary submission the following year	\$1,400
Communication	Review and present a recommendation on Marine Atlantic's 2007 policy on Travel-Related Information in Multiple Formats.	Manager of Customer Relationships	End of Fiscal Year 2022-23	\$225
Information and communication technologies	Undertake an internal review of employee facing intranet resources to identify improvements to the current offering of information.	Director of Communications	End of Fiscal Year 2023-24	\$2,300

¹ Figure is based on the estimated required internal effort in addition to the procurement of related goods and services.

	Investigate existing adaptive technologies available for potential use in terminals and other locations and create recommendation for review.	Manager of Customer Relationships	End of 2023	\$325
Transportation	Introduce new all electric shuttle buses with improved accessibility features.		Coming into service in 2023	-
Employment	Plan at least two new employee-focused activities around national AccessAbility Week for both ship and shore-based employee groups.	Manager of Customer Relationships and the Organizational Effectiveness Specialist	Aligning with the 2023 event	\$1,400
Procurement of goods, services and facilities	Investigate the potential to implement a form or checklist, similar to the one used for significant purchases, at other purchasing levels to indicate that accessibility requirements are considered and addressed.	Procurement and Strategic Sourcing Manager	End of 2023	\$425
Training	Develop a project plan for the re-organization of Marine Atlantic's accessibility training program into a content-based modular system.	Manager of Customer Relationships, with support from the organization's training department	End of Fiscal Year 2023-24	\$2,500
TOTAL				\$10,150

Glossary

Class Society - A ship classification society is a non-governmental organization that establishes and maintains technical standards for the construction and operation of ships and certify a vessel complies with relevant standards.

Drop trailer – the trailer portion of a commercial tractor trailer, with no attached truck.

Drupal Operating System – a content management system that provides developers and content creators with a base system to build flexible websites. At Marine Atlantic, Drupal acts as the underlying system that our digital experience platforms are built or integrated including the website, online booking engine, and commercial customer portal.

Estimated Budget Commitment – anticipated costs including purchases of goods and services, as well as estimated internal labour costs based on the anticipated time and resources required for the task.

Fiscal Year – Marine Atlantic operates under 12-month periods beginning April 1 of one year and ending March 31 of the next.

Foot passengers – passengers travelling without vehicles.

Lighthouse Scan – an open-source, automated tool for improving the quality of web pages. It can be run by developers and website administrators against websites to audit performance, accessibility, progressive web apps, and search engine optimization.

Marine Atlantic Accessibility and Inclusion Advisory Committee – a committee including both internal representatives from multiple departments and various external members representing disability and advocacy organizations from target groups.

Nautical Mile - Nautical miles are used to measure the distance traveled through the water. A nautical mile is slightly longer than a mile on land, equaling 1.1508 land-measured (or statute) miles.

Ro-Pax vessel – an abbreviation for roll-on/roll-off passenger vessel, which means a vessel that accommodates vehicles, which are driven on and off, as well as passengers.