



SaskTel's Accessibility Plan

2023 – 2026

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General

SaskTel is the leading provider of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) products, services, and solutions in Saskatchewan. We are building the most extensive and advanced broadband networks throughout the province for the benefit of our customers, the people and businesses of Saskatchewan. With approximately \$1.3 billion in annual revenue and over 1.4 million customer connections, SaskTel is a major contributor to Saskatchewan's economy.

As a Saskatchewan Crown Corporation, SaskTel has approximately 3,300 employees, making it one of Saskatchewan's largest employers. SaskTel delivers a wide range of ICT products and services designed for consumers and businesses throughout Saskatchewan. These include wireless services, television services, local access, internet and data services and security monitoring.

SaskTel's Commitment to Accessibility

SaskTel is committed to customer service excellence and supporting the Government of Canada's Accessible Canada Act, which strives to make Canada barrier-free by 2040. We continuously strive to have a product mix that meets the needs of the people of Saskatchewan. We offer a variety of accessible products and services that enable people who experience disability to get the most out of their SaskTel products and services.

SaskTel values a diverse workforce that is reflective of the people of Saskatchewan. Our employees can be found throughout the province, working, raising families, and volunteering in their communities. SaskTel's Representative Workforce Strategy has been instrumental in guiding our employment practices, by insuring a fair and equitable hiring experience for all prospective employees. Through this initiative,

SaskTel has hired employees who experience disability in a variety of professional roles including Engineers, Marketers, Information Systems Specialists etc. Understanding the diversity of people who experience disability, SaskTel has also seen success working with partners in the disability community to launch a Supported Employment Program, which enables people who experience more complex disabilities to experience the independence and empowerment that employment provides. Promoting SaskTel as an employer of choice for people who experience disability remains a priority for SaskTel. We acknowledge that our practices must continue to evolve to meet the needs of all people who seek employment at SaskTel.

Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility (IDEA) continue to be important goals at SaskTel. We believe having a diverse and inclusive organization is the responsibility of all employees. It's about building an environment that is inclusive and not only accepting of people's differences but valuing them and leveraging that uniqueness.

SaskTel's Accessibility Feedback Process

We are always open to receiving feedback from our customers who experience disability. If you'd like to provide feedback regarding our products and services or on, the implementation of our ACA accessibility plan, please contact us in one of the following ways:

- In Person: Visit a SaskTel Store
- By Phone:
 - 1.800.SASKTEL (1.800.727.5835)
 - Deaf access line: 1.800.552.3595 (TTY users only)
- By Email: accessibility@sasktel.com

- By Mail:
 - SaskTel Accessibility Feedback
 - 12th Floor, 2121 Saskatchewan Drive
 - Regina, SK S4P 3Y2

Our designated person to receive feedback regarding Accessibility is Shara McCormick, Vice President of Human Resources and Corporate Services.

Anonymous feedback is accepted; however, we'll be unable to provide a receipt of acknowledgement or further follow-up.

For a description of our feedback process in an alternative format, please contact us at one of the methods provided above.

By contacting us, you agree to the collection, use, and storage of your personal information for the purposes of responding to you and improving accessibility of our products, services, and processes.

Information collected for this purpose is done so in accordance with our [Privacy Policy](#).

Introduction

The Accessible Canada Act (the ACA) came into effect in July 2019, and SaskTel as the Incumbent Local Exchange Carrier (ILEC) serving the Province of Saskatchewan is covered by the requirements of the ACA. It must be noted that SaskTel has in the past and in the future continually works on identifying, removing, and preventing accessibility barriers as they are identified.

In response to the requirements of the ACA, SaskTel appointed, an internal Accessibility Advisory Committee that is representative of SaskTel's workforce including business planners from across the

organization reporting to a senior leadership Director Advisory Committee. These committees are responsible to identify barriers, assist with decision making and oversee the development and successful implementation of SaskTel's Accessibility Plan.

As part of the ACA, SaskTel is required to file its initial Accessibility Plan that presents the barriers that SaskTel has identified through consultation with external and internal groups and individuals with disabilities, and its plans to address these barriers in over the course of the next three years where possible.

As per the ACA, SaskTel has categorized the barriers it has identified into the 7 key areas of focus described in Section 5 of the ACA. These areas are (1) Employment; (2) the built environment; (3) information and communications technologies; (4) communication, other than information and communication technologies; (5) the procurement of goods, services and facilities; (6) the design and delivery of programs and services; (7) transportation.

Consultation

SaskTel conducted virtual consultations with both external accessibility advocacy groups and internal employees who experience disability to understand the barriers individuals experience when interacting with SaskTel as both a customer and/or employee. These consultations guided SaskTel's internal team to determine the barriers faced by persons with disabilities across the organization and form the basis of the remainder of this report.

External Consultations

SaskTel facilitated several virtual external consultation sessions with Saskatchewan based disability advocacy groups to understand the barriers they face when interacting with SaskTel. Participants in these

sessions shared their perspective through their lived experiences with a disability and represented a wide spectrum of disabilities including sensory, mobility, and cognitive disabilities.

SaskTel also participated in external consultation sessions held by the Canadian Telecommunications Association (CTA) (formerly known as the Canadian Wireless Telecommunications Association CWTA), who facilitated feedback sessions between wireless carrier members and nationally based disability advocacy groups.

Internal Consultations

SaskTel solicited feedback via virtual interviews regarding accessibility from individual employees that experience a disability directly or indirectly. Similar to external group sessions, these employees provided their perspectives of barriers experienced through their lived experience both as an employee of SaskTel, as well as a customer of the company. Again, the employees interviewed provided a cross sectional view across a wide spectrum of disabilities.

Areas of focus

The feedback received from SaskTel's consultation with external and internal participants helped us understand the barriers persons who experience disability have experienced when interacting with the company. These barriers, and SaskTel's plans to focus on activities that address them over the next 3 years, are provided in the following section as categorized by the key focus areas of the ACA.

1. Employment

From consultations with external and internal groups, several barriers were identified.

From external groups, barriers included items such as:

- Ensuring employee training was made available to educate employees on how to support the needs of persons who experience disability and ensuring that employees were aware of the products and services available to persons who experience disability.

From internal employees, barriers included items such as:

- Employee training concerns, in addition to ensuring that any employee training provided was available in an accessible format. Further internal feedback focused on workplace accommodations, job role classifications and career advancement.

In response to the feedback received SaskTel is planning to undertake the following actions:

- Development of disability awareness training.
 - Specific training will be developed for customer facing employees.
 - Corporate level training for all employees was implemented in March 2023 to increase disability awareness.
- Software utilized for both internal and external job postings is not fully accessible.
 - Software enhancements and/or replacement is being investigated.
 - In the interim, candidates may request job postings in alternative formats.
- Assessments and testing for candidate selection processes can be challenging for persons who experience disability.
 - SaskTel has a variety of testing options that offer flexibility ensuring candidates can complete any necessary assessment and/or testing requirements.

- Online internal employee employment information, time tracking, and training materials are not fully accessible.
 - Internal systems and applications are being reviewed with current vendors.
 - Alternative solutions such as providing documents in alternative formats or personalized help are in place in the near term while medium/long term solutions are developed.

2. The Built Environment

Consultations with external groups focused on publicly accessible SaskTel properties such as SaskTel Stores. Feedback on these locations was positive, and external groups provided SaskTel with general accessible design standards and suggestions as to what could be improved within store layouts such as product placement, desk/ countertop heights, and pathways within the store for wayfinding. Similarly, internal feedback received supported what was gathered from the external consultations.

SaskTel regularly assesses and evaluates its facilities to ensure they meet the needs for all customers and employees including the provision of ramps, elevators, braille signage and elevator buttons, accessible washrooms, and other specific accessibility accommodations as required. When accessibility related issues are identified, and when a major renovation is planned, Corporate Services follows national/local building codes and regulations as they pertain to accessibility.

3. Information and communication technologies (ICT)

Overall, the bulk of external feedback received focused on the area of Information and Communications Technology. In particular, the

accessibility of SaskTel's external website, www.sasktel.com, was discussed.

External feedback noted that while the website was generally functional, the following items could be improved.

- Focus could be placed on ensuring further Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) compliance, further use of plain language, increased ease of navigation explored, and alternatives to signed contracts and PDFs where possible.
- SaskTel's Integrated Voice Response (IVR) system was also raised as a barrier. Accessing the Customer Contact Centre can be challenging for people who experience speech, or mobility impairments to navigate. Providing a simplified route to sales and or technical support for customers who experience disability could mitigate this barrier.
- General product and service knowledge and awareness was again raised, with requests to ensure employees are adequately trained. Being able to proactively identify customers who experience disability would enable representatives to be more proactive and responsive to the needs of the customer.

Internal feedback received focused on positives that have occurred in recent years with the introduction of new technologies allowing for virtual meetings which have enabled employees who experience disability to utilize assistive technologies such as screen readers and closed captioning to better participate in meetings.

SaskTel continues to engage an external vendor to audit SaskTel's external facing websites and applications to assess its compliance with WCAG 2.1 guidelines. Based on the results of the audit:

- Short term, SaskTel is in the process of reviewing the audit results and implementing some findings that can be quickly implemented without underlying application or system changes.

- For audit findings that involve more complex work and/or potential underlying application or system changes, SaskTel is in the process of developing a plan going forward to determine the required changes and scheduling.
 - This includes working with vendors to determine their WCAG roadmaps and ensuring internal web development resources have adequate training and support for WCAG compliance.

SaskTel is also planning a review of its Integrated Voice Response (IVR) system to determine what changes can be made within the current environment to assist in making the IVR more accessible. Should further systems work be required, this will occur in the medium to long term.

4. Communications other than ICT

In this category, no external feedback was received. Internally, feedback was focused on the accessibility of internal software systems used within the company for business purposes, as well as the accessibility of internal training platforms. Further feedback was received regarding the training, testing and certifications regarding the use of WCAG functionality within the company for both internal and external facing webpages.

SaskTel conducted an audit of its internal intranet and training platforms for accessibility related issues and has discovered that not all pages or templates utilized are WCAG compliant. Given medium term plans to revamp its internal intranet platform and make it WCAG compliant at that time, SaskTel has fixed WCAG errors within its control on the current platform, as well as providing accessible documents upon request as a short term solution until a full revamp can take place as planned.

Training is being reviewed and developed for general awareness of

accessibility standards, ensuring documents and material are created using WCAG standards. Specific WCAG training is being investigated for employees that develop and design applications, systems, and software.

5. The design and delivery of programs and services

Feedback received from both external and internal groups regarding the products and services offered by SaskTel was very similar.

- External groups focused on the accessibility of:
 - SaskTel's maxTV platform.
 - Issues faced when calling for support such as modem placement within the home and difficulty seeing visual indicators on the modem itself.
 - The cost and complexity of technology.
- Internal feedback looked deeper into some of these same items, while noting that SaskTel has made progress in removing barriers in areas such as its most current version of web-based email which is WCAG compliant and the provision of ebill allowing for use of assistive technology to view billing information.

In response to the feedback received, SaskTel is presently undertaking the following:

- Reviewing potential enhancements to our TV platform that would reduce the user's reliance on visual queues.
- Work with web based email vendor on further accessibility enhancements in future releases.
- Launched Sensory Shopping times at select SaskTel stores for persons who experience disability while processing sensory queues.
- Reviewing with vendor the potential for e-signature

enhancements to be made available for contracts removing the requirement for a physical signature.

- In the process of reviewing current accessible plans and barriers to wireless connectivity adoption in light of Telecom Regulatory Policy CRTC 2023-41, Mobile wireless service plans that meet the needs of Canadians with various disabilities.

6. The procurement of goods, services and facilities

For this topic, only internal feedback was received. Feedback received from internal employees focused on the need to ensure any new systems and software procured includes accessibility features to prevent further barriers moving forward.

In response to the feedback received:

- SaskTel is ensuring that moving forward, accessibility requirements are reviewed and included in business cases and procurement policies.
- Reviewing its RFP application and software to determine if the system is designed with accessibility in mind.

7. Transportation

Transportation does not apply to SaskTel's operations.

Conclusion

SaskTel recognizes that our customers who experience disability rely on our products and services daily. We take this responsibility very seriously and that is why we continue to strive to deliver an outstanding customer experience by working with our customers in ways that minimize the impact of their disability. We remain committed to being an employer of choice for people who experience disability, and we recognize that by creating an inclusive

environment internally that values all perspectives and abilities, we are enabling our employees to do the same for our customers.

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