



Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation

ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

Progress Report – December 31, 2024

Accessible Canada Act

1. **Employment:** FFMC is committed to removing and preventing barriers to recruitment, retention, and the promotion of persons with disabilities. Employees will be given access and insight on accessibility resources and information needed in completing their responsibilities.

Actions and progress to December 31, 2024:

1. Benchmark against ACA standards for employment and update relevant FFMC policies, guidelines and programs as needed.
 2. Through consultations with subject matter experts, during 2023 and 2024 FFMC determined that its operations have compelling structural, safety and physical accessibility barriers when working in processing areas and using equipment. FFMC is reviewing jobs in its processing and support/office areas with an accessibility lens to provide accessibility for employees to the safest extent practical;
 3. FFMC has provided locks for lockers that are accessible to employees who are unable to read fine print;
 4. FFMC includes a walk-through of the processing plant as part of the new employee orientation upon hiring to assist with wayfinding through the plant.
2. Provide additional accessibility training for employees on topics as identified by their role. i.e., training on creating accessible documents for communications employees; and training on accessible recruitment for employees.
- Where visuals are used, including images and charts that are provided in training, FFMC has ensured that visuals are well described verbally or replaced with text.

2. Built Environment

FFMC recognizes the importance of an accessible built environment. As such, FFMC will continue collaborating with stakeholders to enhance accessibility within current facilities. Notable examples include consulting with employees experiencing light sensitivity and making accommodations by adjusting the lighting in their office space. Additionally, adding grip strips for better traction and replacing door handles with levers to access rooms with ease.

Actions and Progress to December 31, 2024:

1. Benchmarking Against ACA Standards

- FFMC continues to benchmark ACA standards compliance for the Built Environment at its Winnipeg and remote processing facilities.
- In the last 2 years, consultations with subject matter experts identified significant structural barriers at the Winnipeg processing facility, built in 1971. FFMC has committed to improving accessibility where feasible within these constraints.
- Updates include high-contrast indicators for slip and trip areas.
- ACA standards benchmarking for remote facilities is set to complete by December 31, 2024.

2. Accessibility Accommodations for Visitors

- FFMC ensures alternative arrangements are available for individuals needing accessibility accommodation before visiting an FFMC site.

3. Structural Adjustments and Enhancements

- Ramps & Railings: Proposed addition of ramps, stair grip strips, and railings for improved mobility in entryways, hallways, and staircases (timeline: 1-5 years).
- Automated Doors: FFMC has initiated planning to automate main and high-traffic doors to support individuals with mobility challenges (timeline: 1- 5 years).

4. Signage & Markings (In Progress)

- Enhanced directional and emergency exit signage, including Braille.
- Clear pathways in cluttered areas, complemented by improved lighting for better visibility.

5. Workspaces and Equipment Design (Ongoing)

- Adjustments such as height-modifiable desks, uncluttered workspaces, and accessible fixtures (e.g., soap dispensers and door handles).

- Plans to redesign break rooms and kitchens with lower counters and user-friendly layouts (timeline: 1-10 years).

6. Housekeeping and Maintenance

- Regular practices to address loose cords, clutter, and tripping hazards.
- Periodic review and improvement of housekeeping across departments.

7. Specialized Safety Enhancements

- Audible and visual emergency signals and improved safety infrastructure in high-risk areas like cold storage, addressing ice buildup and slippery surfaces (timeline: 1- 5 years).

8. Training & Awareness

- Educating employees on accessibility barriers and housekeeping improvements to foster an inclusive environment.

Status:

- Many initiatives, such as structural updates, are long-term projects requiring evaluation and resource allocation.
- Feasible fixes, such as trip hazard removal, have been completed successfully.
- Further assessment is underway for comprehensive, tailored solutions to address key challenges.

3. Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)

The public interacts with FFMC through its website (<http://www.freshwaterfish.com>). FFMC employees rely on a variety of technology hardware, software systems, and communication devices in their daily work. FFMC is committed to improving the accessibility and inclusivity of its technologies, ensuring they are usable by individuals with diverse needs. As digitalization expands in the work environment, accessibility and usability considerations will remain a priority.

Planned Updates for 2025 & 2026:

To support these initiatives, FFMC is introducing a suite of free accessibility software tools to enhance both public and employee interactions with its digital systems. These tools address a range of accessibility needs, including visual, hearing, mobility, and cognitive challenges.

Accessibility Tools Available:

1. Screen Readers (for Visual Impairments):
 - NVDA (NonVisual Desktop Access), VoiceOver (macOS/iOS), Narrator (Windows), and Orca (Linux).
2. Speech Recognition (for Mobility/Dexterity Challenges):
 - Windows Speech Recognition, Google Voice Access (Android), and Apple Dictation (macOS/iOS).
3. Magnification (for Low Vision):
 - Windows Magnifier, Zoom (macOS/iOS), and Linux Compiz Zoom Plugin.
4. Real-Time Captioning and Transcription (for Hearing Impairments):
 - Google Live Transcribe (Android) and Otter.ai (Free Plan).
5. Cognitive Assistance (for Learning Disabilities):
 - Grammarly (Free Plan) and Google Read&Write (Lite Version).
6. Color Accessibility (for Color Blindness):
 - Color Enhancer (Chrome Extension) and Windows Color Filters.
7. All-in-One Accessibility Platforms:
 - Microsoft Accessibility Features, Apple Accessibility Suite, and Ubuntu Accessibility Tools.

These tools are great for people with hearing and vision disabilities.

FFMC will leverage these tools to complement the broader accessibility testing planned for 2025. This approach will ensure an inclusive experience for technology use.

5. Transportation

FFMC's main processing facility is located in an area that can create barriers as a result of lack of public transportation available. The processing facility does abide by Municipal Codes which ensures that there are the appropriate number of accessible parking spots at the building.

Actions and progress to December 31, 2024:

- While forklifts are used at Freshwater Fish, FFMC does not provide transportation services to employees nor to customers. No goals have been created for transportation.

Consultations

Methodology

FFMC's Accessibility Plan was prepared through consultation with subject matter experts at FFMC. FFMC consults regularly with persons with disabilities to hear from them on the Accessibility Plan.

Subject Matter Experts at FFMC were interviewed through focus groups. Internal stakeholders with knowledge of employment practices, procurement, facilities, digital resources, communications, and the design and delivery of goods and services were consulted. Questions regarding accessibility barriers, current accommodation practices, and priorities for remediation were discussed and responses have been used to inform this Plan.

ACA Review Committee

The Accessibility Plan is supported by The Manitoba League of Persons with Disabilities. Consultation group members are individuals with a variety of experiences with disabilities, and knowledge of a range of accessibility issues. The committee consists of members who self-identify with a disability including mobility, vision, learning disability, mental health disability and hearing loss. Committee members were provided with an overview of the functions at FFMC and an advance copy of the draft FFMC 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 continues to be incorporated into this Plan.

Conclusion:

FFMC is actively advancing its commitment to creating an accessible and inclusive environment across all facets of its operations. Significant strides have been made in employment practices, including updating policies to address accessibility barriers and providing targeted information sharing during new-hire orientation. Future structural enhancements in facilities, such as ramps, automated doors, and improved signage, reflect the organization's dedication to creating an inclusive built environment over the next few years. Similarly, FFMC has prioritized accessible technology by introducing free accessibility tools to help ensure digital compliance.

FFMC's Accessibility Plan is informed by extensive consultations with experts, employees, and individuals with lived experiences of disabilities. This ongoing dialogue ensures the plan remains practical, effective, and responsive to evolving needs. While many initiatives are underway, FFMC recognizes the need for continuous improvement and collaboration, aiming to foster a workplace and service model that empowers all individuals to thrive.