

**PACIFIC COASTAL AIRLINES**

**Accessibility Progress Report**

June 1, 2024

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## **GENERAL**

### **Appointed Contact Person**

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 online form submission, email, phone, or mail. Pacific Coastal Airlines accepts feedback submitted anonymously and will treat such feedback with equal weight to all other accessibility feedback being provided. All named feedback will be acknowledged within five business days of receipt.
  - a. If received through our call centre, the feedback is considered received by Pacific Coastal Airlines 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 Airlines 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.

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.

## **Online Form Submission**

Found at <https://www.pacificcoastal.com/accessibility/>

## **Mailing Address**

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

## **Email Address**

[accessibility@pacificcoastal.com](mailto:accessibility@pacificcoastal.com)

## **Phone Number**

Pacific Coastal Airlines Call Centre:

Toll free: 1-800-663-2872

Local: 604-273-8666

## 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*

To enhance our compliance with the Personnel Training for the Assistance of Persons with Disabilities Regulations, Pacific Coastal Airlines has re-written our initial Ground Operations Training to include more extensive training on the handling of mobility aids for our ground operations staff. As discussed in greater detail in the *Design and Delivery of Programs and Services* section of this report, we will additionally be enhancing our Airports Department Accessibility training programs as well.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES (ICT)

The goals, as listed in the Accessibility Plan published June 1, 2023, for this section of the plan are to investigate the viability of moving towards voluntary compliance with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) standards as well as to begin using the “Check Accessibility” feature when making documents in MS Word. We continue to work towards both of these goals.

## COMMUNICATION, OTHER THAN ICT

The goal, as listed in the Accessibility Plan published June 1, 2023, for this section of the plan included the updating of documents to reflect appropriate reference to persons with disabilities as well as an enhanced training program for customer service and call centre agents.

We continue to update all documentation with appropriate terminology, including referring to the person before the disability, and have ongoing review of documentation with accessibility in mind.

Our enhanced training for Customer Service and Call Centre Agents is being expanded to include all Airports roles, which includes our ramp and cargo agents as well. This has begun with a revamp of our new hire Ramp agent training which encompasses more accurate and well-rounded training on the handling of mobility aids, and the assistance of passengers with disabilities. Our goal of launching this enhanced training program in 2025 is on schedule.

## **PROCUREMENT OF GOODS AND SERVICES AND FACILITIES**

The goal, as listed in the Accessibility Plan published June 1, 2023, for this section of the plan is a commitment to consulting with persons with disabilities prior to investing in new purchases. We have not made any new purchases in relation to our passenger programs however through our consultations with Return on Disability it was noted that the Mobi-Lift equipment we have in a number of stations network wide is not a positive experience from the perspective of the passenger, and therefore we have focused on our business plan efforts on new boarding ramps instead. Accessibility equipment is a very costly investment, and can take a significant amount of time to get financial approval prior to the start of a procurement process.

## **DESIGN AND DELIVERY OF PROGRAMS AND SERVICES**

The goals, as listed in the Accessibility Plan published June 1, 2023, for this section of the plan are to work with our consultation partners to improve the programs and services offered by Pacific Coastal Airlines including having them provide mystery shops on our behalf. We completed the mystery shops as planned, with a report having being provided. Using that report, we identified that the transparency of procedures surrounding the transportation of passengers with disabilities was the biggest gap for both employees as well as passengers. With that report, along with feedback from our passengers, we have set up the following programs:

1. The development of a One Person, One Fare policy which is intended to be launched in the remainder of 2024. This will be communicated extensively internally as well as published on the website including all relevant guidance on how to utilize that fare.
2. A detailed table of aircraft specifications is being compiled to publish on our website. The intent of this is to allow passengers to reference this information independently, as well ensure we have a consistent and reliable source of information for our staff to reference when assisting passengers.
3. The Regulatory Compliance & Policy Committee meets monthly with representatives of each department to review all active and known upcoming changes to policy and procedure. Accessibility review has been imbedded as a part of this committee to ensure all policy and procedure is reviewed against accessibility regulations and general best practice.
4. Develop an Accessibility Committee separate to the existing regulatory and policy committee to have dedicated time reviewing policy and procedure for accessibility, including reviewing accessibility training as well as the Accessibility Plan itself. The intent is to have this committee meet bi-annually, however frequency will be reviewed once the committee has been launched.
5. Develop a process for passengers who have difficulty completing online forms to be able to contact our call centre to have them assist in submitting the form.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

The goals, as listed in the Accessibility Plan published June 1, 2023, include validating existing transportation options outside of Pacific Coastal Airlines in the individual communities we serve as well as creating and maintaining useful internal resources for our staff to reference when

communicating with our passengers. While not owned or operated by Pacific Coastal Airlines directly, ensuring our passengers are able to access accessible transportation before and after taking a flight will ensure a consistent experience for our passengers.

There is no significant progress made in this area since the publishing of the plan on June 1, 2023; however, it remains in our goals for the remainder of the 2023-2026 Accessibility Plan.

## **THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT**

The goals, as listed in the Accessibility Plan published June 1, 2023, for this section of the plan include improving the quality of our on-board speakers, engaging with our community partners to evaluate our built environment as well as publishing our aircraft specifications online for transparency for the community.

After detailed investigation and assessment related to the on-board speakers, it was determined to be non-viable at this time to replace them. While we continue to evaluate options for the future, our focus has shifted to our in-flight crew regarding the clarity and speed of speech as well as utilizing personal briefings for passengers who have self-identified as needing additional assistance. We have seen an increase in customer satisfaction related to these changes in the last month already. We have also provided ear plugs to all airport bases for passengers to take prior to boarding, as filtering out the engine noise has made an immediate improvement as well.

As part of our consultation with Return on Disability, they evaluated our built environment during the mystery shops in 2023. It was noted that our aircraft are very restrictive, and therefore have necessary limits in what can be safely boarded in regards to mobility aids as well as the general support we can provide to passengers depending on the needs related to their disability. While it was acknowledged that this is reasonable given the type of aircraft we serve, the lack of information available regarding that information was a concern. We have therefore prioritized the goal of publishing aircraft specifications, as listed in our 2023 Accessibility Plan, and have developed the following program with our Maintenance department to ensure consistency and transparency moving forward regarding our aircraft:

1. We have measured the interiors of our aircraft to confirm the specifications that will be published on our website and to set a standard for consistency moving forward. This will include things such as armrests being able to move and seat recline, among others.
2. Accessibility Features are being given their own identification on our maintenance checklist that is used during our heavy maintenance cycle. This is done on a 2-year cycle for each aircraft, and at that time all specifications will be reviewed on that aircraft to ensure standard. Any items that are non-standard or require modification will be done during that time. Where possible, we are also striving to standardize the location of accessible seating on all our aircraft.
3. Accessibility Features are being given their own identification on our onboarding checklist for new aircraft when they are introduced into the fleet. This will allow us to maintain consistency for our passengers.

## FEEDBACK INFORMATION

We have received accessibility feedback on a handful of overarching topics since the launch of the plan in June of 2023. All accessibility feedback has been taken into consideration for their respective areas of this plan, and the steps being taken in regards to the feedback can be found in that area of the report. The feedback received was as follows:

### Design and Delivery of Programs and Services

**Feedback:** We do not have a published process on our website for passengers who require a personal attendant during travel, and passengers were met with inconsistent process and information from staff.

**Feedback:** Our Service Dog acceptance policy includes a form that must be completed and submitted, but the published policy does not consider passengers who have difficulty completing and submitting a digital form but who are otherwise independent.

**Feedback:** We do not currently have a sufficient program in place to ensure that PCA has the ability to immediately provide access to a temporary aid when a mobility aid does not arrive with the passenger, or arrives in a condition other than the way it was checked in with.

### Built Environment

**Feedback:** We do not have published information regarding our aircraft specifications in relation to accessibility, and it is not readily available via our call centre agents or our accessibility department. This includes items such as which aircraft have moveable armrests and the physical dimensions of the seats, as well as mobility aid restrictions.

**Feedback:** It was reported that a passenger was unable to buckle their belt when sitting in one seat but had no issue while sitting in a different seat resulting in anxiety for the passenger.

## CONSULTATIONS

Pacific Coastal Airlines consulted with the company Return on Disability which included multiple in person and virtual meetings over the course of this past year, including a presentation and report compiled based on the mystery shopping of multiple flights by passengers with disabilities through their organization. The Report allowed us to determine what the priorities should be and those have been used as the basis of the accessibility program since September, 2023 when the report was received.