



**BC Maritime
Employers Association**

BC MARITIME EMPLOYERS ASSOCIATION

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BCMEA

Accessibility Plan

Accessibility Plan

GENERAL

About BCMEA

The British Columbia Maritime Employers Association (BCMEA) is a multi-employer waterfront organization, representing approximately 49 ship owners and agents, stevedores, container, bulk, and breakbulk terminal operators on Canada's west coast, extending from Victoria north to the Alaska border.

A key objective of the BCMEA is to meet the needs of its membership. The BCMEA is dedicated to understanding and being responsive to the shared needs of its members and to the unique circumstances of each BCMEA member. With this commitment to customer service, the BCMEA provides information, expertise, and systems that improve the operational effectiveness of the BCMEA's members.

At its core, the BCMEA is a service provider of labour relations for waterfront employers in British Columbia, representing employer interests on regulatory issues in the areas of labour relations, pensions, legislative reform, Canada Labour Code, health and safety, advocacy, human rights and employment equity.

In addition to labour relations activities, the BCMEA oversees the training and recruitment of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) Canadian Area and the daily dispatch of labour for the Vancouver local of the Union.

Requirements

As a federally regulated organization, the BCMEA is governed by the [Accessible Canada Act](#) (ACA).

The ACA is a federal law enacted by the Canadian government in 2019 to promote and ensure equal access and inclusion for persons with disabilities. The ACA applies to all federally regulated entities, including companies, organizations, and government agencies.

Per the Act, all federally regulated entities must:

- Prepare and publish an initial Accessibility Plan
- Establish an accessibility feedback process
- Report annually on the progress towards the plan and address any feedback received

Our Accessibility Plan must be reviewed in its entirety and published every three years.

Overall, the Accessible Canada Act represents a significant step towards creating a more inclusive and accessible society for all Canadians, including those with disabilities. By complying with these requirements, the BCMEA can help ensure that we are providing equal access and opportunities to all members of society.

Executive Summary

The BCMEA values Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) in the workplace and across BC's waterfronts. Over the last few years, the BCMEA has proactively integrated DEI principles into our business. The BCMEA conducted a DEI audit in 2021-2022 that provided insights into employee and leadership perceptions of DEI at the BCMEA and supported us to prioritize ways to advance DEI. A DEI Committee was established in October 2022 to help drive DEI

initiatives across all levels of the organization. We are excited to progress with our Accessibility Plan to further our efforts in making the BCMEA a more inclusive workplace for all. Table 1 (below) provides a summary of each Priority Area and our accessibility commitments.

Table 1.
Executive Summary: BCMEA’s Accessibility Plan 2023-2026.

Priority Area	Commitments
Employment	Commitment 1: Provide a safe and welcoming environment for employees with disabilities.
	Commitment 2: Further promote employment opportunities and growth for individuals with disabilities
	Commitment 3: Plan an employee communication campaign starting in 2023 to inform them of new accessibility policies and services available to them. Communications will include awareness of disability definitions and common barriers to accessibility.
Built Environment	Commitment 1: Create a physical environment that is free from barriers and provides safe access to all employees.
	Commitment 2: Provide the opportunity for non-union employees, consultants, association members, and guests to attend meetings virtually, when possible.
Information & Communication Technology (ICT)	Commitment 1: Further assess and understand the barriers that exist in our ICT infrastructure.
	Commitment 2: Ensure plans are in place to identify and remove barriers where possible and upgrade our standards to WCAG 2.2.
Communication (other than ICT)	Commitment 1: Develop a communication standard for the BCMEA that is designed to be barrier-free and supports accessibility from inception.
Procurement of Goods, Services, & Facilities	Commitment 1: The BCMEA will actively seek out vendors who have a strong commitment to accessibility and promote the use of accessible technologies and tools that are designed to meet the needs of people with disabilities.
Design & Delivery of Programs & Services	Commitment 1: To review all training programs for potential accessibility enhancements while considering bona fide occupational requirements as they relate to the safety of the work sites.
	Commitment 2: Enhance the accessibility of services designed by BCMEA for association and union members.
Transportation	Commitment 1: Ensure that the BCMEA’s Policy for transporting employees for work purposes integrates accessibility to meet the needs of staff and actively seek out vendors who have a strong commitment to accessibility.

Accessibility Statement

The BCMEA is committed to providing a barrier-free, accessible environment to BCMEA employees, union members, and association members whenever possible.

Our commitment is to advance as a workplace and association that is accessible for everyone and ensures that we are making progress in ensuring that participation and opportunities are barrier-free and equally accessible across all identities and irrespective of one's abilities.

Accessibility Committee

An Accessibility Committee will be established as a sub-committee within a broader Diversity & Inclusion Committee. Our current Accessibility Plan project group includes:

1. **Michelle Chisholm**
LR Officer
2. **Colleen Sammon**
HR Manager
3. **Heather Wright**
VP – People and Technology

Feedback

The BCMEA is committed to providing an open and transparent feedback process. For more information, to provide feedback, or to request alternative formats of this Plan, please contact the BCMEA through one of the following methods:

- Anonymous feedback form <https://forms.office.com/r/25Hvy0ik3J>
- Direct mail: 349 Railway St., Vancouver, BC, V6A 1A4
- Telephone: 604-688-1155

Alternative Formats

The BCMEA's Accessibility Plan is available in the following formats:

- Print
- Large Print
- Electronic
- Audio

A Braille copy of the BCMEA's Accessibility Plan may be requested by phone at 604-688-1155 or through our online form <https://forms.office.com/r/25Hvy0ik3J>.

PRIORITY AREAS

Area 1: Employment

Our Accessibility Goal

At the BCMEA we are proud to support and value diversity and inclusion amongst our teams and in our workplace. Our goal is to create a welcoming, accessible, barrier-free workplace environment for all employees and prospective candidates.

Currently Level of Accessibility

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) are current areas of focus for the BCMEA. We conducted a DEI audit internally in 2021-2022 and are in the process of building a DEI Committee. The Committee will be responsible for driving DEI initiatives internally and with our members. Accessibility is one aspect of our DEI initiative but until now has not been a primary area of focus for these initiatives. In addition to establishing the DEI Committee, the BCMEA has:

- Committed to Gallup Q12 to ensure strong employee engagement and a positive work experience.
- Established a pilot project, Women of Influence, with monthly content based on the Lean In curriculum to build influence and leadership in the organization.
- Revitalized our internal mentorship program and paired employees with their desired mentor for allyship and development opportunities.

Actions

Commitment 1: Provide a safe and welcoming environment for employees with disabilities by:

- Completing a detailed audit of our current accommodation process to understand how the BCMEA has or would meet employee accommodation requests by January 2024.
- Establishing guiding principles for meeting accommodation requests by January 2024.
- Developing a formal process for employees to request accommodations including a process of requesting feedback from employees on their requests by January 2025.
- Review the Violence and Harassment Policy and add an anti-discrimination clause by June 2024.
- Planning the rollout, including budget, timeline, and accountability standards, for a formal DEI training program for all people leaders with an emphasis on workplace accessibility training starting with a pilot project to run in 2025.

Commitment 2: Further promote employment opportunities and growth for individuals with disabilities by:

- Updating the BCMEA's Equal Employment Opportunity Statement to include links to our Violence and Harassment Policy, and Anti-Discrimination Policy and include the statement on all job ads by June 2024.
- Completing a detailed audit by June 2024 of our internal recruitment process to fully understand how the BCMEA has or would meet accommodation requests during the recruitment process.
- Adding a process for candidates to request accommodations during the interview process on all job postings by January 2025.

Commitment 3: Plan an employee communication campaign starting in 2023 to inform them of new accessibility policies and services available to them. Communications will include awareness of disability definitions and common barriers to accessibility.

Area 2: Built Environment

Our Accessibility Goal

The BCMEA aims to ensure that all our facilities are barrier-free for our employees, union employees, customers, individuals from member companies, and the public. We need to understand the safety and security of our facilities and the jobs performed on-site to prioritize accessibility upgrades.

Current Level of Accessibility

The BCMEA owns and operates three separate facilities: Head Office, Dispatch Hall, and Waterfront Training Centre. We also rent a Training Centre in Prince Rupert. We conducted assessments of the built environment of our facilities and recognize that several physical barriers must be addressed. We seek to realistically address such barriers considering external constraints, such as fire lanes.

All employees have access to ergonomic assessment of their workstations along with requests for modifications to improve the ergonomics of their workstations and account for accommodations.

Actions

Commitment 1: Create a physical environment that is free from barriers and provides safe access to all employees by:

- Removing all obstructions from hallways and refuge areas at our head office by December 2023.
- Providing our Health & Safety Committee Members and Floor Wardens with training on how to engage and support people with disabilities in case of emergencies by June 2024.
- Conducting a formal inventory and list of upgrades for all common spaces, including but not limited to, lunchrooms, washrooms, shower facilities, common areas, access points, and parking spaces that will need to be upgraded with accessibility features by June 2025.
- Establishing a priority list and budget for all accessibility upgrades by June 2026.
- Developing a standard for accessibly designed signage throughout all our facilities by June 2026.

Commitment 2: Provide the opportunity for non-union employees, contractors, association members, and guests to attend meetings virtually, when possible, by:

- Establishing a virtual attendance policy that accounts for which roles can be performed remotely and general etiquette for virtual meetings by June 2025.
- Ensuring that all employees have access to the correct tools and equipment, including adaptive technology when needed, to attend meeting virtual and fully participate with their colleagues by June 2026.

Area 3: Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)

Our Accessibility Goal

The BCMEA's goal is for ICT to provide all users, including persons with disabilities, with progressive tools that support efficiency and reduce barriers to communication for BCMEA employees, union employees, customers, individuals from member companies, and the public.

Currently Level of Accessibility

Accessibility has not been a focus area for ICT practices at the BCMEA. The BCMEA currently runs multiple internally facing ICT systems including BCMEA's website, the Union employee portal, the member portal, and another for external third-party providers. Currently, the BCMEA is in the process of evaluating our web services for upgrade and consolidation opportunities.

Actions

Commitment 1: Further assess and understand the barriers that exist in our ICT infrastructure by:

- Creating an Accessibility Assessment tool for ICT systems, possibly in collaboration with an external subject matter expert vendor, that identifies areas for enhanced accessibility by 2024.
- Determining feasibility, priority, and budget for completing an Accessibility Assessment of all ICT systems to identify areas of improvement and develop a plan to address existing barriers by 2025.
- Conducting an Accessibility Assessment of BCMEA's website, the Union employee portal, the member portal, and the external third-party provider portal ICT systems by June 2026.
- Establishing a prioritized plan to implement the Accessibility Assessment tool across all ICT systems by June 2026.

Commitment 2: Ensure plans are in place to identify and remove barriers where possible and upgrade our standards to WCAG 2.2 by:

- Aligning with principles of WCAG 2.2 on ICT systems, including BCMEA's website refresh that is to begin in Fall 2023, by December 2026.
- Including digital accessibility tools as part of the accommodation process for employees and applicants on BCMEA's website (e.g., screen readers, text-to-voice, etc.) by 2026.

Area 4: Communication, other than ICT

Our Accessibility Goal

We seek to ensure that our mode of communication and communication tools enable all employees to thrive and express their unique perspectives and contributions, connect with their team, and feel respected, included, and heard organization-wide.

Currently Level of Accessibility

Historically, principles of accessibility have not been actively considered in the development and execution of communications at the BCMEA.

Actions

Commitment 1: Develop a communication standard for the BCMEA that is designed to be barrier-free and supports accessibility from inception by:

- Reviewing communications materials to identify large-scale revisions to templates and branding to support standardization and integration of accessibility principles, design, tools, and plain language across the BCMEA's communication(s) by 2026.
 - Considering accessible design during the rebranding process and in the designing of future communication templates.
 - Establishing branding and communication guidelines that incorporate accessible design and communication standards.

- Collecting feedback from employees and association members regarding our overall communication strategy and the level of accessibility starting in 2026.
- Training employees responsible for communication, including those in HR and Marketing, on accessible communication best practices and the use of plain language starting in 2026.

Area 5: Procurement of Goods, Services, and Facilities

Our Accessibility Goal

The BCMEA aims to work with vendors and providers who share our values and good business practices. As such our goal is to ensure accessibility and accessible design are included in our evaluation of all contractors providing products, services, and facilities to the BCMEA.

Currently Level of Accessibility

The BCMEA has not historically made accessibility a priority in our procurement of goods, services, and facilities.

Actions

Commitment 1: The BCMEA will actively seek out vendors who have a strong commitment to accessibility and promote the use of accessible technologies and tools that are designed to meet the needs of people with disabilities by:

- Developing and publishing a new Procurement Policy that prioritizes the selection of goods, services, and facilities that promote access to employment, accessible design, and provide a barrier-free procurement process by June 2024.
- Training all employees responsible for procurement on the new policy and how to identify accessible design starting in 2024.

Area 6: Design and Delivery of Programs and Services

Our Accessibility Goal

Design services that are inherently accessible in their design and address barriers in existing services.

Currently Level of Accessibility

As an association, the BCMEA offers members a wide variety of services including Health & Safety, Employee Dispatch, Labour Relations, Training, Recruitment, and Information Systems. Historically, accessibility had not been a key consideration in the design and delivery of such programs and services.

Actions

Commitment 1: To review all training programs for potential accessibility enhancements while considering bona fide occupational requirements as they relate to the safety of the work sites.

- Working with our training and communication teams to provide alternative formats, including large print, audio, and E-learning for training materials starting in 2025.
- Assessing the feasibility and logistics of revamping our training programs to be more accessible for people with a cognitive, learning, or mental health disability, by 2026.

Commitment 2: Enhance the accessibility of services designed by the BCMEA for association and union members by:

- Creating an Accessibility Assessment Tool to analyze existing and new services to identify barriers and ways to remove barriers by June 2024.
- Analyzing existing and new services using the Accessibility Tool to identify and prioritize barriers to be removed by December 2026.

Area 7: Transportation

Our Accessibility Goal

The BCMEA's goal is to ensure that employees who are transported for work purposes have access to safe, reliable, and accessible means of ground transportation.

Currently Level of Accessibility

The BCMEA is not responsible for the transportation of members of the public. For employees who are required to travel for work purposes, and who do not have access to alternative modes of transportation, the BCMEA offer means of transportation in the form of a taxi.

Actions

Commitment 1: Ensure that the BCMEA's Policy for transporting employees by taxi for work purposes integrates accessibility to meet the needs of staff and actively seek out vendors who have a strong commitment to accessibility by:

- Reviewing our Taxi Policy and modifying it to ensure that vendor companies offer accessible options and meet the accessibility needs of employees by December 2023.

CONSULTATIONS

Summary

The concept of “[Nothing without Us](#)” supports the notion that persons with disabilities must be involved in the ideation of the BCMEA’s Accessibility Plan. This further support our efforts to identify opportunities to progress accessibility in our policies and procedures and built environment. We consulted the British Columbia Centre for Ability (BC CFA) in the development of our Accessibility Plan.

Consultation Process

The BC CFA was provided with a draft of our Plan as a Word document for their review. We followed this with a live session on April 24, 2023, to discuss the impact and significance of our goals towards creating an accessible workplace and experience for our employees, association members, and the public.

The session was hosted virtually via Zoom and the consultation team from BC CFA was asked in advance about any accommodation that would be needed for the session.

During the session, participants had the option to turn on closed captioning. Each priority area of the Plan was discussed and was accompanied by a PowerPoint presentation for everyone to see.

Results

During the session, we reviewed each of the BCMEA’s Accessibility Commitments and gathered feedback from the BC CFA. Overall, the BC CFA found the Plan to be clear and logical and shows a commitment to making a positive impact on the community through accessibility measures.

Most of the Commitments and corresponding action plans provide a coherent and logical progression. However, the BC CFA identified a couple of key areas where further elaboration on the actions was needed to provide a clear and meaningful commitment. This was incorporated throughout the Plan by:

- Integrating our feedback process throughout the Plan as part of individual Commitments to ensure a culture of continuous improvement,
- Breaking down actions into smaller steps to create momentum and progression toward the overarching Commitment, and
- Incorporating language to account for all types of disabilities.

Future Consultations & Feedback

Future versions of the BCMEA’s Accessibility Plan will place greater emphasis on conducting a more comprehensive consultation process to fully align with the concept of “Nothing Without Us”. Our goal is to engage broader mechanisms for consultation of organizations, employees, association members, and union members through testimonials and storytelling, feedback surveys, and facilitated consultative sessions. We recognize that the more robust our consultation phase is in future republications of our plan, the more likely it is that barriers will be identified and meaningful progress on accessibility and DEI will be achieved.

CONCLUSION

The BCMEA's Accessibility Plan reflects our unwavering commitment to identifying, eliminating, and preventing accessibility barriers across all seven (7) priority areas outlined in the *Accessible Canada Act*. By setting goals and holding ourselves accountable, we will actively cultivate a workplace environment that offers equal access to opportunities for employees, union members, and association members, regardless of their abilities.

We recognize that promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) at the BCMEA will have far-reaching benefits for our employees, association members, union members, and our business as a whole. We will dedicate resources to making meaningful progress on our Accessibility Plan commitments to contribute to a more accessible Canada for all.

While we acknowledge that advancing accessibility is just one aspect of our DEI journey, we are determined to create a workplace that is safe, accessible, and equitable for all marginalized groups, including but not limited to, Indigenous people, Black people, racialized individuals, members of the 2SLGBTQ+ community, and women.



Accessibility Plan