*Regulations covering the rights of people with disabilities or access and functional needs continue to evolve. Please check local, provincial, and federal ordinances to ensure that your organization complies with rules regarding building entrances and exits, evacuation planning, signage, and safety equipment.*

*For more information go to the* [***Accessible Canada Act*** *(justice.gc.ca)*](https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/A-0.6/) *or the* [*Americans with Disabilities Act (ada.gov)*](https://www.ada.gov/)*.*

In an emergency, the organization’s primary goal is to ensure everyone’s safety. To this end, an evolving aspect of the Emergency Action Plan (EAP) is focused on the needs of people with disabilities who may be at the worksite when a disruption occurs. Periodically review the following:

* Does the facility’s floor plan comply with legislation such as the *Americans with Disabilities Act* or the *Accessible Canada Act*?
* Do emergency alarms have audible and visible features which help indicate whether to evacuate the facility or move to a shelter?
* Will these alarm systems work if the electrical service is disrupted? Do emergency communication procedures address the needs of people with disabilities, particularly concerning two-way communication from within the facility (e.g., stairwells)?
* Do doorway widths and ramps meet the needs of those with temporary or permanent disabilities?
* Do evacuation plans minimize the use of stairwells when designing evacuation routes?
* Does the facility have emergency lights, signage, and fire doors in place to ensure that evacuation routes meet or exceed legislated requirements?
* Does the evacuation plan address the movement of people from the upper and lower floors if someone needs assistance in reaching safety?
* Check parking areas, drop-off sites, and accommodations in shelters against legislated standards.
* Review the equipment and supplies stored on site to determine the level of support that can be given to people with disabilities. For information on emergency supplies available in Canada, go to [Emergency Preparedness](https://products.redcross.ca/collections/emergency-preparedness). For information on emergency supplies available in the U.S., go to [Emergency Preparedness](https://usfirstaidandprep.com/collections/survival-kits).

If someone is newly hired who has a disability or a current employee becomes disabled, update your EAP to account for this. If your facility is visited by people with disabilities, account for their presence in your EAP.

**General Guidelines:**

Review your EAP and determine if the organization has accounted for the needs of people with disabilities. Review the following checklist when making this determination.

* Have Emergency Response Team (ERT) members, especially Safety Wardens, been trained in how to support people with disabilities or injuries who may need assistance during an emergency?
* Have ERT members, especially Safety Wardens, been trained to safely move people from wheelchairs to transportation chairs?
* Have ERT members, especially Safety Wardens, been trained to use other lifesaving equipment such as AEDs? For information on first aid equipment such as AEDs in Canada go to [AEDS (DEFIBRILLATORS) (redcross.ca)](https://products.redcross.ca/collections/aeds-defibrillators) and in the U.S. go to [How to Purchase Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) | Red Cross](https://www.redcross.org/take-a-class/organizations/purchase-aeds).
* Has signage been installed in stairwells and other parts of the facility that identifies the specific location so that an individual needing assistance can communicate their location to emergency responders?
* Have emergency procedures been reviewed by someone who has experience in dealing with emergency preparedness and people with disabilities?
* Have those responsible for developing the EAP created opportunities for employees with disabilities to make their needs known?
* Have those responsible for developing emergency procedures contacted agencies, local first responders and community organizations for input as it relates to the safety of people with disabilities?
* Have local first responders been informed about relevant issues related to personnel with disabilities?
* To protect the privacy of those involved, take care to validate only the medical information necessary to implement the EAP.
* Have steps been taken to communicate the reasons for gathering information on the nature of any disabilities among team members to all personnel while highlighting the organization’s commitment to maintaining confidentiality?
* Has the organization purchased equipment to help anyone with mobility issues move to safety in an emergency? Has the organization offered training on this topic to personnel?
* Has a review of the location of this extra equipment been conducted by experts to ensure they are in strategic locations?

**Evacuation, Shelter-in-Place, Drills & Exercises:**

* Have people with disabilities been briefed and participated fully in all safety drills?