SaskTel

SaskTel's Accessibility Plan 2023-2026

Progress Report
June 1, 2024

Contents

SaskTel

General

1.   SaskTel is the leading provider of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) products, services, and solutions in Saskatchewan. We are building the most extensive and advanced broadband networks throughout the province for the benefit of our customers, the people and businesses of Saskatchewan. With approximately $1.3 billion in annual revenue and over 1.4 million customer connections, SaskTel is a major contributor to Saskatchewan's economy.

2.   As a Saskatchewan Crown Corporation, SaskTel has approximately 3,300 employees, making it one of Saskatchewan's largest employers. SaskTel delivers a wide range of ICT products and services designed for consumers and businesses throughout Saskatchewan. These include wireless services, television services, local access, internet and data services and security monitoring.

SaskTel's Commitment to Accessibility

3.   SaskTel is committed to customer service excellence and supporting the Government of Canada's Accessible Canada Act, which strives to make Canada barrier-free by 2040. We continuously strive to have a product mix that meets the needs of the people of Saskatchewan. We offer a variety of accessible products and services that enable people who experience disability to get the most out of their SaskTel products and services.

4.   SaskTel values a diverse workforce that is reflective of the people of Saskatchewan. Our employees can be found throughout the province, working, raising families, and volunteering in their communities. SaskTel's Representative Workforce Strategy has been instrumental in guiding our employment practices, by insuring a fair and equitable hiring experience for all prospective employees. Through this initiative, SaskTel has hired employees who experience disability in a variety of professional roles including Engineers, Marketers, Information Systems Specialists etc. Understanding the diversity of people who experience disability, SaskTel has also seen success working with partners in the disability community to launch a Supported Employment Program, which enables people who experience more complex disabilities to experience the independence and empowerment that employment provides. Promoting SaskTel as an employer of choice for people who experience disability remains a priority for SaskTel. We acknowledge that our practices must continue to evolve to meet the needs of all people who seek employment at SaskTel.

5.   Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility (IDEA) continue to be important goals at SaskTel. We believe having a diverse and inclusive organization is the responsibility of all employees. It's about building an environment that is inclusive and not only accepting of people's differences but valuing them and leveraging that uniqueness.

SaskTel's Accessibility Feedback Process

6.   We are always open to receiving feedback from our customers who experience disability. If you'd like to provide feedback regarding our products and services or on, the implementation of our ACA accessibility plan, please contact us in one of the following ways:

- In Person: Visit a SaskTel Store

- By Phone:

    ◦ 1.800.SASKTEL (1.800.727.5835)

    ◦ Deaf access line: 1.800.552.3595 (TTY users only)

- By Online Form: Accessibility Feedback Form

- By Email: accessibility@sasktel.com

- By Mail:

    SaskTel Accessibility Feedback
    12th Floor, 2121 Saskatchewan Drive
    Regina, SK S4P 3Y2

7.   Our designated person to receive feedback regarding Accessibility is Shara McCormick, Vice President of Human Resources and Corporate Services.

8.   Anonymous feedback is accepted; however, we'll be unable to provide a receipt of acknowledgement or further follow-up.

9.   For a description of our feedback process in an alternative format, please contact us at one of the methods provided above.

10.   By contacting us, you agree to the collection, use, and storage of your personal information for the purposes of responding to you and improving accessibility of our products, services, and processes.

11.   Information collected for this purpose is done so in accordance with our Privacy Policy.

Introduction

12.   The Accessible Canada Act (the ACA) came into effect in July 2019, and SaskTel as the Incumbent Local Exchange Carrier (ILEC) serving the Province of Saskatchewan is covered by the requirements of the ACA. It must be noted that SaskTel has in the past and in the future continually works on identifying, removing, and preventing accessibility barriers as they are identified.

13.   In response to the requirements of the ACA, SaskTel appointed, an internal Accessibility Advisory Committee that is representative of SaskTel's workforce including business planners from across the organization reporting to a senior leadership Director Advisory Committee. These committees are responsible to identify barriers, assist with decision making and oversee the development and successful implementation of SaskTel's Accessibility Plan.

14.   As part of the ACA, SaskTel is required to file its progress report regarding its initial Accessibility Plan that presented the barriers that SaskTel had identified through consultation with external and internal groups and individuals with disabilities, and its plans to address these barriers in over the course of the next three years where possible.

15.   As per the ACA, SaskTel has categorized the barriers it has identified into the 7 key areas of focus described in Section 5 of the ACA. These areas are (1) Employment; (2) the built environment; (3) information and communications technologies; (4) communication, other than information and communication technologies; (5) the procurement of goods, services and facilities; (6) the design and delivery of programs and services; (7) transportation.

Areas of Focus

16.   The feedback received from SaskTel's consultation with external and internal participants helped us understand the barriers persons who experience disability have experienced when interacting with the company. The following sections provide the progress that SaskTel has made in addressing the barriers identified in its initial Accessibility Plan during the past 12 months.

SaskTel

Employment

17.   The following table outlines the actions taken by SaskTel over the past year to remove barriers to employment. See the table below for more information.

Action Item	Action taken in 2023/24	Status
Disability Awareness Training	• Introduction to Disability Awareness and Accessibility Course developed and made available to all SaskTel Employees	Complete
Software for internal and external job postings not fully accessible	• Launch of new HR platform (SAP SuccessFactors) that incorporated accessibility requirements into design • User acceptance testing of new platform performed by members of SEND – continue to work on minor accessibility issues identified by user acceptance testing • Detailed accessibility feedback was shared with vendor (SAP) to be taken into account for future improvements	In Progress
Assessments and testing for candidate selection processes	• Development of workarounds to assist in assessments and testing until permanent solution identified	In Progress
Online internal employee information, time tracking and training	• Awaiting vendor updates to time tracking software that should result in more accessible user experience • Launch of new online training platform (SAP SuccessFactors) that incorporated accessibility requirements into RFP • User acceptance testing of new platform performed by members of SEND – continue to work on minor accessibility issues	In Progress

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The Built Environment

18.   SaskTel continues to regularly assess and evaluate its facilities to ensure they meet the needs for all customers and employees including the provision of ramps, elevators, braille signage and elevator buttons, accessible washrooms, and other specific accessibility accommodations as required. When accessibility related issues are identified, and/or when a major renovation is planned, Corporate Services follows national/local building codes and regulations as they pertain to accessibility. See the table below for more information.

Action Item	Action taken in 2023/24	Status
Inclusive design used for construction of new SaskTel Store	• Incorporated CSA B651 standards where possible, exceeding National Building Code • Additional space and flexibility for merchandising that allows the same product to be available at multiple heights • Power door provided at main entrance • Low glare materials and lighting in key areas • Sit-stand stations to enable flexibility for customers and employees • Barrier-free kitchenette for employees	In Progress

Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)

19. The following table provides actions taken in the past year to remove barriers in the Information and communications technologies (ICT) focus area. See the table below for more information.

Action Item	Action taken in 2023/24	Status
Audit of SaskTel's external facing websites and applications	• Audit identified WCAG errors on 11 separate pages of SaskTel's external website. These errors have been corrected • Completed WCAG enhancements on SaskTel Coverage maps including updated written content, label names and descriptive text attributes • Added ability of keyboard only users to select start chat button without use of a mouse for the online customer support application	Complete
Continuous improvement of SaskTel's external facing websites and applications	• Continue to work on reducing WCAG errors on other pages of SaskTel's external facing websites	In Progress
Review of SaskTel's IVR	• A review has been started to investigate potential changes to both the IVR and voice authentication systems	In Progress
WCAG Training and software certifications for web developers	• Training is being prepared to raise awareness of the ACA and Accessibility • ACA Testing tools and training are being reviewed • A lab is being developed to allow for testing of websites and applications for WCAG compliance	In Progress

20. In the coming year, SaskTel will continue to work on ensuring that its external facing websites are WCAG compliant, in addition to continued development of training for its employees involved in web development in WCAG compliance.

SaskTel

21.   Further investigation will continue to review SaskTel's IVR and voice authentication systems to find solutions to accessibility barriers presented by these systems.

Communications Other than ICT

22.   The following table provides actions taken in the past year to remove barriers in the Communications other than ICT focus area. See the table below for more information.

Action Item	Action taken in 2023/24	Status
Internal intranet platform upgrades for WCAG compliance	• Internal intranet platform has been migrated to new platform which is mostly WCAG 2.1 AA compliant	Complete
Internal policy documents not compliant with screen readers	• Internal policy documents migrated to new platform which is mostly WCAG 2.1 AA compliant	Complete
Document creation for assistive technology users	• Developing documentation for assistive technology users to aid in easier navigation of content hosted on the internal intranet	In Progress

SaskTel will continue to make improvements to accessibility as new functionality is released by the platform vendor.

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The Design and Delivery of Programs and Services

23. The following table provides actions taken in the past year to remove barriers in the design and delivery of programs and services area. See the table below for more information.

Action Item	Action taken in 2023/24	Status
Potential enhancements of TV platform	• Continue to work with vendor on addition of voice controls	In Progress
Web based email platform enhancements	• Worked with vendor to develop an upgraded platform to be released in late 2024 that will be WCAG 2.1 compliant	In Progress
E-signature enhancements	• Investigation has revealed that enhancements are not available in current software version. Continue to work with vendor to ensure enhancements are available in future software releases	In Progress
Review of current accessible plans and barriers to wireless connectivity	• Continual review of wireless rate plans in light of Telecom Regulatory Policy CRTC 2023-41	In Progress
Sensory Shopping	• SaskTel Stores in Regina, Saskatoon and Swift Current offer neurodivergent individuals who may benefit from a shopping environment that is more sensitive to sensory experiences	On Going

24. SaskTel continues to work with its vendors to ensure that the products and services it provides are accessible to its customers. In the next year, further work with vendors will be undertaken to remove barriers where possible.

SaskTel

The Procurement of Goods, Services and Facilities

25.   The following table provides actions taken in the past year to remove barriers in the procurement of goods, services, and facilities area. See the table below for more information.

Action Item	Action taken in 2023/24	Status
Inclusion of accessibility statement and requirements in RFP templates	• Accessibility statement and evaluation criteria included in RFP template where applicable	Complete
Review accessibility of RFP application and software	• Began accessibility review of application and software with vendor	In Progress

26.   SaskTel will continue to review the accessibility of its RFP Application and Software, in addition to seeking other opportunities for accessibility enhancements in the procurement of goods and services.

Transportation

27.   Transportation does not apply to SaskTel's operations.

Consultation

28.   SaskTel continues to consult with both external accessibility advocacy groups and internal employees who experience disability to understand the barriers individuals experience when interacting with SaskTel as both a customer and/or employee. These consultations guide SaskTel's internal teams in determining the barriers faced by persons experiencing disabilities across the organization.

External Consultations

29.   SaskTel was an active participant in the virtual Industry consultation sessions facilitated by the Canadian Telecommunications Association (CTA) with registered Accessibility groups and carrier representatives from across Canada held in November 2023. While these sessions were focused on the accessibility of wireless services to persons experiencing disabilities, the sessions also provided valuable feedback from external customers regarding the various focus areas included in our Accessibility plan.

Internal Consultations

30.   SaskTel continues to work directly with employees experiencing disability directly, and through the SaskTel Employee Network on Disability (SEND).

Feedback

31.   SaskTel's feedback process includes a variety of options for employees and members of the public to provide feedback regarding accessibility barriers they have encountered with our products and services. This includes, in person, by phone, online form, by email or regular mail. We also offer Message Relay Service (MRS) and, Telewriter service (TTY). Accessibility Contact & Feedback | SaskTel

External Feedback Received: 10 emails

Internal Feedback Received: 3 emails

Since the inception of the feedback process in June 2022, SaskTel has received a total of ten interactions with members of the public through the accessibility@sasktel.com email address or online form.

SaskTel also received a total of three emails from internal employees.

Many requests or inquiries that were not related to accessibility reached us through the accessibility email address. We handled them by either directing the message to the most relevant department for follow-up, or by replying with alternative ways of reaching a more suitable area of the company to get their request/inquiry resolved.

The **external feedback** and inquiries we received fell into a few different categories

Communication (other than ICT): The feedback and inquiries that fell into this category included concerns with accessing our Integrated Voice Response (IVR) system as well as inquiries regarding our Telewriter service (TTY) and Message Relay Service (MRS) options. In all occasions SaskTel representatives reached out to the individuals to provide assistance in having their inquiry or concern addressed.

Design and Delivery of Programs and Services: The feedback and inquiries received in this category included questions about accessibility discounts such as the Wireless Accessibility Credit and Directory Assistance Exemption. As well as an inquiry regarding the accessibility of SaskTel's voicemail platform. SaskTel representatives responded to all feedback and inquiries by providing the necessary information required to answer questions or provide alternative solutions.

Procurement of Goods, Services and Facilities: The inquiries that fell into this category included questions about the availability of equipment for individuals that would assist them with their communication needs. SaskTel representatives responded to the inquiries by providing the necessary information required to answer questions or provide alternative solutions.

The **internal feedback** we received from employees with accessibility concerns while using some internal applications has been categorized in the Employment Category. We worked with both the employee and responsible departments to identify the root cause of the accessibility barrier and are currently evaluating options to address any concerns.

SaskTel

One of the internal emails was related to a concern with the accessibility or readability of a corporate wide internal communication. This concern was quickly addressed by informing our internal communications team who promptly added alt text to an image in the message. Future internal communications are now double checked to ensure alt text is added to future messages. No additional feedback was received using alternate methods of communication, including, in person, by phone, regular mail, Message Relay Service (MRS) or Telewriter service (TTY).

Conclusion

32.   SaskTel recognizes that our customers who experience disability rely on our products and services daily. We take this responsibility very seriously and that is why we continue to strive to deliver an outstanding customer experience by working with our customers in ways that minimize the impact of their disability. We remain committed to being an employer of choice for people who experience disability, and we recognize that by creating an inclusive environment internally that values all perspectives and abilities, we are enabling our employees to do the same for our customers.

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