



Rise Air and
Snowbird Aviation
Services
Accessibility Plan
Progress Report

Amended September 2024

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Introduction

Executive summary

In May 2023, Rise Air/Snowbird Aviation Services introduced its Accessibility Plan along with a feedback process following the guidelines of the *Accessible Canada Act* (ACA). The ACA, which became law on July 11, 2019, has the goal of making Canada barrier-free by January 1, 2040.

At Rise Air/Snowbird Aviation Services, we recognize the importance of removing barriers and creating an inclusive environment where everyone can fully participate in all aspects of our organization. As part of this commitment, we have engaged in extensive consultation with individuals with disabilities to better understand the barriers they face and how we can address them effectively. Through these consultations, we have gained valuable insights that have informed the development of our accessibility plan.

We have established a feedback process to receive input from the community, including feedback on our implementation of the accessibility plan and any barriers individuals encounter when interacting with our organization. We are committed to promptly addressing feedback and making necessary adjustments to improve accessibility.

Our accessibility plan is available for public viewing on our websites. We encourage all stakeholders to review the plan and provide feedback to help us further enhance accessibility within our organization.

For inquiries or feedback regarding accessibility at Rise Air/Snowbird Aviation Services, we have mentioned all the contact person details as well as the feedback link.

This progress report outlines the advancements we have made in enhancing accessibility, hurdles we have encountered, and our ongoing commitment to integrating feedback and insights to reach our objectives. It marks the initial installment of several progress reports detailing our Accessibility Plan, which undergoes annual review for the next three years.

Our commitment to accessibility

At Rise Air/Snowbird Aviation Services, accessibility is not just a commitment, but a core value that guides everything we do. We are dedicated to empowering accessibility for both passengers and employees, ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to travel and work with dignity and respect.

We ensure that our airports and aircraft are equipped with accessible features such as ramps and have designated seating areas to facilitate ease of movement for passengers with mobility impairments.

Clear and accessible information is provided across all platforms including websites, booking systems, and in-flight materials to assist passengers with visual or hearing impairments. This is achieved through adherence to accessibility standards, such as incorporating features like adjustable font sizes, high contrast options, providing clear instructions for requesting assistance or accommodations, selective prompts, comprehensive staff training. Our staff members are trained to communicate effectively and respectfully with passengers of all abilities.

Rise Air/Snowbird Aviation Services promotes an inclusive workplace environment by ensuring that facilities and tools are accessible to employees with disabilities. This includes accessible workstations, assistive technology such as telephones with adjustable volume controls, reads text aloud, built-in screen magnifier, live captions and subtitles during presentations, sit-stand desk and workstation accommodations tailored to individual needs.

We are committed to fostering diversity and inclusion across all levels of the organization, including the recruitment and retention of employees with disabilities. We value the unique perspectives and contributions of all our employees and strive to create a workplace where everyone feels valued and supported.

General

Feedback on accessibility

Rise Air/Snowbird Aviation Services has established a comprehensive feedback process to actively receive and address concerns regarding accessibility. This process encompasses feedback on the implementation of our accessibility plan as well as any barriers individuals encounter when interacting with our organization.

We encourage individuals to share their experiences and provide feedback on accessibility through various channels such as websites, feedback forms, emails, social media platform, customer support. Whether it is regarding the effectiveness of our accessibility initiatives or identifying specific barriers they have encountered, we value every insight shared with us.

By actively listening to and responding to feedback, we aim to continuously improve our accessibility efforts and ensure that all individuals, regardless of their abilities, have a positive and inclusive experience when engaging with Rise Air/Snowbird Aviation Services.

Designated person(s)

The public may provide feedback, request an alternate format of the accessibility plan, and request an alternate format of the description of the feedback process by contacting the designated persons. The persons designated by the organization to receive feedback on barriers and accessibility plans are as follows:

Designated Person	Designation	Email	Phone Number
Carla Wayman	Director of Flight Operations	cwayman@riseair.ca	306-667-2844
Kristi Knight	Director, Commercial	kknight@riseair.ca	306-667-2846
Kim Goertzen	General Manager, Snowbird Aviation Services	kgoertzen@snowbirdas.ca	306-668-0260
Michel Farrugia	Director, Human Resources (Rise Air/Snowbird Aviation Services employees)	mfarrugia@riseair.ca	306-667-2849
Larry Denholm	Occupational Health and Safety Officer (Rise Air/Snowbird Aviation Services employees)	ldenholm@riseair.ca	306-667-2848
Dan Gold	Director, Communications and Stakeholder Relations	dgold@riseair.ca	306-381-7916

Keevin Berg	Director, Information Technology and Systems	kberg@riseair.ca	306-692-9121
Nick Hudak	Manager, Facilities	nhudak@snowbirdas.ca	306-668-0814

or to any of the designated persons by mail or in person at:

Rise Air
3A Hangar Road
John G. Diefenbaker Airport
SASKATOON SK S7L 5X4

or through our websites at riseair.ca or snowbirdaviationservices.ca.

Consultations

Rise Air/Snowbird Aviation Services remain dedicated to fostering an inclusive and barrier-free environment for all individuals. Through continuous consultation, feedback, and proactive measures, we ensure that our services, facilities, and employment practices are accessible to everyone, including individuals with disabilities. In preparation for the progress report our designated persons created opportunities for employees to voice their concerns and recommendations moving forward.

These recommendations were centred around working meetings that included personnel in IT and systems, communications, customer service, transportation, facilities, corporate services and members of employee groups both unionized and non-unionized .

Information and communication technologies (ICT)

At Rise Air/Snowbird Aviation Services, our commitment to accessibility remains steadfast as we strive to ensure that our information and communication systems are accessible to all individuals in compliance with the *Canada Accessibility Act*. Over the past year, significant progress has been made across various departments to enhance accessibility and provide support for individuals with diverse needs.

Accessible formats and communication support

Rise Air/Snowbird Aviation Services ensures accessibility through electronic formats compatible with adaptive technologies, alternative communication channels and accommodations. Additionally, preboarding announcements in multiple languages and passenger rights information is provided in various formats.

Progress

1. Alternative communication channels such as Teams and videos calls are being integrated alongside traditional telephone systems to provide additional support for individuals with diverse needs.
2. We expanded accommodation offerings for passengers, including providing multiple formats for information dissemination during the online booking process, such as selective prompts indicating disability and accommodation required.
3. Requests for passenger documents with enlarged fonts and Braille cards are being accommodated upon request, with procedures in place to ensure prompt fulfillment.
4. We have implemented measures to ensure that information provided on planes prior to departure is available in all aircraft equipped with communication capabilities and is provided in English and French. Our large aircraft feature Denesuline auto briefing capabilities, further enhancing accessibility for passengers who speak Denesuline.
5. Rise Air/Snowbird Aviation Services has published passenger rights information in various formats, including print material, large print, websites, announcement and braille, to ensure accessibility for all passengers. Currently, the information is available in English, and we are reviewing the possibility of including it in Denesuline and Cree.
6. Employees have been provided with laptops and other necessary tools to enhance accessibility in the workplace, including flexibility options such as adjusting monitor resolutions and font sizes according to visual needs. The occupational health and safety officer is trained in conducting ergonomic assessments.

Future Tasks

1. We are actively working toward implementing electronic formats compatible with adaptive technologies for all informational materials.
2. Analyzing how to integrate live chat to provide additional support for individuals with diverse needs.
3. We are working toward implementing preboarding announcements in Denesuline and Cree languages, both pre-recorded and live, to promote inclusivity.
4. We are currently working toward developing and implementing Denesuline and Cree preboarding announcements, both pre-recorded and live, as well as notifications of departure delays, arrivals, and cancellations at northern bases.

Accessible websites and web content

Progress

Our efforts to upgrade our websites for compatibility with adaptive technologies are well underway, with the majority of the work already accomplished, and we are on track to complete this upgrade by July 2024. Additionally, our progress towards meeting Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0, Level A standards is nearly finished, with the same target end date of July 2024.

Future Tasks

1. We are currently working on the development of our intranet as a centralized hub for accessible communication, where defined roles and responsibilities for content development and compliance are established. However, during the testing phase, we identified areas for improvement, prompting us to initiate a rework of the system. We are now targeting to complete this work by 2025.
2. We will further formalize our procedure for routine accessibility testing of our websites.

Communication, other than ICT

Rise Air/Snowbird Aviation Services recognizes the importance of effective communication beyond the realm of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) to ensure inclusive and accessible interactions for all passengers, including those with disabilities.

Communications

Progress

1. We have designed and implemented training for all staff interacting with customers, ensuring they consider each passenger's disability during interactions. They assess the use of assistive devices and adjust communication methods accordingly. When disabilities are disclosed during reservations, personnel engage in conversations to pinpoint specific needs and available services. Detailed descriptions of services are offered upon request. Our trained staff make sure that public announcements are made in plain language, with clear enunciation, and repeated for clarity. Pre-recorded messages are utilized whenever possible.
2. All the staff are given customer service training to trained them to communicate in a respectful and informed manner, particularly when interacting with passengers with disabilities.
3. Information about services and facilities is made accessible to those with visual or hearing impairments through alternative formats such as electronic, large print, audio, and Braille.
4. Information for individuals with intellectual, cognitive, or learning disabilities is provided in clear, concise language, with options for written instructions and consideration for privacy in noisy environments.

Future Tasks

1. Raise awareness about accessibility among employees, customers, and other stakeholders through communication campaigns, training sessions, and public outreach efforts.
2. Establish mechanisms for ongoing monitoring, evaluation, and improvement of accessibility efforts. Stay informed about emerging technologies, standards, and best practices to continuously enhance accessibility.

Procurement of goods, services, and facilities

Progress

1. Successfully developed a comprehensive principles for procurement document that incorporates accessibility considerations into the evaluation process. By prioritizing accessibility criteria, engaging with stakeholders, and fostering a culture of inclusion, we are working towards our goal of ensuring equal access and opportunity for persons with disabilities.
2. Rise Air/Snowbird Aviation Services has actively engaged with stakeholders, including persons with disabilities and advocacy organizations, to gather insights and feedback on accessibility needs and preferences.

Future Tasks

1. Establish robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to track the engagement of procurement principles and assess its effectiveness in promoting accessibility.
2. Stay updated on relevant regulations, standards, and best practices governing procurement, including any changes or updates that may impact operations.

Design and delivery of programs and services

We understand the importance of inclusivity and strive to ensure that individuals of all abilities can fully participate in and benefit from our programs and services.

Customer Service

Progress

1. Our commitment to excellence in customer service extends to persons with disabilities. We ensure that all employees serving external customers undergo comprehensive accessibility for all training to provide exceptional service to everyone, regardless of their abilities. This includes familiarity with assistive devices and accommodation for approved service dogs and support persons.
2. Rise Air/Snowbird Aviation Services acknowledges the importance of approved service dogs in providing essential assistance to passengers with disabilities. Our policy complies with Transport Canada safety protocols and we warmly welcome approved service dogs on board our aircraft. These animals play a vital role in our passengers' well-being, and we prioritize their accommodation without any extra charges.
3. Rise Air/Snowbird Aviation Services has implemented user-friendly methods to facilitate customer feedback, ensuring accessibility and ease of communication. Whether via online surveys, email correspondence, or direct interactions, we welcome and value all feedback provided by our passengers.

Future Tasks

1. Implement comprehensive accessibility training programs for all employees to further enhance their understanding of accessibility requirements and best practices.
2. Launch an awareness campaign aimed at educating both employees and passengers about accessibility issues and the importance of inclusivity. This campaign will utilize various communication channels, including internal newsletters, social media platforms, and in-flight announcements, to promote a culture of accessibility and sensitivity towards the needs of all passengers.

Transportation

Rise Air/Snowbird Aviation Services ensures that the transportation is accessible to persons with disabilities. This includes taxis, limousines, bus, or rental vehicles that we may provide, from time to time.

Employment

Progress

1. We stay informed about emerging trends and best practices in disability inclusion and accessibility by participating in professional networks, attend conferences, workshops, and webinars, read

industry-specific magazines and newsletters, follow updates from government bodies and regulatory agencies, and engaging with experts in the field.

2. We have implemented various initiatives to ensure accessibility throughout the recruitment and hiring process. One of our key strategies involves notifying both employees and the public about the availability of accommodation for applicants with disabilities.
3. Through our websites and job postings, we proactively communicate that accommodation is available for applicants who require them during the selection process. This information is prominently displayed to ensure that individuals with disabilities feel encouraged to apply and be confident that their needs will be considered.
4. We conduct corporate-wide mandatory workplace harassment and violation prevention training. Participants receive education on recognizing and addressing harassment or discrimination in the workplace and the legal implications related to discrimination.

Future Tasks

1. Implement different strategies to attract a diverse pool of candidates, through targeted outreach and developing partnerships with disability-inclusive organizations, and inclusive job postings.
2. Train human resource personnels and hiring managers on inclusive interviewing techniques, accommodation requests during the hiring process, and understanding unconscious bias awareness.
3. Continual review of our workplace accommodation process in collaboration with our occupational health and safety officer, and people with disabilities.

Training

We believe that educating our team is the best way to remove barriers to accessibility.

Progress

1. We have implemented a comprehensive training program, "Accessibility for All," which is mandatory for all employees serving external customers. This training is designed to equip employees with the knowledge and skills to provide inclusive and accessible service experiences to individuals with disabilities.
2. We successfully delivered a corporate-wide mandatory training program focused on workplace harassment and violation prevention. The training content was inclusive and covered disability as a protected ground, ensuring that all employees have a clear understanding of the importance of preventing harassment and discrimination, particularly related to disabilities.

3. We maintain detailed records of participants and completion dates for all training sessions. These records serve as valuable documentation of employee engagement and compliance with mandatory training requirements.

Future Tasks

1. Evaluate the effectiveness of training initiatives through regular feedback mechanisms and adjust content and delivery methods as needed.
2. To work on specialized training sessions on accessibility best practices for employees and managers.
3. Expand training opportunities to reach all employees.

The Built Environment

Facilities and Fleet

Over the past year, significant strides have been taken to improve accessibility, ensuring compliance with legal requirements, and fostering inclusivity.

Progress

1. Several infrastructure upgrades have been completed to improve accessibility. All bases that previously lacked ramps and access points now have them installed, ensuring safe passage for passengers to and from the aircraft.
2. Entrance and exit doors at all locations have been modified to allow individuals with mobility issues to access the buildings.
3. Accessibility criteria are considered at the outset of a facilities project, as this is often simpler, more efficient, and more cost-effective. This ensures the facility is accessible to everyone from the start.

Future Tasks

1. The project to install automatic doors at all main entrances and exits is currently under review. This initiative aims to improve accessibility for individuals with mobility challenges and enhancing overall user experience.
2. While several base washrooms have been upgraded to meet accessibility standards, ongoing efforts are directed towards ensuring that all washrooms across our facilities are fully accessible.

Conclusion

In alignment with the *Accessible Canada Act (ACA)*, Rise Air/Snowbird Aviation Services remain dedicated to fostering an inclusive and barrier-free environment for all individuals. Our comprehensive accessibility plan underscores our commitment to accessibility as a core value that guides our operations, customer service, and workplace culture. Through continuous consultation, feedback, and proactive measures, we have made significant strides in various priority areas, ensuring that our services, facilities, and employment practices are accessible to everyone, including individuals with disabilities.

We have successfully implemented a range of initiatives to enhance accessibility in information and communication technologies, customer service, transportation, employment, training, and the built environment. Notable progress includes the integration of alternative communication channels, accessible formats, comprehensive training programs, and infrastructure upgrades. These efforts ensure that our passengers and employees can navigate and interact with our services with dignity and respect.

By fostering a culture of accessibility and inclusion, we aim to set a benchmark for excellence in accessibility practices. Our ongoing commitment to listening, learning, and adapting ensures that we will meet and exceed the standards set forth by the *Act*, contributing to a barrier-free Canada by 2040.

For any inquiries or feedback regarding our accessibility efforts, we encourage stakeholders to contact our designated representatives or utilize the feedback channels provided on our websites. Together, we can create a more inclusive environment where everyone has the opportunity to thrive.