



2024

**ACCESSIBILITY PLAN
SHOCK TRAUMA AIR RESCUE SERVICE
JUNE 2024 – MAY 2027**

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INTRODUCTION

Providing Critical Care, Anywhere has been our North Star – our guiding light in everything we do. As we've grown and evolved, Shock Trauma Air Rescue Service (STARS) has never wavered from our mission. Fundamentally, we believe that it doesn't matter who you are or where you are; if you need critical care, our mission is to be there for you in whatever capacity we can help.



These values ride along on every mission. This level of commitment to the community extends into our Accessibility Plan with respect to all who work here, our donors, our allies, and members of the public.

CEO STATEMENT



Updated May 2025

Every day STARS is there to provide critical care for those who need us. Ensuring our services, facilities, and communication are accessible to all, is mission critical. Nearly everyone will experience, or be touched by, a disability at some point in their lives. Together we support all those who face barriers – our Team Members, patients, donors, and members of the public in the communities we serve. Our committed actions in STARS' first Accessibility Plan will provide foundational support as we strive for a barrier-free environment.

BACKGROUND

The Accessible Canada Act (ACA) came into force in 2019 with the goal of making Canada barrier-free by 2040 by identifying, removing, and preventing accessibility barriers. STARS' duty under the ACA is to publish our Accessibility Plan by June 1, 2024.

The ACA has identified seven priority areas to focus on and STARS' Accessibility Plan includes these where applicable.

- Employment
- Built environment (buildings and public spaces)
- Information and communication technologies
- Communication, other than information and communication technologies
- Procurement of goods, services, and facilities
- Design and delivery of programs and services.
- Transportation – not applicable to medivac missions and therefore is not within the purview of this plan.

Our Accessibility Plan has been formed and created with the following guiding principles.

- Accessibility Standards Canada's (ASC) "Nothing without us". Persons with disabilities participated in the design and implementation of the strategy.
- Collaboration. Our business areas will work in collaboration with each other, and with other public, private, and not-for-profit organizations as appropriate.
- Sustainability. The strategy prioritizes actions that will have a lasting impact.
- Transparency. We will report openly and transparently on efforts to remove barriers.

This Plan has been approved by STARS' Executive Leadership Team and outlines the actions we are committed to taking between June 2024 and May 2027. STARS will publish progress reports on an annual basis and an updated Plan in 2027 or as outlined in regulations.

CONSULTATION

One of the guiding principles of this strategy is to align with the statement from ASC "Nothing without us," which affirms that persons with disabilities must be involved in the design and implementation of this plan at every stage. Persons with disabilities offer a unique and valuable perspective and our goal is to ensure that we do not have any barriers that prevent their full participation in the workplace and the community we serve.

Our accessibility plan was developed in consultation with internal focus groups made up of team members who identify as a person with a disability or have lived experience, e.g., someone who cares for a person with a disability, as well as Key Stakeholders, and Excellence Canada's Accessible Canada Act Review Committee. Excellence Canada is a consulting firm with deep expertise in this area.

Participants were invited to offer perspectives from a diverse set of disabilities (temporary or permanent, visible, or invisible) including:



Physical:
including mobility
and/or dexterity



**Cognitive /
Developmental:**
including neurodiversity,
mental health, and/or
learning disabilities



Sensory:
including vision,
hearing, and/or
speech

Methodology

This plan was prepared by first completing an environmental scan to ensure understanding of STARS accessibility initiatives and to review existing related policies and procedures. The exercise helped identify existing practices and initiatives that could be adopted as a best practice across the organization. On behalf of STARS, Excellence Canada consulted with the following three groups:

1. Team Member Focus Group – individuals who identify as a person with a disability, or as someone with lived experience who cares for a person with a disability, and who accepted an invitation to participate.
2. Individual Key Stakeholder Meetings - Internal stakeholders with knowledge of employment practices, facilities, digital resources, communications, and the design and delivery of good and services.

The focus group and key stakeholders were asked questions regarding accessibility barriers and current accommodation practices. Priorities for remediation were discussed and responses have been used to inform this plan.

3. Excellence Canada's standing Accessible Canada Act Review Committee also reviewed the Accessibility Plan. Consultation Group members are individuals with a variety of lived experience with disabilities, and knowledge of a range of accessibility issues. The five-member committee consisted of members who self-identify with a disability including mobility, vision, learning disability, mental health disability, and hearing loss.

Committee members were provided an overview of the functions at STARS and an advance copy of the draft STARS Accessibility Plan. Members provided comments on the plan format and readability, accessibility actions as outlined in the plan, suggested timelines for actions, and specific barriers that could be encountered. Committee feedback has been incorporated into this plan.

We thank all participants for their input into STARS Accessibility Plan.

THREE-YEAR ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

The purpose of the Plan is to outline how STARS will identify, remove, and prevent barriers for Persons with Disabilities across the priority areas in accordance with Accessible Canada Act. Our Plan will continue to evolve as we work towards Canada's accessibility standards/requirements as they are released.

We believe the actions listed below will have a direct impact on building on a culture of inclusiveness for all.

Employment

STARS is committed to inviting persons with disabilities to engage in our recruitment process and will identify those career opportunities that have bona fide job requirements up front.

BARRIERS IDENTIFIED	ACTIONS
<p>Job postings do not include a statement encouraging persons with disabilities to apply for positions without bona fide job requirements.</p>	<p>Job postings to state whether there are bona fide physical job requirements up front.</p> <p>Identify and prioritize what accommodations can be provided (e.g. technology and physical components of each base).</p>
<p>Illness and Injury Leave Procedure does not include details about the accommodation process and available options.</p>	<p>Define accommodation process and provide informational resources on reasonable accommodation (e.g. ergonomic assessment).</p> <p>Ensure return to work plan templates via our third-party insurance providers (e.g. Short-Term Disability or Long-Term Disability) include reasonable accommodations.</p> <p>Monitor and evaluate opportunities to adapt to ACA regulations on employment as they are made available.</p>

Built Environment

STARS recognizes the importance of an accessible built environment for Team Members, Very Important Patients (VIPs), Donors, Allies, and other visiting members of the public. STARS also recognizes that this will be an ongoing effort that will evolve over time and may involve partnering with building owners/property managers.

BARRIERS IDENTIFIED	ACTIONS
<p>While most bases have main entrance accessibility, there is not full accessibility throughout the buildings.</p>	<p>Any future-owned builds, or renovations to owned facilities will be built to the accessibility standards of that time.</p> <p>Any future new leases, or lease renewals, will factor in the accessibility standards of that time.</p>
<p>No facility has been formally assessed for accessibility standards, and as such, there are no plans in place to address physical barriers.</p>	<p>Conduct an accessibility assessment on half of our facilities, identify, and prioritize areas for improvement.</p> <p>Create the option for a Personalized Emergency Response Plan (ERP) template for team members with a temporary or permanent disability. Ensure this is incorporated into processes and communicated to team members.</p> <p>Create a standard visitor checklist that includes inquiring as to any accessibility requirements so that accommodations are identified, and plans can be put into place prior to the visit.</p> <p>Monitor and evaluate opportunities to adapt to Accessible Canada Act regulations on the built environment as they are made available.</p>

Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)

STARS recognizes the value of accessible content on both our intranet and external website.

BARRIERS IDENTIFIED	ACTIONS
<p>STARS.ca does not offer basic accessibility features (i.e. font size adjustment, contrast options, or alternative text for graphics.)</p>	<p>Review the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) requirements, identify and prioritize areas STARS will strive to achieve on our intranet and website.</p>
<p>STARS intranet and other technologies have not been assessed.</p>	<p>Implement WCAG prioritized items that were previously identified.</p> <p>Create awareness with Team Members on accessibility features on current software (e.g. contrast and font sizes) and incorporate into documents scheduled for review, and in creation of new communication documents, internally and externally.</p> <p>Monitor and evaluate opportunities to adapt to Accessible Canada Act regulations on Information and Communication Technologies as they are made available.</p>

Communications Other Than Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)

STARS recognizes that people’s communication needs vary and will strive to communicate in a manner that is flexible, that includes different modes to suit a broad range of needs, and that acknowledges this will be an ongoing effort.

BARRIERS IDENTIFIED	ACTIONS
<p>Technical and/or sector specific language is used in public facing reports and documents.</p>	<p>Review and prioritize documents for plain language enhancements and accessibility on our website and intranet by business area.</p> <p>Monitor and evaluate opportunities to adapt to Accessible Canada Act regulations on Communications other than ICT as they are made available.</p>
<p>There is no existing process to provide alternative formats and communication supports upon request by a user or Team Member.</p>	<p>Become familiar with alternate formats available for accessibility. (e.g. font size options). Select one alternative format for implementation.</p> <p>Develop communication guidelines that include plain language and consideration of accessible format/s identified.</p> <p>Review STARS Brand Digital Toolkit Guidelines, identify accessible opportunities, and prioritize for implementation (e.g. typography – font type & size).</p> <p>Educate team members on communication guidelines and accessible formats (e.g. plain language).</p> <p>Implement previously prioritized plan language enhancements and accessibility on our websites and intranet by business area.</p>
<p>Lack of general awareness on different types of disabilities and how people</p>	<p>Provide general education and/or training to team members on accessibility awareness and sensitivity (e.g. educational resources on types</p>

BARRIERS IDENTIFIED	ACTIONS
<p>can be supported with diverse needs.</p>	<p>of disabilities and basic guidelines on interactions and communication).</p> <p>Explore initiatives to spread awareness on accessibility and create a more inclusive culture within the workplace (e.g. disseminating information to all team members in recognition of National AccessAbility Week, World Mental Health Day etc.).</p> <p>Provide education and/or training to team members on specific topics as identified by their role.</p>

The Procurement of Goods, Services, and Facilities

STARS will explore and implement procurement principles, and practices to advance accessibility.

BARRIERS IDENTIFIED	ACTIONS
<p>There is not a written process that shows how accessibility will be considered in the procurement process.</p>	<p>Create Request for Proposal (RFP) templates with standardized criteria that reflects our evolving accessibility requirements (e.g. request bidding companies speak to their commitment to accessibility and inclusion of persons with disabilities).</p> <p>Leaders will partner with others regarding facilities as appropriate. Please refer to the Build Environment and Design and Delivery of Programs and Services regarding facilities for fundraising events etc. to identify and prioritize actions (e.g. new build, renovations, events sites including third parties).</p> <p>Monitor and evaluate opportunities to adapt to ACA regulations on procurement of goods, services, and facilities as they are made available.</p>

The Design and Delivery of Programs and Services

STARS recognizes the importance of increasing our accessibility to members of the public.

BARRIERS IDENTIFIED	ACTIONS
<p>Accessibility is not thoroughly considered when new events are put in place.</p>	<p>Create a standardized accessibility template/checklist for STARS-organized events with accessibility in mind (e.g. venue accessibility, parking, restrooms, set up, food & refreshments, etc.)</p> <p>Identify and prioritize accessibility components/considerations per event (e.g. STARS & Spurs event will have different requirements than an outdoor event).</p>
<p>The accessibility of donor and fundraising communications and events may have a direct effect on the effectiveness of such activities. Consideration of the accessibility needs of donors and VIPs is not adequately given.</p>	<p>Inform members of the public about accessibility features in invitation, promotional materials, and STARS.ca Upcoming Events.</p> <p>Update Event Took Kit and Request third-party event proposals to include accessibility statement and details of how the event will incorporate accessibility.</p> <p>Monitor and evaluate opportunities to adapt to CA regulations on the design and delivery of programs and services as they are made available.</p>
<p>Accessibility is not adequately considered in volunteer recruitment process.</p>	<p>Develop guidelines and educate those involved in volunteer recruitment on inclusive practices.</p>

FEEDBACK MECHANISM

The Accessible Canada Act requires organizations to establish a process for receiving and dealing with feedback regarding the implementation of the accessibility plan. STARS will be regularly monitoring and evaluating feedback and ensuring that it is incorporated into future plans when possible.

If you have any questions, feedback, or suggestions, you can communicate with us at:

STARS

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GLOSSARY

Barrier

Means anything, including anything physical, architectural, technological, or attitudinal, that is based on information or communications, or anything that is the result of a policy or a practice, that hinders the full and equal participation in society of persons with an impairment, including a physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication or sensory impairment or a functional limitation.

Disability

Means any impairment, including a physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication, or sensory impairment, or a functional limitation, whether permanent, temporary, or episodic in nature, evident or not, that, in interaction with a barrier, hinders a person's full and equal participation in society.

ICT (Information and Communication Technology)

A broader term for Information Technology (IT), which refers to all communication technologies, including the internet, wireless networks, cell phones, computers, software, middleware, videoconferencing, social networking, and other media applications and services enabling users to access, retrieve, store, transmit, and manipulate information in a digital form.

Neurodiversity

The range of differences in individual brain function and behavioral traits.

Universal Design

The design and arrangement of an environment to make it accessible to all, regardless of age, ability, or other factors.

Web Content Accessibility Guideline (WCAG)

The WCAG documents explain how to make web content more accessible to people with disabilities. Web "content" generally refers to the information in a web page or web application, including natural information such as text, images, and sounds.

ACCESSIBILITY AT-A-GLANCE

COMPLETION TIMELINE	PRIORITY AREA	ACTION
Year 1	Employment	Job Postings to state whether there are bona fide job physical requirements up front.
Year 1	Employment	Ensure return to work plan templates with our third-party insurance providers (e.g. short term and long-term disability) include reasonable accommodations.
Year 1	Design & Delivery of Programs	<p>Create a standardized accessibility template / checklist for STARS-organized events with accessibility in mind (e.g. venue accessibility, parking, restrooms, set up, food & refreshments, etc.)</p> <p>Identify and prioritize accessibility components / considerations per event (e.g. STARS & Spurs event will different requirements than an outdoor event).</p>
Year 1	Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)	Review the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) requirements, identify and prioritize actions STARS will strive to achieve on our intranet and website.
Year 1	Communication (other than Information and Communication Technologies)	Explore initiatives to spread awareness on accessibility and create a more inclusive culture within the workplace. (e.g. disseminating information to all team members in recognition of National AccessAbility Week, World Mental Health Day etc.).
Year 1	Communication (other than Information and Communication Technologies)	Review and prioritize documents for plain language enhancements and accessibility on our websites and intranet by business area.

COMPLETION TIMELINE	PRIORITY AREA	ACTION
Year 1	Communication (other than Information and Communication Technologies)	Become familiar with alternate formats available for accessibility (e.g. font size options). Select one alternative format for implementation.
Year 1	Procurement	Create Request for Proposal (RFP) with standardized criteria that reflects our evolving accessibility requirements (e.g. request bidding companies speak to their commitment to accessibility and inclusion of persons with disabilities).
Year 1	Built Environment	Create the option for a Personalized Emergency Response Plan (ERP) template for team members with a temporary or permanent disability. Ensure this is incorporated into processes and communicated to team members.
Year 2	Employment	Identify and prioritize what accommodations can be provided e.g., technology & physical components of each base.
Year 2	Design & Delivery of Programs	Inform members of the public about accessibility features in invitation, promotional materials, and on STARS.ca Upcoming Events.
Year 2	Design & Delivery of Programs	Develop guidelines and educate those involved in volunteer recruitment on inclusive practices.
Year 2	Design & Delivery of Programs	Update Event Toolkit and request third-party event proposals include accessibility statement and details of how the event will incorporate accessibility.

COMPLETION TIMELINE	PRIORITY AREA	ACTION
Year 2	Communication (other than Information and Communication Technologies)	Develop communication guidelines that include plain language and consideration of accessible format/s identified.
Year 3	Employment	Define accommodation process and provide informational resources on reasonable accommodation (e.g. ergonomic assessment).
Year 3	Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)	Create awareness with Team Members on accessibility features on current software (e.g. contrast and font sizes) and incorporate into documents scheduled for review, and in creation of new communication documents, internally and externally.
Year 3	Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)	Implement WCAG prioritized items that were previously identified.
Year 3	Communication (other than Information and Communication Technologies)	Provide general education and/or training to team members on accessibility awareness and sensitivity (e.g. educational resources on types of disabilities and basic guidelines on interactions and communication).
Year 3	Communication (other than Information and Communication Technologies)	Provide education and/or training to team members on specific topics as identified by their role.

COMPLETION TIMELINE	PRIORITY AREA	ACTION
Year 3	Communication (other than Information and Communication Technologies)	Educate team members on communication guidelines and accessible formats (e.g. plain language).
Year 3	Communication (other than Information and Communication Technologies)	Review STARS Brand Digital Toolkit Guidelines, identify accessible opportunities, and prioritize for implementation (e.g. typography – font type & size).
Year 3	Communication (other than Information and Communication Technologies)	Implement previously prioritized plain language enhancements and accessibility on our websites and intranet by business area.
Year 3	Built Environment	Create a standard visitor checklist that includes inquiring as to any accessibility requirements so that accommodations are identified, and plans can be put into place prior to the visit.
Year 3	Built Environment	Conduct an accessibility assessment of half of our facilities, identify, and prioritize areas for improvement.
Ongoing throughout this 3-year plan	Procurement	Leaders will partner with others regarding facilities as appropriate. Please refer to the Build Environment and Design and Delivery of Programs regarding facilities for fundraising events etc. to identify and prioritize actions (e.g. new build, renovations, events sites including third parties).

COMPLETION TIMELINE	PRIORITY AREA	ACTION
Ongoing throughout this 3-year plan	Built Environment	Any future new leases, or lease renewals, will factor in the accessibility standards of that time.
Ongoing throughout this 3-year plan	Built Environment	Any future-owned builds, or renovations to owned facilities will be built to the accessibility standards of that time.
Ongoing throughout this 3-year plan	All	Monitor and evaluate opportunities to adapt to Accessible Canada Act regulations as they are made available.