

PACIFIC COASTAL AIRLINES

Accessibility Plan

2023-2026

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Message from Pacific Coastal Airlines

Pacific Coastal Airlines is a B.C.-based organization that takes pride in providing safe, reliable, and top-quality service for passengers to various airports across British Columbia and Alberta. Our commitment lies in shaping a future where communities are connected and enriched, supported and embraced. We strive to act with integrity, honesty, and respect while embracing diversity and fostering unity.

As the sixth-largest airline operating at Vancouver International Airport (YVR), Pacific Coastal Airlines is the gateway for domestic and international travellers across Canada to explore the unique offers of many communities in British Columbia. As we extend our services to numerous remote communities throughout British Columbia, we recognize the significance of accessibility in fulfilling the travel requirements of our customers, whether it be for medical care, leisure, or business purposes. We understand that accessibility must be at the heart of our commitment to the communities we serve. By breaking down barriers and championing accessibility, we aim to enhance the overall travel experience for everyone.

Pacific Coastal Airlines has developed this Accessibility Plan to align with our obligations under the Accessible Canada Act (ACA). This comprehensive plan will serve as a guiding roadmap for our employees, contractors, and stakeholders as we strive to foster a more diverse and inclusive organization. By implementing the strategies outlined in this plan, we aim to create an environment where accessibility and safety are at central focus, ensuring that all individuals, regardless of ability, can fully participate in and benefit from our services and opportunities.

This Accessibility Plan was created with significant consultation from all areas of our business and has undergone a thorough review by our senior management team. We are committed to reviewing the plan annually, updating it at least every three years, and providing progress reports as mandated by legislation. We value the input of those with lived experiences as persons with disabilities and actively encourage their involvement at every stage of development and review.

Pacific Coastal Airlines will use the Accessibility Plan as a vital resource, enabling us to meet our obligations under accessibility and human rights legislation, as well as our organizational accessibility commitments and goals. By aligning our efforts with these guidelines, we aim to create a more inclusive and barrier-free environment for all.

Quentin Smith

President

Pacific Coastal Airlines

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The goal of the *Accessible Canada Act* (ACA) is to identify, remove and prevent barriers to accessibility in federally regulated organizations by 2040, and Pacific Coastal Airlines (PCA) is committed to doing our part. While the *Accessible Transportation of Persons with Disabilities Regulations* (ATPDR) do not apply to small carriers, such as PCA, Pacific Coastal Airlines is often the sole service provider for remote communities in British Columbia and therefore feel that the network we support deserves a higher level of accessibility than the regulations dictate.

Key Findings

Employees from each department involved in the passenger process for Pacific Coastal Airlines participated in the review, and it was noted that increased awareness and communication of policy and procedure is needed, as information is documented formally and, in some cases, not documented in each department. The group felt that a more cohesive digital location for all accessible information for staff to access would be beneficial for all.

There was a lack of understanding amongst multiple parties as to the specific application of the regulations due to the unique nature of our network, so clarification on a broader level is required.

The overall feel of the review was positive, and all staff felt confident that we currently provide accessible transportation for our passengers and are committed to continuing that moving forward.

Strengths

Pacific Coastal Airlines has a team that is dedicated to our passengers and their communities, and is constantly striving to exceed the regulations by offering accessible travel over and above the regulatory requirements. A number of strengths were identified during our accessibility review:

- ➔ PCA leadership and senior management has shown an eagerness in prioritizing accessibility across the network, putting us on a strong path towards the 2040 goal of the ACA.
- ➔ Our standard practice for documentation already meets regulatory requirement, and our technology department is committed to ensuring we research and develop ways to improve our digital presence with accessibility in mind, with a goal of working towards meeting Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) standards as soon as is practical.
- ➔ PCA already has mechanisms in place to receive and action feedback, with positive change implemented regularly from these comments.

Challenges

During the Accessibility Review, the following items were raised as challenges for PCA:

- As a small carrier, Pacific Coastal Airlines does not have the same resources or staffing to provide 24/7 administrative oversight as a large carrier would, so all front line staff must have a higher level of training on handling each circumstance
- Our aircraft fleet are not physically capable of transporting large mobility aids, and we often travel at or near capacity on our remote routes, meaning even some smaller rigid aids can be difficult to accommodate.
- There is no designated location for accessibility procedures due to information living siloed in individual departments rather than as a communal resource.

GENERAL

Pacific Coastal Airlines considers accessible travel a priority and welcomes all feedback regarding accessibility to services, facilities, and the way that Pacific Coastal Airlines employees, including contractors, interact with our passengers.

Appointed Contact Position

Our appointed contact position for acknowledging, responding and tracking feedback, and to provide alternate formats for information is our Customer Relations Coordinator. The Customer Relations Coordinator works standard Monday to Friday hours and is responsible for both the mailed in content and the accessibility email account. Our Call Centre Agents are available with extended coverage, with ranging hours due to seasonal volumes, and can provide information on our accessible processes as well as receive feedback over the phone, which they relay to the Customer Relations Coordinator.

Feedback Handling Process

The process for feedback and complaint handling is as follows:

1. Feedback and complaints to accessibility are received by email, phone, or mail and will be acknowledged within five business days of receipt.
 - a. If received through our call centre, the feedback is considered received by Pacific Coastal from the time the Customer Service agent received the feedback, or from the time a voicemail is listened to.
 - b. If received by mail, the feedback is considered received by Pacific Coastal from the time the letter is received by the address listed below.
2. Action and/or follow-up on the feedback/complaint may take more time depending on the nature of the comment:
 - a. If the feedback/complaint is in relation to Pacific Coastal Airlines employees, policies or processes, Pacific Coastal Airlines will take reasonable steps to rectify the concern and provide the information of what was actioned to the passenger. It is important to note that some topics may require significant investigation or exploration. In those instances, the airline will do its best to provide timely updates on a resolution or on what steps it has taken to address the concern.
 - b. If the feedback/complaint is in relation to a contractor who provides a service on behalf of Pacific Coastal Airlines, the same process will be followed as the point above, and Pacific Coastal Airlines will take the responsibility to follow-up with that contractor and provide the resolution back to the passenger.
 - c. If the feedback/complaint pertains to employees, policies or procedures of an airport authority/operator or other service provider not operating directly on behalf of Pacific Coastal Airlines, the passenger is to provide that feedback directly to the appropriate company.
3. Pacific Coastal Airlines records all feedback and complaints received in relation to accessibility to track and identify trends. This aids the airline in keeping accessibility at the forefront of our operation and ensures we can affect positive change wherever possible.

Mailing Address

Customer Relations
Pacific Coastal Airlines
4980 Cowley Crescent,
Richmond, B.C. V7B 1C1

Email Address

accessibility@pacificcoastal.com

Phone Number

Pacific Coastal Airlines Call Centre:

Toll free: 1-800-663-2872

Local: 604-273-8666

ACCESSIBILITY SERVICES, PROCEDURES, AND FACILITIES

Pacific Coastal Airlines (PCA) strives to publish all accessibility policy and procedure information in relation to requesting additional passenger services on our website at www.pacificcoastal.com/accessibility/. Anything not currently available on our website can be provided and explained by contacting us at one of the methods listed in our Contact Us section.

PCA is working towards ensuring our website content is in an accessible format, and we will provide all information in alternate formats upon request.

PROVISIONS OF CTA ACCESSIBILITY-RELATED REGULATIONS

All accessibility features provided by Pacific Coastal Airlines (PCA) have been developed to ensure compliance with the *Accessible Canada Act (ACA)*, the *Air Transportation Regulations (ATR)* and the *Personnel Training for the Assistance of Persons with Disabilities Regulations* as they apply to our services, with the ultimate goal of identifying, removing and preventing barriers to accessible travel.

Pacific Coastal Airlines is subject to and meets the following CTA Accessibility-related Regulations:

- *Air Transportation Regulations Part VII, Sections 146-156*
- *Personnel Training for the Assistance of Persons with Disabilities Regulations, Sections 4-11*
- *Accessible Canada Act Part 4, Sections 60-72*
- *Accessible Transportation Planning and Reporting Regulations*

CONSULTATION

Pacific Coastal Airlines works closely with a number of partners as a regular part of our operation and consulted with a variety of people while reviewing the plan and conducting our gap analysis. This included persons with disabilities both in the community and within PCA's own employee base, as well as community members who work regularly with Pacific Coastal Airlines to book passengers with disabilities. Through these interviews and consultations, we were able to assess our existing policies and set reasonable goals and measures for the future.

This consultation continues on a regular basis, with two main companies assisting in various capacities with ongoing assessment of PCA policy, procedure and our training programs.

1. Return on Disability
2. Power to Be

PCA is committed to continually improving and evolving our programs as we become more educated on how best to serve our communities.

GOALS AND MEASURES

It is the overall goal of PCA to employ industry best practice while meeting, and wherever possible exceeding, all regulatory requirements for accessibility. As a small carrier with primarily aircraft under 20 seats, many of the regulatory requirements do not apply, including the Accessible Transportation for Persons with Disabilities Regulations (ATPDR).

A significant goal for PCA is to work towards proactive voluntary compliance with the ATPDRs wherever feasible to ensure even the most remote communities we serve have the same access as those in metropolitan areas of Canada.

Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)

Pacific Coastal Airlines is committed to ensuring all persons have access to our services, including all information in print, digital and audio forms. All in-flight information is provided via in flight announcements and individual briefings as needed. Safety cards are available in print form including braille versions available upon request. Should the information we provided not be accessible to a passenger, all information will be made available in alternate forms upon request as applicable to each stage of the passenger's journey.

Goals related to Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)

- ➔ We do not currently meet the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) for our website, but have committed to, by the time we republish this plan in 2026 or before, if regulations change for small carriers, researching the viability of migrating our website to compliance with those standards.
- ➔ PCA will continue to engage with our community organizations and people with lived experience to further address the various forms of information we provide and make any required changes by the first progress report. As a first step, all documents made using Microsoft word are being assessed using the “Check Accessibility” feature. This includes not only public facing documents but also internal PCA documentation wherever able.

Communication, other than ICT

Our training programs already include material around communicating in a language that is informed, respectful and accessible to persons with disabilities. During consultation, it was noted there was room for improvement on this. PCA takes pride in ensuring that all our communication is respectful and created with care, whether that be through our social channels, on our website or in person. Our website content is regularly reviewed and updated, and our training programs are constantly evolving to stay up with industry best practices and beyond.

Goals related to Communication, other than ICT

- ➔ During our review of PCA material, it was identified that a very small number of manuals use outdated terminology when referring to persons with disabilities. PCA will update our internal documentation to reflect the appropriate way to refer to persons with disabilities:
 - For non-regulated documentation, no later than the first progress report

- For all regulated documentation, during the next update to that individual document.
- ➔ The Customer Service team has committed to building an enhanced training program primarily for our call center and customer service agents to further expand on their existing knowledge and skillset. The Timeline for this program currently is for completion by 2025 to allow for inclusion of and review by our community partners.

Procurement of Goods and Services

PCA includes accessibility as a key criteria during the procurement process when evaluating goods and services that will be used by, or to assist, persons with disabilities.

Goals related to the Procurement of Goods and Services

- ➔ PCA commits to consulting persons with disabilities prior to investing in new purchases to evaluate accessibility from the perspective of a person with a disability.

Design and Delivery of Programs and Services

The current design and design of all PCA programs and services considers all those who require access to our network. As we are a vital piece of the network.

Goals related to the Delivery of Programs and Services

- ➔ PCA has collaborated with Return on Disability to conduct mystery shopping by people with disabilities to assist in reviewing the passenger experience through their eyes. While unable to conduct this prior to the deadline for this plan, they are scheduled during the remainder of 2023. This will include anything from booking a flight using our website, contacting our call centre or through our customer service agents at the airport, to being assisted to and from the aircraft and experiencing our in-flight services.
- ➔ PCA has developed a close working relationship over the last 4+ years with Power to Be, who will be assisting in the ongoing collaboration and review of our training material and customer processes. This collaboration has no end date, but the goal of this collaboration is to ensure that all material and policy is built with the key principles of the ACA in mind—that all persons are treated with dignity and have the same opportunity for travel regardless of a disability.

Transportation

Many of our communities are serviced by taxis, rideshare and public transportation which are available in accessible forms. In the remote communities we serve, transportation to and/or from our airline can be limited and often only has a single option. To help eliminate barriers for our passengers, we have educated our staff on the limitations that exist for some of those communities, including starting an internal resource for staff to reference. This allows staff to speak to what options exist in our communities when passengers call to book it, or when they speak to an agent prior to departure.

Goals related to Transportation

- ➔ PCA Airports Department to continue to build out resources for Customer Service staff to reference with any/all local transportation options. This will note specifically if there are any restrictions known or processes that must be followed in order to accommodate passengers with disabilities.
- ➔ PCA to validate that processes exist in all communities to ensure accessible transportation is available for getting passengers to and from hotels when required due to irregular operations.

The Built Environment

PCA operates two different types of aircraft, Beechcraft 1900 and Saab 340. These are both small turboprop aircraft with limited features on-board. All feedback received regarding our built environment is escalated for immediate review by the Senior Management of Cabin Safety and Flight Operations.

Goals related to The Built Environment

- ➔ During the feedback process, it was identified that the on-board speakers are a potential barrier due to their sound quality, in part due to the noise level associated with the engines during flight. Assessment is in progress as to how we may be able to address that issue, and further information to that will be included in progress reports moving forward.
- ➔ PCA will continue to engage with our community organizations to bring people with lived experience to in-person trials to assess our current environment. The goal is specifically to identify what, if anything, can be modified and to identify what information is necessary to publish to ensure passengers can make educated decisions regarding their travel.
- ➔ There are limitations to our aircraft that we are unable to change due to the nature of our aircraft types and the airports we serve. We have already noted that by not publishing this information online, we create a barrier to those who need to locate that information and have set a goal to publish all critical specifications for our aircraft models online by September 1, 2023.

CONTACT US

Pacific Coastal Airlines
4980 Cowley Crescent,
Richmond, B.C. V7B 1C1

Email Address

accessibility@pacificcoastal.com

Phone Number

Toll free: 1-800-663-2872
Local: 604-273-8666

GLOSSARY

Accessible, Accessibility: products, services, facilities, or environments that can be accessed, used by, or understood by all persons, including those with disabilities

Ambulatory: a person who is able to move about within the aircraft unassisted.

Attendant: in relation to a person with a disability, an attendant is any person who accompanies a person with a disability in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care, or medical needs or with access to goods, services, or facilities.

Barrier: anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of their disability, including physical, architectural, information or communications, attitudinal, technological, or systemic policies or practices

Contractor: an organization or individual contracted by and to provide services on behalf of PCA

Disability: any impairment, including a physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication, or sensory impairment — or a functional limitation — whether permanent, temporary, or episodic in nature, or evident or not, that, in interaction with a barrier, hinders a person's full and equal participation in society

Information: includes data, facts and knowledge that exists in any format, including text, audio, images, digital or print, and that conveys meaning

Mobility Aids: Mobility assistive devices, such as a cane, walker, wheelchair, electric scooter, or similar device used to assist with mobility

Non-Ambulatory: a person who is not able to move about within the aircraft unassisted.

Non Self-Reliant: a person who is not independent, not self-sufficient and is not capable of taking care of all personal needs during flight, and does require assistance of a personal nature, such as assistance with eating, using the washroom facilities or administering medication, and does require services from the Carrier other than that which is normally offered by the Carrier

PCA: Pacific Coastal Airlines Ltd.

Self-Reliant: a person who is independent, self-sufficient and capable of taking care of all personal needs during flight, and does not require assistance of a personal nature, such as assistance with eating, using the washroom facilities or administering medication nor does not require services from the Carrier other than that which is normally offered by the Carrier

Service Dog: a dog is a service dog for a person with a disability if:

- ➔ The dog can be readily identified as one that is being used by the person for reasons relating to the person's disability, as a result of visual indicators such as an identifying vest or harness worn by the dog; or

- b) The person provides documentation from a regulated health professional confirming that the person requires the dog for reasons relating to a disability.

WCAG: Web Content Accessibility Guidelines, means the World Wide Web Consortium Recommendation