



ARCH Bulletin on COVID-19: Accessible Communication

All Official Communications About COVID-19 Directed to the Public Must be Accessible to All Persons

In response to COVID-19, officials from all levels of government have provided daily news updates about how to stop the spread of the virus, what to do if you are sick, and how to get support if you are affected. This information is critical and is rapidly developing.

Over the past few days, some communications have been made more accessible to persons with disabilities. However, many communications remain inaccessible, which means that many persons are not fully informed about important updates. Persons with disabilities have a right to equal access to communication and a right to be informed.

At the very minimum, accessible communication means that:

- All press conferences are conducted with American Sign Language (ASL), Langue des signes du Québec (LSQ), and Indigenous Sign Language (ISL) interpretation. Sign language interpretation is necessary to ensure that persons who are Deaf receive the information in real time and are kept as informed as all other members of the public.
- All press conferences are captioned for persons who are deaf, deafened and hard of hearing.
- All press conferences offer audio description for persons who have vision disabilities.
- All written communication, including government newsletters and bulletins, is in a screen reader-friendly format so that persons who are blind are able to access information on an equal basis as all other members of the public.
- All written communication is in clear and accessible language without the use of jargon or complex terms in order to ensure that a wide audience will understand the information.

This is not an exhaustive list; it is critical that all communication strategies and planning are developed with full consideration of accessibility for persons with disabilities.

ARCH continues to call on all levels of government to fulfill their human rights obligations to ensure that all communications are provided in accessible formats.

For more information

Persons with disabilities who live in Ontario can call ARCH for free, confidential legal information and summary advice. To find out about the kind of legal advice ARCH provides and how to book an appointment, please use the following link: www.archdisabilitylaw.ca/services