



VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS



GCworkplace Consultation Series on Accessibility

PRELIMINARY REPORT – VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS

DATE: APRIL 7, 2021

DEPARTMENT: ACCOMMODATION MANAGEMENT AND WORKPLACE SOLUTIONS, REAL PROPERTY SERVICES, PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT CANADA



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Introduction

The GCworkplace Consultation Series on Accessibility was created as part of the mandate of the Centre for GCworkplace Innovation, which is to foster knowledge transfer and innovation as well as develop new concepts and tools for the Government of Canada (GC) workplace in collaboration with GC departments, agencies, and external partners. It was also created following the GC's priority and commitment towards accessibility by partnering with key stakeholders.

The GCworkplace Consultation Series on Accessibility consists of a series of virtual workshops with persons with various types of disabilities (visible and invisible) to discuss and understand their needs in the workplace. A total of 14 sessions (seven in English and seven in French) were originally organized; due to high demand, additional sessions were added for certain disabilities. Through engagement and consultation with users of workplaces, each session addressed existing and emerging or potential workplace barriers for a specific type of disability including mobility issues, cognitive impairments, learning disabilities, environmental sensitivity, visual impairments, hearing impairments, and psychological and mental health.

Two sessions attended by persons with visual impairments were held on October 14 (in French) and October 21 (in English). Following the success of these sessions, another session in English was held on January 26, 2021.

Statistics

For visual impairment sessions held on October 14 and October 21, 2020, and January 26, 2021.



PARTICIPATING DEPARTMENTS

- Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
- Canada Revenue Agency
- Canadian Border Services Agency
- Canadian Heritage
- Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission
- Department of Justice Canada
- Employment and Social Development Canada
- Environment and Climate Change Canada
- Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada
- Public Safety Canada
- Public Service and Procurement Canada
- Transport Canada
- Treasury Board Secretariat
- Veterans Affairs Canada

PARTICIPATING REGIONS AND CITIES

- **National Capital Area**
- **Western (Calgary, Winnipeg)**
- **Atlantic (Sydney, Moncton, Saint John, Charlottetown)**
- **Ontario (Toronto)**

➤ Pacific (Vancouver)

Comments

CURRENT WORKPLACES

Participants were asked to share their thoughts on their current workplace—what works, what doesn't—as well as to imagine their dream workplace. They were also walked through what a GCworkplace might look like and asked about potential barriers in specific parts of a workplace.



When asked about their current workplaces, participants struggled to find positive things to say. A few people mentioned that they appreciated having things like larger monitors, sit-stand desks, and newer cell phones that were better than BlackBerries where accessibility was concerned. One participant who was already in a GCworkplace environment noted that they really appreciated having the different work zones. In general, however, participants felt that their current workplaces were very inaccessible. Several common concerns arose.

Lack of support from management



The biggest concern many participants had was with managers who lacked the training, knowledge, or empathy to deal with their requests for accommodations. Multiple participants spoke about managers who questioned their medical diagnoses or decided it was their role to determine what accommodations were or were not necessary. Several mentioned that their managers requested private medical details before approving any accommodations.

Lack of emergency plans

Another major concern for most participants was the lack of emergency plans and procedures for people with visual impairments. Multiple participants mentioned that they had to rely on nearby coworkers to guide them out of the building during emergencies and that they felt stressed trying to make sure there was always someone near them who could help. One participant mentioned that they had requested to use the elevator in case of an emergency, to avoid having to use the stairs, but they were told they weren't handicapped enough to take the elevator.

“One-size-fits-all” approach to accommodations

Several participants mentioned feeling frustrated because of assumptions that were made about the kind of accommodations they would need. Some were given newer or larger monitors but actually would have preferred older or smaller monitors because they found the size or brightness of the newer ones hard to manage. Some were given isolated offices or cubicles because it was assumed they would have to listen to any documents out loud, but they would have preferred to simply wear headphones and be seated near their teams. One participant highlighted that there is a lack of understanding of the difference between the accommodations needed by people who are blind versus people who have low vision.

Lack of wayfinding

Participants noted that they had to spend a lot of time and energy memorizing floor plans because each floor was laid out differently and there weren't any visual reference points, tactile differences on the ground, or other indicators as to where they were on the floor. They noted that it could be challenging trying to find boardrooms because there weren't always signs outside of rooms to show which boardroom it was. Several also noted that it could sometimes be difficult to tell doors apart from walls and that made finding their way around even more challenging.

Poor or inconsistent signage

Several participants noted that even if there were signs, they weren't always available in Braille, and they also pointed out that the Braille should follow the same language order as written text (e.g. if the English was written first on the sign, then the English Braille should come first) to avoid confusion. Participants also noted that signage—including emergency signage and directional signage such as that for COVID-19 spacing—was often not easily visible or readable, particularly from a distance.

Unsafe stairwells

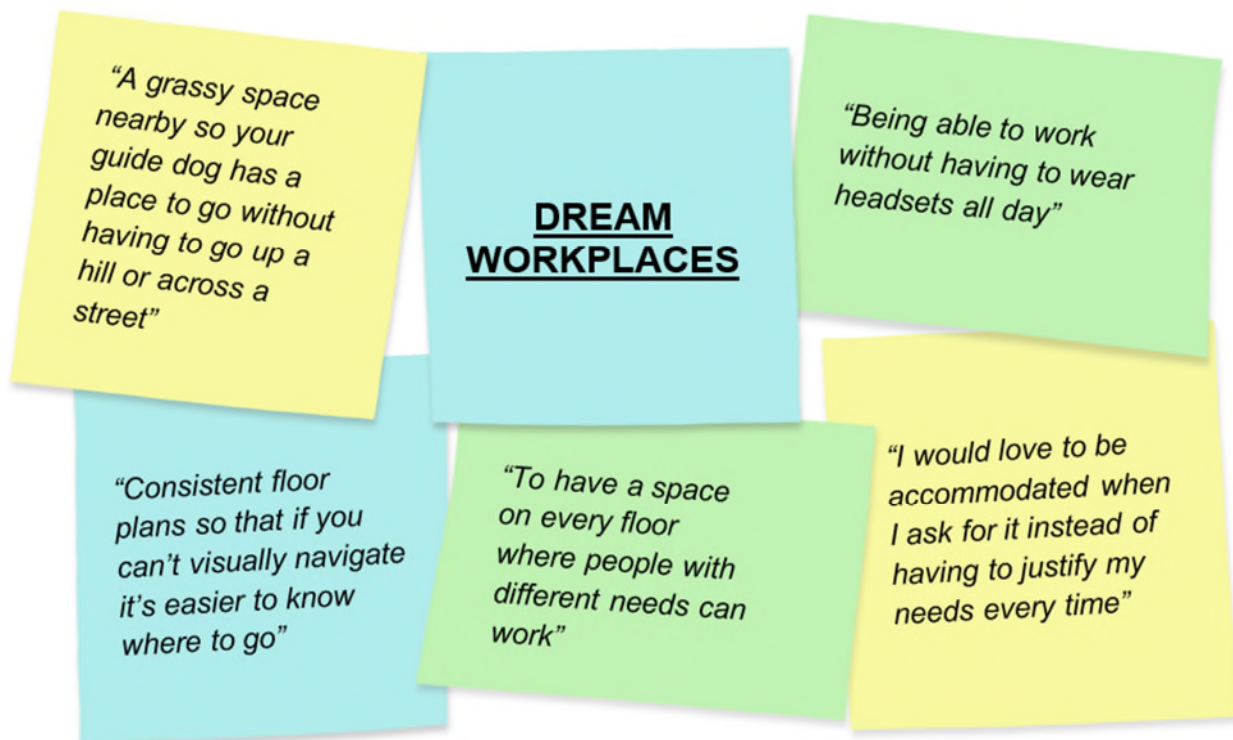


Stairwells came up frequently as places that most participants tried to avoid or felt unsafe. Participants noted that many stairwells were so grey that everything blended together and it was difficult to tell where the edges of the steps were as there was no contrast between the step they were on and the next step. Several mentioned that it would be helpful having something on the wall to give them some perspective and something to focus on, as without that it was difficult to detect changes in height.

Inaccessible meetings

Participants commented that, while they generally had accommodations that allowed them to work on computers at their personal workstations, these accommodations did not carry over to meetings in boardrooms. They were unable to see presentations on the screens in boardrooms unless the font size was very large, and also could not follow along on a tablet because either the presentations weren't sent ahead of time or there was nowhere to put their tablets where they could see them.

DREAM WORKPLACES



When asked about their vision for their dream workplaces, participants listed practical improvements that would make workplaces work for them.



Accessible boardrooms

Participants wanted boardrooms with easily accessible plugs and stands for their tablets— noting that the outlets should not be where the cords might create a tripping hazard—as well as whiteboards and screens that were large enough to see from any seat in the room. Several also mentioned that more education was needed to ensure that other employees pushed chairs into the table when they were done with their meetings, as the unpredictable location of chairs caused problems. Participants also commented that for boardrooms with glass, there should be something to visually distinguish the glass so they can tell that it's there.

Consistent floor plans, signage, and wayfinding

Participants felt that offices with consistent floor plans would make it much easier for them to find their way around. They also wanted easily readable signage that was done consistently between and around floors. Multiple participants said that visual or tactile wayfinding tools— such as differently textured flooring or differently coloured walls to indicate the various work zones—would help them identify locations on the floor.

Rapid and reliable accommodations

Participants were tired of having to justify their requests for accommodations or present multiple medical notes before finally receiving accommodations, particularly those participants with invisible disabilities. They wanted quick accommodations that weren't dependent on an empathetic manager but were instead available no matter which department or team they worked for.

Ability to listen to screen readers without headsets

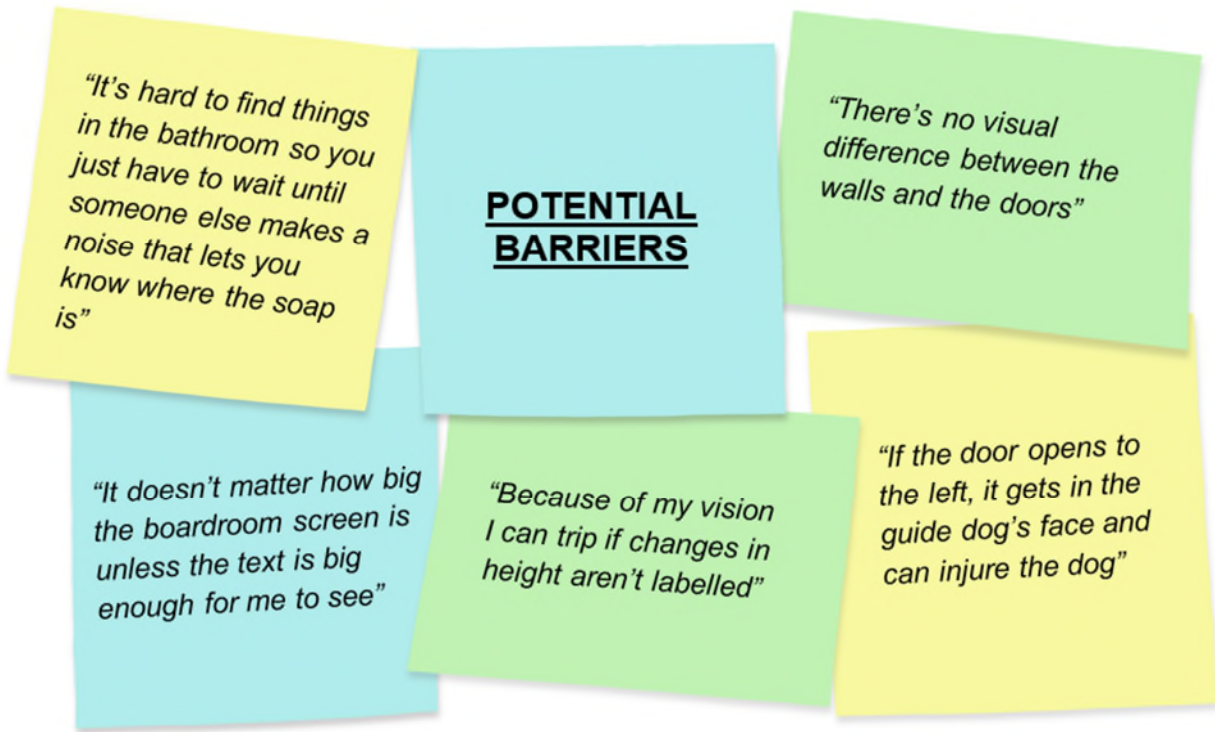
Participants commented that they would really like to be able to listen to their screen readers on low volume without having to wear headsets all day or worry about disturbing their coworkers with the noise. Several participants noted that they felt like they were missing out on the social elements of the workplace because they needed to wear headsets all day to hear their screen reader or else had to sit separately from their team.

Input into accommodations and tools

Participants wanted to have more say in the types of accommodations they received, instead of being told what they were going to get based on assumptions about what they needed. Several participants commented that they would like more input into what computer programs or tools were used at their work, because sometimes the programs chosen were not accessible.



POTENTIAL BARRIERS



Participants were asked for feedback about barriers in different parts of the workplace, as well as what they would like to see instead in those places. Some common barriers were identified:

Doors

Getting into the building presented a problem for many participants. Buttons to open doors and card readers for security passes were often not easily found or clearly visible. When doors opened automatically, participants felt that they often didn't stay open long enough for them to be able to find the door and pass through. Several participants with guide dogs commented that doors shouldn't open to the left as that can injure their guide dog, who walks on their left. Some participants disliked doors that opened automatically—without any interaction from them—because it was difficult for them to tell that the door was opening or that it had opened.

Participants suggested having a standard placement for card readers and door buttons so that they can easily find them no matter what building they are in. They also mentioned that any signage on doors should have standard locations too. Automatic sliding doors that opened sideways were suggested by several participants as a solution both to doors that could swing open and injure guide dogs and to the issue of having to find buttons. Participants noted that card readers shouldn't be smooth against the wall but instead should have a tactile element—such as a border or raised surface—that makes them easier to find.



Elevators

Elevators were another common barrier. The buttons to summon elevators were often difficult to find or poorly lit. Participants commented that they often couldn't tell if the button to summon the elevator had actually been pressed, whether the elevator that was coming was going up or down, and what floor the elevator was going to. Some participants worked in buildings where there was an audio announcement about which elevator was arriving, but they often couldn't hear the announcement over the noise in the lobby, and they noted that the announcement didn't identify if the arriving elevator was going up or down.

Participants recommended having large bold arrows or large brightly lit buttons that make it easy to see whether a button has been pushed, which elevator is coming, and which direction it is going. They recommended having talking elevators that not only let them know which floor the elevator was going to but that also let them know which way the elevator was going. Any audio feature needed to be loud enough to be heard over a crowd. Participants noted that elevator doors should remain open long enough for them to be able to find the correct elevator.

Common areas

Participants pointed out multiple barriers in common areas such as bathrooms, kitchens, and lockers. While one-person bathrooms were generally easier to navigate, participants found multi-person bathrooms more of a challenge as it was harder to know where things such as taps, soap, and paper towel dispensers were. They also sometimes struggled to know which bathroom to use as there wasn't always signage on or near the door. When it came to kitchens, many participants commented that they generally avoided using the communal kitchen. They found that appliances such as microwaves, coffee makers, and fridges were not accessible for them as the buttons weren't labelled or any labels were done in very small print. They also found it hard to deal with chairs, kettles, and common supplies that weren't put away consistently. For lockers, participants found it difficult to use combination locks or small keypads, and they also found it hard to identify which locker was theirs in a bank of lockers.

For all common areas, participants strongly recommended having consistent signage with both raised tactile lettering and Braille, as there are people who don't read tactile letters well but are fluent in Braille and vice versa. They wanted more than one single-stall bathroom to make it easier for them to navigate. In the kitchen, participants suggested using microwaves and coffee makers that could be controlled via smartphone. They also wanted more education for other employees around the importance of putting chairs back and of not leaving kettles, glasses, or other items on the counters where they could be knocked over. For lockers, participants recommended using raised number pads with large buttons that had numbers in Braille. They also suggested having visual and tactile ways to identify lockers.

Summary of Feedback

| Symbol | Meaning |
|--------|---------|
|--------|---------|



The green checkmark icon means: this has been addressed by GCworkplace.



The yellow line icon means: this has partially been addressed by GCworkplace.







The red x icon means: this has not been addressed by GCworkplace.









The blue asterisk icon means: outside the scope of GCworkplace.





| Issue/Barrier Raised | Already addressed by GCworkplace or others? | OPI | Explanation | Status Date | Future Improvements |
|---|---|-------------------------|--|---------------|---------------------|
| No choice of workpoints |  | PSPC – GCworkplace Team | <p>Workpoints are distributed to OPTIMIZE the workplace and reflect the functions of the organizations. Workpoints are not assigned or designed for individuals but rather for the optimum functionality of the workplace. The users have the freedom to choose their preferred work setting</p> <p>For more information: GCworkplace Design Guide - Part 3 Design Development, Section 3.2</p> | December 2020 | |
| Choice of workpoints only available at certain times (i.e. early in the morning) |  | PSPC – GCworkplace Team | <p>Taking considerations lessons learned from Workplace 2.0, GCworkplace is equipped with a large number of different workpoints. The users have the freedom to choose their preferred workpoints and setting according to their needs and preferences. As everyone is different, users should be able to find a workpoint that suits their needs.</p> <p>In some departments, it is also possible to reserve your workpoint in advance.</p> | December 2020 | |



| Issue/Barrier Raised | Already addressed by GCworkplace or others? | OPI | Explanation | Status Date | Future Improvements |
|------------------------|---|-------------------------|--|---------------|---------------------|
| Loss of privacy |  | PSPC – GCworkplace Team | <p>Focus Work and Refuge: GCworkplace design focuses on improving access to visual and acoustic privacy. By recognizing that all employees can benefit from an environment that supports focus work or time to recharge, GCworkplace is designed to support all occupants.</p> <p>For more information: GCworkplace Design Guide, Part 2 Key Design Principles, Section 2.4.2</p> | December 2020 | |
| Too much noise |  | PSPC – GCworkplace Team | <p>Taking into consideration lessons learned from Workplace 2.0, GCworkplace is divided into 3 distinctive zones: a quiet zone, a transitional zone and a collaborative zone. The quiet and collaborative zones are usually at opposite sides of a floor and are composed of various enclosed or open workpoints. And the transitional zone is the one that allows the other two to co-exist.</p> <p>For more information: GCworkplace Design Guide - Design Guide</p> | December 2020 | |




| Issue/Barrier Raised | Already addressed by GCworkplace or others? | OPI | Explanation | Status Date | Future Improvements |
|---|---|---|--|---------------|--|
| Part 2 Key Design Principles | | | | | |
| Length of time to get accommodations |  | PSPC – GCworkplace Team AND Departments HR Branches | GCworkplace removes part of this issue as many requirements are already in the space (height adjustable desks, ergonomic chairs, etc.). By integrating accessibility at the beginning of the design phase, GCworkplace is promoting an inclusive, equitable, and adaptive workplace. | December 2020 | Transfer consultation results to departments to see how they can facilitate and accelerate accommodation requests. |
| Accommodation for non-visible disabilities are harder to get or are not thought of automatically like visible disabilities |  | Departments HR Branches | | December 2020 | Transfer consultation results to departments to see how they can change the way non-visible disabilities are dealt with. |
| Need to always justify accommodation requests |  | Departments HR Branches | Doctor's notes or ergonomic assessments are often questioned by managers. | December 2020 | Transfer consultation results to departments to see how they can change the way accommodation requests are processed. |




| Issue/Barrier Raised | Already addressed by GCworkplace or others? | OPI | Explanation | Status Date | Future Improvements |
|---|---|---|---|---------------|---|
| Not enough recruitment of people with disabilities |  | Departments HR Branches | This is not something fixed by GCworkplace, but the Government of Canada is working on recruiting more people with disabilities by 2025. | December 2020 | |
| Lack of standardized process for accommodations |  | Departments HR branches, Office of Public Service Accessibility (OPSA) and maybe Shared Services Canada (SSC) | The Government of Canada (GC) Workplace Accessibility Passport might help solve this issue, at least partially. The Passport is a tool (yet to be launched) to create a more inclusive and accessible workplace by facilitating conversations between employees and their managers about the tools and supports employees need to succeed in their jobs. The Passport will support employee mobility and career development by ensuring the portability of adaptive tools and support measures between federal organizations. | December 2020 | <p>Verify when the passport will be launched.</p> <p>Transfer consultation results to departments and to OPSA and SSC to see what they are working on that could help with the issue.</p> |
| Everyone is given the same computer monitor regardless of their visual needs |  | PSPC GCworkplace Team, Departments IT branches, and Shared Services | GCworkplace offers a variety of monitors and screens for various workpoints. Workpoints are equipped with one or two monitors of different sizes, collaborative areas also have screens of different sizes and equipped with various options. | March 2021 | |

| Issue/Barrier Raised | Already addressed by GCworkplace or others? | OPI | Explanation | Status Date | Future Improvements |
|---|---|--|--|--------------|--|
| | | Canada (SSC) | Employees should be able to find a workpoint that includes a monitor or screen that fits their needs. | | |
| Computer programs and applications are not accessible (e.g. can't enlarge fonts, won't work with accessibility software) |  | Departments IT branches, and Shared Services Canada (SSC) | Computer programs and applications are the responsibility of SSC and the departments. However, GCworkplace is planning to test with different groups of users technology before using it in the workplace as a best practice. | March 2021 | Transfer consultation results to departments to see how they can improve the computer programs and applications. |
| Lights are not adjustable at workpoints or in meeting rooms |  | Office of Accessibility in the Built Environment (OABE) – PSPC AND PSPC GCworkplace Team | GCworkplace offers task lighting for various workpoints. It also suggest adding dimmable accent lighting for user adjustability. Accessibility tips are mentioned in the Technical Reference Manual. | January 2021 | |



| Issue/Barrier Raised | Already addressed by GCworkplace or others? | OPI | Explanation | Status Date | Future Improvements |
|---|---|---|---|-------------|---|
| Fluorescent lights bother people's eyes and create glare |  | Office of Accessibility in the Built Environment (OABE) – PSPC AND PSPC GCworkplace Team | GCworkplace offers task lighting for various workpoints. It also suggest adding dimmable accent lighting for user adjustability. Accessibility tips are mentioned in the Technical Reference Manual. | March 2021 | Add accessibility tips to the Technical Reference Manual (to be launched in April 2021) |
| Must wear headsets all day to avoid bothering coworkers |  | PSPC GCworkplace Team | GCworkplace is divided into 3 distinctive zones: a quiet zone, a transitional zone and a collaborative zone. The quiet and collaborative zones are usually at opposite sides of a floor and are composed of various enclosed or open workpoints. And the transitional zone is the one that allows the other two to co-exist. Employees would have the choice to select a workpoint that best fits their needs. An enclosed workpoint if the employee needs to concentrate or a workpoint in the open space away from the quiet space if the | March 2021 | Add accessibility tips to the Technical Reference Manual (to be launched in April 2021) |

| Issue/Barrier Raised | Already addressed by GCworkplace or others? | OPI | Explanation | Status Date | Future Improvements |
|---|---|--|--|---------------|---|
| | | | <p>surrounding noise isn't an issue for the employee. Both these options would ensure colleagues are not bothered by noise.</p> <p>For more information: GCworkplace Design Guide - Design Guide Part 2 Key Design Principles</p> | | |
| Workpoints are not large enough to accommodate a guide dog |  | PSPC GCworkplace Team | <p>GCworkplace offers various sizes workpoints, many options should be able to accommodate a guide dog.</p> <p>Accessibility tips to be added to the Technical Reference Manual to ensure people are aware it could be an issue.</p> | March 2021 | Add accessibility tips to the Technical Reference Manual (to be launched in April 2021) |
| No or not enough automatic doors |  | Office of Accessibility in the Built Environment (OABE) – PSPC | Due to the pandemic and other needs that have been identified during research and consultation, OABE is researching options for automatic door openers. | December 2020 | |
| Automatic door buttons are |  | Office of Accessibility in the Built | Due to the pandemic and other needs that have been identified during research and consultation, | December 2020 | New buildings, new space acquisitions, and fit-up projects will |

| Issue/Barrier Raised | Already addressed by GCworkplace or others? | OPI | Explanation | Status Date | Future Improvements |
|---|---|---|---|---------------|---|
| sometimes too small or not well planned | | Environment (OABE) – PSPC | OABE is researching options for automatic door openers. Where applicable, it is recommended to offer vertical push buttons or door sensors. | | incorporate updated requirements as part of the design and implementation. |
| Automatic doors that break and aren't fixed rapidly |  | PSPC – National Service Call Centre and Property and Facility Management Service Line | | December 2020 | Transfer consultation results to PSPC's National Service Call Centre and Property and Facility Management Service Line to see if/how they can offer a faster service. |
| Automatic doors don't stay open long enough |  | Office of Accessibility in the Built Environment (OABE) – PSPC | It appears that adjustment can be made to improve on the timing of the door in an open position. | March 2021 | |
| Doors open towards the person and to the left, which can injure guide dogs |  | Office of Accessibility in the Built Environment (OABE) – PSPC | The requirement will vary based on project specifics. There are limitations to doors swinging in (low occupancy situations). The doors typically have to swing in the | March 2021 | |



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|----------------------|---|-----|---|-------------|---------------------|
| | | | <p data-bbox="936 427 1339 483">direction of travel for egress in the case of an emergency.</p> <p data-bbox="936 516 1371 756">Example: If the door swings in and there is a fire, occupants could panic and rush to the door with the hope of exiting the space. By doing so, they could trap themselves in with the fire because the occupants are piled up at the door that swings toward the pile up.</p> <p data-bbox="936 792 1371 1245">The lack of a beep when opening the door may not allow a visually impaired person to hear the door opening, where companion dogs are used, they are trained to push the individual when they see something might hit or is risky to their master, which means that the dog is exposing itself to being knocked by the door. There several options to avoid this, among others, increasing the time during the door opening process, installing the electric door controls further than the doors to be applied, light flashing while door is in</p> | | |





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|---|---|--|--|-------------|---------------------|
| | | | <p>movement. The risk of the dog being hurt by the door is almost zero.</p> <p>If none of the context presented above provide sufficient explanation, we would like to suggest that a call be placed with the National Call Services Centre to address specific situation.</p> | | |
| Doors open automatically with no sound or warning | | Office of Accessibility in the Built Environment (OABE) – PSPC | Research is being done on this subject. | March 2021 | |
| Card readers are difficult to find (e.g. smooth or flat against the wall, on different sides at different doors) | | Office of Accessibility in the Built Environment (OABE) – PSPC | <p>Card readers shall be mounted 800-900 mm from the finished floor, located so the first device encountered when approaching the door.</p> <p>Enhancement recommendation is to locate the card reader within 1500 mm of door but not within door swing. It is also recommended that</p> | March 2021 | |






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|--|---|--|---|-------------|---------------------|
| | | | continuous maintenance of keeping floor area in front of devices clear of obstructions (i.e. plants, furniture, garbage bin...). | | |
| Signage at doors is not in consistent locations |  | Office of Accessibility in the Built Environment (OABE) – PSPC AND PSPC GCworkplace Team | All GCworkplace Fitups must follow FIP standards for any related signage elements. New signage applications are to be in a consistent location however there might be instances where site specific limitations prevent the signage from being installed in the consistent location. | March 2021 | |
| Signage is not available in tactile letters and Braille |  | Office of Accessibility in the Built Environment (OABE) – PSPC | GoC is required to follow FIP standards. There is research underway to determine the effectiveness of tactile lettering and numbers, braille and various signage technology applications. | March 2021 | |







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|--|---|--|---|-------------|---------------------|
| Signage is not consistent (e.g. French first in tactile letters but English first in Braille) |  | Office of Accessibility in the Built Environment (OABE) – PSPC | GoC is required to follow FIP standards. | March 2021 | |
| Lack of signage on floors makes it difficult to find boardrooms or workpoints |  | Office of Accessibility in the Built Environment (OABE) – PSPC | GoC is required to follow FIP standards. Rooms should have signage. | March 2021 | |
| Signage is difficult to read from a distance |  | Office of Accessibility in the Built Environment (OABE) – PSPC AND PSPC GCworkplace Team | GoC is required to follow FIP standards. As part of trying to make GoC more inclusive, it is recommended that in addition to FIP standard application, signage includes QR codes or NFC tags. The application of technology for signage is not part of standards at this time. | March 2021 | |





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|--|---|--|---|---------------|--|
| Safety signage (e.g. directional arrows on floor for COVID distancing) don't contrast with floor/wall |  | Office of Accessibility in the Built Environment (OABE) – PSPC AND PSPC – National Service Call Centre and Property and Facility Management Service Line | OABE recommends that the temporary signage visually contrast with adjacent walls and/or floor surfaces to create better depth perception, assist in wayfinding, identify potential obstacles, and minimize vertigo. | March 2021 | |
| Not enough accessible washrooms |  | Office of Accessibility in the Built Environment (OABE) – PSPC | | December 2020 | New buildings, new space acquisitions, and fit-up projects will incorporate updated requirements as part of the design and implementation. |
| Soap and paper towel dispensers, garbage, etc, are |  | Office of Accessibility in the Built | There are set accessibility standards for the maximum installation height for hand dryer, soap dispenser, towel | March 2021 | |

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| <p>placed in different locations in different bathrooms so it is difficult to know where to find them</p> | | <p>Environment (OABE) – PSPC</p> | <p>dispenser and other dispensers. Where any of the above are installed, the operable parts and controls of at least one of each type of washroom accessory should comply with the following requirements. It should be located within a 500 mm reach of a person seated at the lavatory; located with the dispensing point no higher than 1100 mm; and operable with one hand to dispense.</p> <p>The exact location within a washroom will vary depending on the configuration of the washroom.</p> | | |
| <p>Signage is on bathroom doors instead of beside the door so it could be dangerous if the door is opened while trying to read the sign</p> |  | <p>Office of Accessibility in the Built Environment (OABE) – PSPC</p> | <p>Both FIP and CSA standards require that the tactile washroom signage be located at a height of 1500 mm +/- 25 mm from finished floor, have a clear wall area of 75 mm around the sign and mounted on the wall beside latch edge of door. On occasion there are existing conditions that prevent the signage from being mounted on the wall next to the door. Example: limited wall space next to latch side of door.</p> | <p>March 2021</p> | |









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|---|---|--|--|---------------|--|
| | | | A tactile sign should be located to allow a person to approach the sign to within 100 mm without encountering protruding objects or standing within a door swing. | | |
| Hallways and kitchens too narrow or cluttered |  | Office of Accessibility in the Built Environment (OABE) – PSPC AND PSPC GCworkplace Team | CSA B651-18, 5.1 Accessible routes width has increased. An accessible path of travel is now 1700mm minimum wide and aisles are 1000mm min. Doorways are now 850mm. Post-COVID increase in GCworkplace designs. Accessibility tips will be added to the Technical Reference Manual, including space between tables and chairs, between counter tops and tables, etc. For more information: GCworkplace Technical Reference Manual | December 2020 | New buildings, new space acquisitions and fit-up projects will incorporate updated requirements as part of the design and implementation. Add accessibility tips to the Technical Reference Manual (to be launched in April 2021) |
| Microwaves, coffee makers, etc, are not accessible (no labels on microwave |  | Client departments | Coffee makers and microwaves are not usually bought through a GCworkplace project. | March 2021 | |









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|--|---|--------------|--|-------------|---------------------|
| buttons, no raised buttons on coffee makers, etc) | | | Research could be done to find the best possible options and added to some tips or best practices documents. | | |
| Common items (kettles, dishes, chairs) get moved and not put back where they belong | | GC employees | This is something that needs to be addressed as part of a culture change, not through GCworkplace. As a first step, awareness needs to be made around this issue, through communications and possibly some signage, reminding users on the importance of either not moving content that is not theirs or ensuring it is put back in its original location. | March 2021 | |
| Fridges are labelled with very small print | | GC employees | This is something that needs to be addressed as part of a culture change, not through GCworkplace. | March 2021 | |
| Items in fridges get moved around, making it difficult to keep lunches or other items there | | | This is something that needs to be addressed as part of a culture change, not through GCworkplace. As a first step, awareness needs to be made around this issue, through communications and possibly some signage, reminding fridge users on the importance of either not moving | March 2021 | |

| Issue/Barrier Raised | Already addressed by GCworkplace or others? | OPI | Explanation | Status Date | Future Improvements |
|--|--|---|---|-------------|---|
| | | | content that is not theirs or ensuring it is put back in its original location. | | |
| Lockers use combination locks or small keypads |  | PSPC GCworkplace Team and possibly PSPC Accessible Procurement Group | Some research and possibly testing would need to be done to find the best solutions. This includes dexterity issues but would also include other types of disabilities (cannot see the lock, cannot remember the combination, etc.) | March 2021 | Following the research, add accessibility tips to the Technical Reference Manual (to be launched in April 2021) |
| Lockers are difficult to identify |  | PSPC GCworkplace Team | Following feedback received, we suggest that a best practice would be to include some sort of signage to identify lockers. It could be nameplates, numbers, etc. | March 2021 | Add accessibility tips to the Technical Reference Manual (to be launched in April 2021) |
| Meeting room chairs do not get pushed back to the table after use |  | GC employees | <p>This is not something that GCworkplace can fix, this is a culture issue. GCworkplace wants to work on some potential communication pieces to try to help shift the culture.</p> <p>It would also be interesting to talk about this issue at a GCworkplace Community of Practice and Interest Meeting to get feedback on how best to approach this.</p> | March 2021 | This subject will be added as a potential discussion subject for a brainstorming session part of the GCworkplace Accessibility Community of Practice and Interest . |

| Issue/Barrier Raised | Already addressed by GCworkplace or others? | OPI | Explanation | Status Date | Future Improvements |
|---|---|--|---|-------------|---------------------|
| Not enough plugs in meeting rooms |  | PSPC GCworkplace Team | In a GCworkplace, it is recommended to incorporate furniture solutions with integrated power and technology throughout the spaces. | March 2021 | |
| Location of plugs means that there are cords along the floor (tripping hazard, challenge for people with white canes) |  | Office of Accessibility in the Built Environment (OABE) – PSPC AND PSPC GCworkplace Team | In a GCworkplace, plugs are located in easy to reach locations, often on desk or table surfaces which limits the tripping hazards. | March 2021 | |
| Computers in meeting rooms aren't equipped with accessible software so employees with visual impairments can't use them to do presentations, etc |  | PSPC GCworkplace Team, Departments IT branches, and Shared Services | Usually, in a GCworkplace, employees go to a meeting room with their laptops which would be equipped with all the software needed by the employee. In cases where a computer or tablet is used in the meeting space, the | March 2021 | |

| Issue/Barrier Raised | Already addressed by GCworkplace or others? | OPI | Explanation | Status Date | Future Improvements |
|--|---|---|---|-------------|---------------------|
| | | Canada (SSC) | technology should offer solutions for all employee's needs. | | |
| Meetings rooms only have screens at one end so it's difficult to see presentations |  | PSPC GCworkplace Team | It is already recommended in the Technical Reference Manual to have at least 2 large monitors for large meeting rooms. | March 2021 | |
| No tablets or other technology available in meetings rooms to be able to follow along with a presentation |  | PSPC GCworkplace Team, Departments IT branches, and Shared Services Canada (SSC) | Usually, in a GCworkplace, employees go to a meeting room with their laptops or tablets which would be equipped with all the software needed by the employee. Other technology would be at the discretions of the department IT branch with the help of SSC. It would be a best practice for teams to share fully accessible documents in advance to participants | March 2021 | |
| Flip charts with legs that angle outwards are a hazard for white cane users |  | PSPC GCworkplace Team | Flip charts are old practice. One of our planning tips in the Technical Reference Manual is to provide writable walls. | March 2021 | |

| Issue/Barrier Raised | Already addressed by GCworkplace or others? | OPI | Explanation | Status Date | Future Improvements |
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| <p>Glass doors with no outlines or visual contrast can't be seen</p> |  | <p>Office of Accessibility in the Built Environment (OABE) – PSPC</p> <p>AND</p> <p>PSPC GCworkplace Team</p> | <p>Privacy film are to be applied in accordance with applicable codes and standards. Fully glazed doors and partitions shall have at 1350-1500mm from the floor, 50 mm high continuous opaque strips that extend full width of doors and partitions.</p> | <p>March 2021</p> | |
| <p>In closed meeting rooms there is no way to tell if a room is occupied (e.g., people with visual impairments can't see through a window or read a hand-printed sign on the door)</p> |  | <p>PSPC GCworkplace Team</p> | <p>Interesting perspective, something we will consider going forward.</p> | <p>March 2021</p> | <p>Research to be done in 2021-22.</p> |
| <p>Elevators with vocal/computer are hard to hear in crowd</p> |  | <p>Office of Accessibility in the Built Environment</p> | <p>OABE is looking at a variety of options for a more inclusive and pandemic resistant environment. One</p> | <p>December 2020</p> | <p>More research, engagement and analysis to help ensure inclusivity.</p> |

| Issue/Barrier Raised | Already addressed by GCworkplace or others? | OPI | Explanation | Status Date | Future Improvements |
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| | | (OABE) – PSPC | solution may not meet everyone’s needs. | | |
| Elevator buttons do not light up at all or brightly enough to be visible |  | Office of Accessibility in the Built Environment (OABE) – PSPC | <p>Based on CSA B44-13 and 16 - Buttons with floor designations shall be provided with visible indicators to show that a call has been registered... If it does not light up, this would be considered as maintenance issue and be reported to the Facility Manager.</p> <p>The situation can happen if the lighting level in the elevator is too high to allow distinct that the light is on. Please note that if the B-44 indicates a minimum lighting level of 100 lux at the car controls, it is not specified a maximum. If this is the case, the lighting level must be corrected to make it possible to distinguish a light on from an off.</p> | March 2021 | |
| It is difficult to identify which elevator is arriving |  | Office of Accessibility in the Built Environment | Based on E- 18.5 and except for designation-orientated elevators, at the time a car answers a call, an audible and visual signal must be provided at the entrance of the host | March 2021 | |





VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS

| Issue/Barrier Raised | Already addressed by GCworkplace or others? | OPI | Explanation | Status Date | Future Improvements |
|---|---|--|---|-------------|---------------------|
| | | (OABE) – PSPC | <p>to indicate the direction of travel. The audible signal must sound once upwards and twice downwards or may be a verbal announcement. However, the sound level is set from a minimum of 10 dBA to a maximum of 80 dBA above the ambient.</p> <p>Basically in periods of heavy traffic, the ambient being closed or above 80 dBA, makes the hearing impaired not able to hear the sound signal, but the visual signal remains available since it is raised high at the level of the door opening. It is understood that it takes longer to get to the elevator when there are many people in the lobby. To reduce the impact of this problem, the time the door is left open can be increased thus allowing more time to enter the elevator.</p> | | |
| When an elevator arrives there isn't always a way to tell if it's going up or down | | Office of Accessibility in the Built Environment (OABE) – PSPC | As mentioned in the previous question, the moment a car answers a call, an audible and visual signal should be provided at the entrance of the host to indicate the direction of travel. The audible signal must sound | March 2021 | |



VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS

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| | | | once upwards and twice downwards. The lack of sound or light must be reported to the Property Facility Manager. | | |
| Elevator doors do not stay open long enough | | Office of Accessibility in the Built Environment (OABE) – PSPC | The set time during which the elevator door remains open is set to 3 S minimum, however it can be increased if necessary. This increase can be based for a specific period of time. | March 2021 | |
| Elevators with touchless buttons are challenging because people with visual impairments might run their hands over lots of them trying to find their floor | | Office of Accessibility in the Built Environment (OABE) – PSPC | In addition to the height, dimensions, arrangement of the buttons in the elevator cabin, article E.9.3.3.2 requires the presence of tactile and Braille characters immediately to the left of the buttons. The arrangement makes it possible to locate the order in which the buttons are found to avoid long searches. As for the tactile and Braille characters, their lateral position makes it possible to read the floors without activating a destination. Although this is very rare, there may be times when a tactile/Braille sign comes off, this should be reported | March 2021 | |



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| <p>Carpets with a lot of details cause dizziness or other physical impact</p> |  | <p>PSPC GCworkplace Team</p> | <p>immediately to the Property Facility Manager.</p> <p>The exposure to repetitive patterns combined with repetitive colors with strong contrasts, are what could trigger seizures or dizziness. For those that have visual or cognitive impairments, strong color contracts are good and useful when used properly, especially for signage and wayfinding. That said overly patterned spaces can be overwhelming and confusing. In a way, it becomes a sort of visual pollution, or visual miscommunication for them.</p> <p>A future document/annex will be created to list a series of different accessible measures to be considered.</p> | <p>March 2021</p> | <p>A future document/annex will be created to list a series of different accessible measures to be considered.</p> |
| <p>No tactile differences in floors (e.g. going from carpet to tile) to indicate locations</p> |  | <p>PSPC GCworkplace Team</p> | <p>GCworkplace offers well-designed orientation systems that provide visual, tactile, sound and digital directions throughout the space. It is therefore important to develop a simple, effective and constant</p> | <p>March 2021</p> | |






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|--|---|--|--|-------------|---------------------|
| | | | <p>strategic orientation plan. The strategies should help occupants and visitors to find their way easily and logically. It is therefore interesting to use and highlight the architecture, interior design, quality materials, lighting, work points and flooring concepts.</p> <p>Designers can also support wayfinding by creating various concepts such as using specific material near doors, using different colors to identify the Quiet Zone, or any other design strategies that support the information provided by the signs.</p> | | |
| Changes in height that aren't labelled are tripping hazards | | Office of Accessibility in the Built Environment (OABE) – PSPC | <p>There isn't enough context to narrow in on specifics so the below is a general comment based on CSA.</p> <p>A change in level within a 6 mm rise may be vertical. Change in level between 7-13 mm must be beveled but not steeper than 1:2 (50%), and a change in level greater than 13 mm</p> | March 2021 | |



VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS

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|--|---|---|---|-------------------|---------------------|
| | | | <p>must be beveled but not steeper than 1:12 (8.33%).</p> <p>The surface of a curb ramp or blended transition shall have a tactile attention indicator surface.</p> <p>A tactile attention indicator surface should be located at stairs, an unprotected drop-off edge, such as a transit platform, where the change in elevation is greater than 250 mm; or the slope is steeper than in a ratio of 1:3 (33%).</p> | | |
| <p>Stairwells are difficult to navigate because there is nothing to give perspective (e.g. no contrast on stairs, nothing on the walls)</p> |  | <p>Office of Accessibility in the Built Environment (OABE) – PSPC</p> | <p>Updated CSA requirements include tactile attention indicator surfaces at stairs. The nosing should be colour-contrasted with the tread and riser; and extends the full width of the tread.</p> | <p>March 2021</p> | |
| <p>Walls and doors are similar in colour so it's difficult to tell them apart</p> |  | <p>PSPC – GCworkplace Team</p> | <p>In the Technical Reference Manual we mention that doors should have a contrasting edging and handle.</p> | <p>March 2021</p> | |

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|--|---|--|--|-------------|---------------------|
| Difficult to tell different parts of the floor apart |  | Office of Accessibility in the Built Environment (OABE) – PSPC | It is recommended that changing materials and colours are ways in which we can provided enhanced wayfinding. | March 2021 | |
| Must memorize floor plans every time because there is no consistency between floors |  | PSPC – GCworkplace Team | Sequence of activities should be similar from floor to floor. We recommend that floors be zoned consistently to create a typical floor template so that consistent workpoint locations are easier to locate and wayfinding may be clearer to navigate. | March 2021 | |
| There is no plan to help employees with visual impairments evacuate in an emergency |  | Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC), Treasure Board Secretariat (TBS) and others | According to the Planning for Safety website of ESDC, a buddy system could be used. Under the buddy system, friends or associates volunteer to provide assistance to an individual who cannot evacuate independently. In the event of an alarm or emergency situation, the buddy and the person requiring assistance meet at a pre-arranged location. They then | March 2021 | |



VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS

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|--|---|--|---|-------------|---------------------|
| | | | wait there for assistance, or at the closest area of refuge, or the buddy helps the other person to evacuate. | | |
| There is no grass near buildings for guide dogs to use | | Office of Accessibility in the Built Environment (OABE) – PSPC | Enhancements to building exterior areas such as a dog relief area should be considered when a major project is anticipated. | March 2021 | |
| Not enough garbage cans outside to dispose of guide dog waste | | Office of Accessibility in the Built Environment (OABE) – PSPC | Accessories to support enhancements to building exterior areas should be considered when a major project is anticipated. | March 2021 | |