



Accessibility Plan

July 2025 Progress Report

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1.0 General

1.1 Purpose of this Progress Report

- a) CanWest Air and Alberta Central Airways are committed to ensuring we provide equal access and opportunity for all staff and passengers, including those with disabilities. As sister companies performing similar work with similar equipment, and sharing management and front line staff, facilities, safety programming, and accessibility programming, this progress report is applicable for both organizations.
- b) The purpose of this progress report is to describe the steps we've taken towards our accessibility plan goals, including lessons learned from experience and feedback and to meet our obligations under the Accessible Canada Act and the Accessible Canada Regulations.
- c) Our goals are to identify barriers and continually improve our accessibility by addressing the barriers.
- d) The goal of achieving full accessibility is a process. CanWest Air and Alberta Central Airways will review and update the accessibility plan at least every 3 years, or more often as needed as new initiatives are added. We will continue to consult and review feedback with the goal of continual improvement.
- e) The accessibility plans and feedback processes can be found on our company websites:

<https://www.canwestair.com/accessibility>

<https://www.albertacentralairways.com/accessibility>

1.2 Accessibility Contact

- a) CanWest Air and Alberta Central Airways encourage feedback from our passengers, our employees, and other stakeholders. Feedback on our accessibility plan, feedback process and progress reports help us remove barriers. The Chief Operations Officer receives feedback on accessibility through the Safety Management System. He may be contacted by email, telephone or post as follows:

Email: accessibility@canwestair.com

Phone: 1 (866) 849-5353

Mail: Attn: Safety Management System
119, 1519 – 35 Avenue East
Edmonton International Airport, AB T9E 0V6

1.3 Feedback Process

- a) The Chief Operating Officer is designated to receive feedback and address it.
- b) Can West Air/Alberta Central Airways will acknowledge, assess and act upon your feedback in a timely manner. If you provide contact information with your inquiry, we

may reach out to consult with you for further feedback on the concern and any proposed changes.

- c) Routine reviews of the feedback messages will be conducted to identify patterns, themes or trends. Frequency of these reviews will depend on the volume of feedback messages received. Feedback will be incorporated into future progress reports and updated plans.
- d) CanWest Air and Alberta Central Airways understand that access to our accessibility plan, progress reports, and feedback process in alternate formats is required to accommodate diverse needs. Passengers and clients can request our accessibility plan, progress reports, and feedback process in the following formats:
 - Print copies of the plan in the link above
 - Large Print formats, electronic or physical copies (standard available in 16pt, sans serif font unless otherwise requested)
 - Braille
 - Audio
 - Other electronic formats compatible with adaptive technology
- e) Please request these alternate formats through one of the communication channels listed below. We are committed to fulfilling requests for print or large print formats within 15 days, and within 45 days for braille, audio or other electronic formats. We encourage our passengers and clients to communicate any specific formatting needs, and will work with them to accommodate each individual's request and preferences.
- f) Feedback on our plan helps us remove barrier. The Chief Operations Officer receives feedback on accessibility through the Safety Management System. He may be contacted by email, telephone or post as follows:

Email: accessibility@canwestair.com

Phone: 1 (866) 849-5353

Mail: Attn: Safety Management System
119, 1519 – 35 Avenue East
Edmonton International Airport, AB T9E 0V6
- g) Persons wishing to provide feedback in an anonymous fashion are encouraged to do so by mail. No return address or identifying information is required for this process.

2.0 Feedback Received by the companies

There has been no feedback from passengers or employees in regards to the Accessibility program through our Feedback process at this time. Consultations were conducted outside of the established feedback process to gain insights into our processes.

3.0 Consultation

Internal and External consultations were utilized in the process of auditing and reviewing our facilities, communication, the built environment, and delivery of services, as well as to establish a baseline for our training program.

The objectives for the consultations were to address:

- Communication processes, in the booking process and the on-site passenger interaction including loading, disembarking and passenger briefings
- Provide an audit for the Built Environment
- Review our Delivery of Goods and Services elements for accessibility, including performance of a mock charter flight with volunteers of higher accessibility needs as a review and feedback method
- Generate insights for our training program through a learned experience opportunity

3.1 Internal Consultation

The internal consultation process was completed by seven bases and entailed two phases: a facility assessment, and an experiential tour through each facility, all conducted between September 2024 and May 2025.

The facility assessment checklist was drafted by the QMS Manager and administered by the OHS Manager using OHS committee base representatives. It was based on Municipal, Provincial, and Federal considerations for accessibility requirements and best practices, and can be found in Appendix A for review. The assessment consisted of six categories:

- Parking Areas
- Entrances
- Signage and Alerting Systems
- Bathrooms
- Interior
- Mobility Aids

The experiential tours were conducted by means of a representative at each participating base and entailed navigating our facilities, from car seat to aircraft seat, while relying on a mobility aid (usually a wheelchair, or a walker) The intention was that this process would highlight additional areas for improvement that may not have been considered in the initial checklist. If such considerations were discovered, they were documented on the “Comments/Audit Suggestions” portion of the submitted checklist.

A review was completed by management on the charter operations and it was noted that the Edmonton, Fort Vermillion, High Level, and Fort McMurray locations are the primary charter operation bases that may encounter persons with advanced accessibility needs. These bases are the areas being prioritized for improvements and corrective actions.

3.1.1 What we learned from self-auditing and experiencing our bases utilizing a mobility aid:

- Accessible parking is not designated at 4 of our bases, and at one base the designated parking is two stalls away from the door, with the curb to a sidewalk blocked by a bench. Accessibility requires transit through the parking lot space instead of sidewalk.
- Some staff areas are accessible only by stairs (5 bases have second stories used by staff only) This does not affect passenger access.
- Only two locations have power activated doors
- No bathrooms are equipped with change tables
- No dedicated service animal relief areas have been designated
- Some doors including bathroom doors designated as accessible are heavy to open
- Not all accessible bathrooms are labeled as accessible, and not all facilities have accessibility furnished bathrooms with grab bars and toilets at suitable height or clearance for a wheelchair transfer
- Not all facilities have signage for the main entrance for passengers
- Not all soap and paper towel dispensers are automated (2 bases do not have automated dispensers) and some are placed at difficult heights for a wheelchair user.
- One facility had knob style door handles instead of levers, these were replaced when identified
- Most facilities have an aural only fire alert system

3.2 External Consultation

On August 15, 2024, three individuals who experience accessibility challenges in their daily lives were invited, along with some personal escorts, to participate in a scenic flight around the Edmonton Area in exchange for providing feedback on our accessibility processes and ways to improve. One passenger primarily used a wheelchair, one passenger relied on a walker, and one passenger was on the autism spectrum. In addition, one able bodied, pregnant woman also participated in the flight.

Each participant was asked to provide feedback on their experience from the moment they exited their vehicle to the return to their vehicle at the end of the day. Elements inquired about included:

- Including using washrooms
- Navigating the waiting areas and hangar/ramp to the aircraft
- Boarding, disembarking from, and maneuvering within the cabin of a Cessna Grand Caravan

Each passenger was interviewed several days before and immediately after the flight to ensure potential considerations were made for their arrival and to document their experience.

In advance of the flight, flight crews were briefed on the suspected needs of the passengers, the process being evaluated, and the need for feedback to improve our programs. A mock, non-ambulatory passenger loading was practiced with a “sling seat” device procured to evaluate its ability to improve accessibility.

3.2.1 What we learned from our participant feedback:

a. Facilities

Bathrooms in Edmonton were found to be predominantly accommodating, with grab bars, ample space, and accessible amenities, but all three passengers/escorts noted that the doors to the CanWest Air bathrooms were challenging to open, due to their weight, and the signage into the men’s bathroom in the foyer was confusing.

There was a phase inspection being performed in the hangar, adding the need to clear cables from the pathway to the aircraft. This did not cause any delays, but is useful to consider in future. In this situation, the aircraft was boarded inside the hangar, not on the ramp.

Seating in the waiting area wasn’t well suited to wheelchair access as it was a conference room set up, with many office style chairs in the space to navigate around.

b. Aircraft

Feedback from the boarding ,maneuvering inside, and disembarking from the aircraft included:

- All three passengers boarded the aircraft via the airstairs and those with mobility aids confirmed that the first step would have been too high without the added wooden step that was placed on the ground below the door. Additional portable steps should be considered for carriage on all charter aircraft for this purpose.
- The cable handrails on the stairs were found to be unstable when heavily leaned upon, even with staff adding weight to the bottom of the stairs for added rigidity.

- Staff members putting pressure on the lowest step to tighten the cables was an improvement to stability
- Having staff on either side of the door plus one inside the aircraft provided necessary for added support of the passenger needing the most assistance.
- A removable rigid sheath that could be placed over the cable, or some type of external handrail was suggested as a way to reinforce the system when needed.
- Both passengers with mobility issues found maneuvering within the aircraft challenging, as the seating configuration left little room down the aisle.
 - Staff experimented with removing seats, but the advantage of having places to support oneself on the seats was more beneficial than the slightly greater room to maneuver with seats removed.
 - It was suggested that, whenever possible, those with the greatest mobility challenges be seated in further aft seats to avoid maneuvering the aisle. Another suggestion was to remove only the single seat in the aftmost position.

Two passengers disembarked via the airstairs, while one volunteered to use the procured seated sling, supporting our efforts to test out the concept.

- The seated sling is a flexible carrying aid that supports a passenger in a seated position with handles on either side of their thighs and chest, and buckles to secure over their lap and chest. See image below depicting the sling seat device. It can be maneuvered under the passenger in their mobility device, and has handles to use to allow the passenger to be carried into the aircraft.



- Staff attempted carrying the passenger through both the airstair and cargo doors, finding that the cargo door allowed the most freedom of movement.
- Ideally, at least three people are required to perform this shift, with two on the ground and one in the aircraft. The passenger was supported in a seated position

on the floor of the aircraft, with a wheelchair placed on the ground below. The passenger was carefully lowered into the wheelchair while being supported by staff on the ground using the seat and chest handles. A staff member inside the aircraft offered slight support to the top of the sling, while being cautious in a bending position.

The seated sling was also tested to load one passenger into the aircraft and staff found that the airstair door was the easiest option for this, as the passenger could be moved step by step, allowing a moment to reposition as needed. Similar to disembarking procedures, one staff member lifted from within the aircraft, while one person on either side of the passenger were lifting the chest and seat handles. It was noted that caution must be taken to not exceed the weight limitation on the airstair door, as people may use the steps to assist in lifting. Caution must be exercised by the person inside the aircraft lifting, use of good lifting form is essential to avoid injury.

c. General feedback

- Having time to move at their own pace was essential for all three passengers
- Two participants shared the importance of respecting a passenger's autonomy by never touching them without first asking if they want help.
- One passenger become quite nervous once inside the aircraft, but they were given space and time to decide if they were comfortable to move forward. This afforded time resulted in the passenger deciding to continue the flight. This reinforced that additional time be allocated for persons with accessibility challenges when booking/scheduling flights.
- It was recommended that staff training include messaging about not making assumptions about a person's ability, treating all passengers with respect, dignity, and compassion, and keeping solutions simple.
- It was also recommended that enquiring about accessibility requirements during a charter booking could help alleviate surprises.

4.0 Progress Report:

Based on the feedback of our internal audit processes and the consultations undertaken, CanWest Air and Alberta Central Airways recognize new action items in the goal of improved accessibility. An updated action plan has been created. The action items are as follows, including the progress report on original action items:

4.1 Employment

Barrier Identified: Our Job postings include a statement of equality, however they do not address accessibility.

Progress Update: The company websites were updated to reflect accessibility to our applicants

4.2 The built environment

Base facilities were audited for barriers. The consultation process invited persons with accessibility challenges to provide input. The identified barriers and progress updates are as follows:

Barrier: Door closers in Edmonton made bathroom access difficult

Progress Update: Door closers in Edmonton and all other bases adjusted for better access in March/April 2025

Barrier: The passenger lounge in Edmonton was difficult to maneuver for a person with mobility aids such as a wheelchair due to the large conference table set up and clutter of office chairs

Progress Update: A complete new layout including new furniture and a re-designed layout allows better access to all waiting lounge users.

Barrier: There are no infant change tables available at any hangars

Progress Update: Not yet addressed

Barrier: Not all company bathrooms have automatic soap and paper towel dispensers for ease of use

Progress update: Not yet addressed

Barrier: Accessible parking at the YEG airport facility requires transit through the parking lot driving area to access the front entry

Progress update: Being addressed with property manager, ongoing

Barrier: Service animal relief areas not designated

Progress update: Base information documents pertaining to accessibility are in progress for development, this will include a service animal relief area

Barrier: Audible only fire alarms are present at most facilities

Progress update: Visual fire alarms install would occur in the event of renovations replacing the existing alarm system. Base orientation process under review to implement a buddy system or similar for hearing impaired persons in the event of a fire.

4.3 Information and Communication Technologies

Barrier: The company websites need to be reviewed for compatibility with adaptive technology and WCAG 2.2 standards

Progress report: Not yet accomplished

4.4 Communication other than information and communication technologies

Barrier: The passenger booking process did not include an inquiry to assess if accessibility needs existed

Progress report: a review of the passenger booking process identified that the company CSR representatives ask during the initial booking process if there are any special services or accommodations needed. Bookings are accepted in verbal format by phone or written by email. While no accessibility needs have been identified thus far, the CCSR staff are aware that additional timeframes are to be booked for charters where accessibility challenges exist.

Barrier: Language or speech barriers may exist between company staff and passengers, including sign language. There are no translation services immediately available for staff

Progress report: Translation services were reviewed and found readily available on line as needed for text products.

Resources for sign language interpretation services were identified as available through the following service providers:

- Deaf & Hear Alberta, www.deafandhearalberta.ca, 1-866-471-2805, email booking@deafandhearalberta.ca
- Video remote interpreting through Asign, assign.ca, 613-521-6720, email hello@assign.ca

4.5 Procurement of Goods, services, and facilities:

No barriers identified in the procurement of goods, service and facilities at this time

4.6 Design and Delivery of Goods and Services

Barrier: Low staff awareness in regards to passengers with accessibility challenges.

Progress report: Training development is underway to address passenger autonomy, passenger loading and unloading, passenger briefings, and other lessons learned. Training program for CSR and booking staff, to ensure they understand the additional time needs and accessibility processes. This has been assigned for including into existing training material so as to incorporate accessibility as normal operations not stand alone material.

Creation of accessibility documents for each base has been initiated to identify existing aids and equipment as well as suggestions where barriers exist and how to overcome them, as a quick reference guide for all staff. This will be housed in a created information section on the company internal website.

4.7 Transportation

Barrier: Some passengers primarily in Fort Vermilion have higher mobility aid needs to get from the hangar waiting area to the aircraft

Progress report: A wheeled walker is available at the hangar in Fort Vermilion and staff there are aware of it's location. Staff can also bring aircraft into the hangar or tow it closer to the access door for loading more conveniently. At the Edmonton and Fort McMurray base, wheelchairs are available. It is anticipated that dedicated wheelchair users will bring their own wheelchair, staff training should be updated to address the packing, storage, and care needs for these devices during transportation during travel.

Barrier: Passengers with low mobility embarking on and disembarking from the charter aircraft may need additional assistance. The lowest step was found to be too high for all mobility impaired people that tried it during our consultation. Persons that could not walk up the stairs would also need assistance in a lift form.

Progress Report: A consultation flight event was completed and several options for aiding in the loading were reviewed. An "accessibility kit" was created to accompany a charter aircraft when it's needed, including a small folding step stool, a sling seat, and a small rubber backed carpet available to be carried by the Charter Caravans. Additional kits may be purchased as needed, and additional options to the sling seat continue to be looked for to ease loading.

Five of the company Caravan aircraft are equipped with lifeport stretcher systems in the event that a completely non ambulatory passenger would prefer transportation in a prone/lying down position, all Caravan crews are trained in loading and unloading with this equipment and it is an option available during the booking process however it does limit the available seats on the aircraft.

Barrier: Passengers with lower mobility described that the Caravan cable handrails do not provide sufficient support for them when trying to board the aircraft

Progress Report: Caravan crews are briefed on aiding a passenger including pressure on the lowest step to tighten the cables during loading, two staff members standing at either side to provide a physical hand in. Options are being explored for ground support equipment to provide greater stability during loading such as a solid sheath or external handrails that can be disassembled and brought with the aircraft.

Barrier: flight crews have low awareness of accessibility mobility aids and the transportation of service aids including service animals and handling/storage/transportation of equipment such as walkers and wheelchairs

Progress Report: Training development is underway for accessibility, and will include service aids including service animals and handling/storage/transportation of equipment such as walkers and wheelchairs into the training program for staff.

5.0 Provisions of CTA Accessibility-Related Regulations

As a small Transportation Service Provider, Can West Air is subject and fully compliant to the:

- Air Transportation Regulations, Part VII (for air carriers not captured under the Accessible Transportation for Persons with Disability Regulations (ATPDR))
- The Personnel Training for the Assistance of Persons with Disabilities Regulations (for all Transportation Service Providers not captured under the ATPDR).

Can West Air currently meets the definition of a “small air carrier” under the Air Transportation Regulations. We do not foresee this changing in the near future.

- **small aircraft** means an aircraft equipped for the carriage of passengers and having a certificated maximum carrying capacity of not more than 39 passengers

Compliance with these regulations shall be maintained by the Quality Assurance Program described in the Maintenance Control Manual section 8.0

6.0 Conclusion

CanWest Air and Alberta Central Airways remain committed to reducing accessibility barriers.

We will continue to monitor and measure our progress to ensure we meet our accessibility goals, continue to identify barriers and remove them, and prevent creating new barriers.

We encourage feedback from customers, potential customers, and staff members in our accessibility plan. Feedback provided will be acknowledged, assessed and acted upon in a timely manner. Information gathered through feedback will be used to improve our accessibility plan and aid us in implementing plans to attain our goals.

A follow up progress report will be published by May 31, 2026.

Note: This progress report dated July 2025 replaces the report published May 2025, which was found to be missing one section for the provision of CTA accessibility Related Regulations.