

Accommodation Sector

Providing a Welcoming, Inclusive Experience for Travellers with Disabilities

Nova Scotia sold close to 3 million accommodation, room nights in 2022 (Tourism Nova Scotia). Additional research notes that 88% of people with a disability take a holiday each year and is approaching 25% of the tourism market (MyTravelResearch.com).



This accommodation sector information sheet provides ways to enhance services, improve amenities and offers tips on how to provide an inclusive guest experience for people with disabilities. This resource pairs with a broader accessibility guide for all tourism businesses.

Booking & Arrival Experience

- During the booking process, ask guests if they require any support and note this information for arrival. For online bookings, provide a space for comments relating to special needs and requests.
- Ensure the front desk has a lower counter or a clipboard available for guests who cannot access the counter.
- Have an accessible seating area for guests waiting to check in or needing assistance.
- Ensure there is a sheltered, designated, accessible waiting area for guests' pick up and drop off.
- Staff should be available to assist with bags and to escort guests to their rooms.
- Ensure pathways to guestrooms and public areas are open and clear (i.e. ensure the housekeeping cart is not obstructing the hallway).

Guestrooms

- Rooms should be spacious with an open floor plan and should have a wheel-in shower so wheelchair users can move with ease.
- If the guestroom has a doorbell, it should be equipped with a flashing light to notify guests when it is activated.
- Alarm clocks that have flashing and vibrating features should be available.
- Emergency alarms in guestrooms and public spaces should be visual and auditory. Check the applicable local building codes for details.
- Ensure room fixtures and amenities, such as beds, coat hooks, closet rails, and peepholes, are at a lowered height that is easy to access. See the resources section on this tip sheet for links to resources for specific dimensions.
- Allow room service to be ordered via text to accommodate guests with verbal or auditory challenges.

Information on your Guest Services and Amenities

- Provide a list of your amenities. Share details on how they are accessible. Each area should be addressed (i.e. restaurants, gym, spa). Include information for the areas you own and operate and those leased to another operator.
- Ensure the services and amenities geared towards guests with disabilities are identified on the third-party booking sites you work with. Ensure you update the information as you add and implement new accessibility measures.
- When recommending attractions, restaurants, theaters and other places of interest, to your guests, ensure you know which are accessible and how they are accessible. Offer to make special arrangements, if required.



Training and Guest Feedback

- Have staff and management trained on inclusion, accessibility, and supporting people with disabilities.
- Provide various accessible options for customer feedback, complaints, and suggestions. Include phone numbers, mail, online form and hours of operation where someone is available in-person.
- Encourage recommendations on increasing accessibility from guests who have stayed with you.

“Motivate them, train them, care about them, and make winners out of them... they'll treat the customers right. And if customers are treated right, they'll come back.”

— J. Willard Marriott, founder of the Marriott Corporation

Resources

- Nova Scotia Accessibility Directorate provides resources, guidelines, and tool kits.
- Nova Scotia Interim Accessibility Guidelines for Indoor and Outdoor Spaces.
- Tourism Industry Association of Nova Scotia (TIANS) provides programs and advocacy for tourism issues.
- The Hotel Association of Nova Scotia (HANS) provides resources, advocacy and support.