

Oceanex Inc.

Accessibility – Progress Report

June 2024





## Introduction

Oceanex Inc. (“Oceanex”) is a federally regulated Transportation company that has been providing essential goods and cargo transportation services to and from the island of Newfoundland for over 100 years. We have offices in Ontario, Québec, Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Labrador. We operate 3 vessels and transport intermodally using those vessels and our land-based transportation network goods and cargo of all types, such as furniture, vehicle, construction materials, foodstuffs, chemicals, supplies for manufacturing, supplies for the NL offshore industry, clothing, pharmaceuticals and health care products. We primarily transport goods and cargo between central Canada (Ontario and Quebec) and the Maritime Provinces of Canada and Newfoundland and Labrador, although we also transport goods from, within and between the United States and Canada for our customers. We do not transport passengers. We transport approximately 45% - 50% of all the goods and cargo that comes to the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

We are an equal opportunity employer.

In all that we do and in the way that we do it we are committed to treating our employees and the people with which we deal with respect and dignity.

We believe in creating a safe and accessible working environment for all present and future employees, for our customers, clients, contractors, visitors and all those persons who interact with us, whether virtually or physically. One that maintains and respects each individual’s independence, dignity and personal worth when working for or dealing with us, either at distance or in person.

In 2023, Oceanex, in compliance with the Accessible Canada Act, produced an Accessibility Plan. In that plan we outlined and described the actions that we, as an organization were taking and intended to take to improve access and reduce and remove barriers for persons with disabilities. This year’s progress report will provide an update on progress, changes in 3 different areas, and highlight the measures we intend to take over the next year to further remove barriers to access.

In this regard we are always open to receiving suggestions as to how we may do so. Any person who wishes to provide feedback regarding this Report or any aspect of our Accessibility Plan or suggestion as to how we may improve access within our workplace and to promote meaningful inclusion of persons with disabilities is encouraged to do so by communicating with us:

By email: [accessibility@oceanex.com](mailto:accessibility@oceanex.com)

By phone: 1-888-875-9595

By mail:

<p>Human Resources Department          Attention: Human Resources Manager          630 Boul. René-Lévesque Ouest, Suite 2550          Montréal QC H3B 1S6</p>	<p>Corporate Office          Attention: Corporate Administrator          Suite 701, Baine Johnston Center          10 Fort William Place          St. John’s NL A1C 1K4</p>
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## **Employment**

Oceanex is committed to consult with its employees and welcomes their participation in making the workplace more accessible and inclusive thereby helping to identify and remove barriers. We currently collect self-identification data from employees as part of our hiring process. We encourage all employees to express themselves at any time whenever they experience or witness an issue related to workplace accessibility: upon hiring, during their employment, after returning from a medical leave, or indeed at any time. We do this through dialoging with our employees and prospective employees through in person meetings and/or another form of engagement they are comfortable with, including email or virtual engagement. During these exchanges, we exchange information about accessibility, including what Oceanex has done to date and encourage feedback from the same then or at any time thereafter. As part of our ongoing work of enabling us to better engage with our employees, consistent with feedback we have received and Government guidelines, we are planning to modify our employment equity survey to make the definitions clearer to employees completing it. Further as part of making it easier for our employees with visual problems to complete this survey, even if any Word or PDF document is already accessible by using the read aloud function, we are planning to make the survey more accessible by preparing a version with larger characters and to also make this report available in larger character format.

Oceanex provides as part of its ongoing commitment as a socially responsible employer of choice all of the necessary tools its valued employees require to perform their work. As part of that commitment, we make the required changes when identified as necessary, requested, and/or required to accommodate our employees and provide them with an inclusive workplace that is respectful of who they are and that meaningfully and properly within the bounds of Canadian law addresses any accessibility issues they may have. For example, in the past, we have changed lighting to accommodate employees having visual related challenges. We have also used special tools to enlarge characters on computers, provided ergonomic chairs, workstations, and work arrangements for those with physical challenges that are temporary or ongoing. In the last year, we continued these efforts by providing ergonomic keyboards and mice to facilitate the work of employees that requested such tools and supports. We also provided Google Lens and Google Translate to employees who made the requests to enable them to be better interact with those who do not speak the same language as they do, be that French or English or both. We also facilitated the hiring of employees who are new Canadians and Canadian residents, including refugees from the Ukraine that are permitted to work in Canada but do not speak English or French.

Because we presently have no employees within the company who have chosen to self identify as a person with a disability, the changes or accommodations we have made have generally been made in response to individual employee requests. Having said this, we are mindful of the fact that as our employee base ages, and as employee identities and physical and other circumstances change, we must as a socially responsible employer and respond appropriately to circumstances giving rise to employee accessibility and inclusion issues. As such we as an employer, in any circumstance where we have an employee who has accessibility or disability related issues, will work proactively with that employee to take appropriate measures to positively address his/her/their situation.

We also plan to take steps over the next year to make information on our internal company-only and our public English and French websites more easily accessible by persons with disabilities. Further, we plan on

changing the look of our career page on our public website and will add our accessibility statement to inform people of Oceanex's commitment to promoting, supporting and fostering inclusivity in those parts of our workplace where legal requirements related to employee safety do not allow us to hire persons with disabilities for a position. We otherwise invite qualified prospective employees including persons with disabilities to apply for any position within our company.

## **Built Environment**

Oceanex has office spaces in 4 different provinces. Over the last year, 3 of our offices have moved and we added 1 new trailer to our Terminal in St. John's, NL. Our office spaces remain rather similar in terms of accessibility. While we have been advised that these spaces meet all applicable legal requirements and accessibility in the respective provinces where they are located, we are committed to ensuring any new office and other spaces we occupy and do business from meet all applicable accessibility and safety standards. For these 3 office changes, we consulted with employees working in these spaces for feedback regarding their new workplace and to help us identify any accessibility barriers.

Our office located in Mississauga, Ontario moved in the last year. Ontario is home for 4 employees in our Sales Department. Some work 5 days per week from the office, while others primarily work from home when they are not on the road visiting clients. In moving this office location, ensuring accessibility for staff as well as any visitors, and that it met all applicable accessibility requirements was a condition of the move. This new space meets both these accessibility criteria. This office is located on the ground floor with ample space for any mobility challenged persons to move around and has round tables that facilitate easy movement and circulation in the office. There are no stairs in this office for persons with mobility challenges. Bathrooms are individual and have a wide door. Service dogs for visually impaired and other persons are also allowed on the premises and in the building. People with disabilities may gain access to the building and our office space by entering the building via the main entrance doors. There is also an edged curb that can readily accommodate ingress and egress to the building by persons with walkers or in wheelchairs. No uninvited person would ever be asked to or have a need visit our office at this site.

While the building has a fire alarm system, it is sound only. Also, although the entrance doors to the building are such that they are wide to easily accommodate wheelchair traffic they do not have automatic opening mechanisms set up to accommodate their being easily opened by persons with disabilities. Also, there are no automatic doors to enter the office or bathroom. While Oceanex is not the building owner, its intention is to follow up and request its landlord to cause the building to be equipped with a smoke and fire alarm system that also has visual cues in addition to sound to address the needs of persons who have auditory challenges, and to cause the building to be equipped with an automatic door opening system on the main entrance and in the common area bathrooms that would be available for use by persons with physical disabilities.

Oceanex has 2 personnel stationed at the St. John's, NL terminal of its "less than container load" ("LCL" / Less than truck load "LTL") service provider in Newfoundland and Labrador, Armour Transport Inc. These offices moved in the last year and the new space is located on the ground floor of this single-story building and is accessible through the main doors. The main doors can be opened automatically and there is an access ramp to access the entrance. There are no stairs inside the building, and all offices are on the

ground floor. For security reasons they require an access pass to enter. Hallways are clear and the bathrooms are accessible with an automatic door and a larger stall. The building is equipped with both sound and visual fire alarms. Service dogs are allowed in the building. Other than Oceanex employees who have the required security clearance and the need to attend there for work reasons, Amour Transport Inc. employees and visitors to that company, or regulators having jurisdiction over Oceanex or Armour Transport Inc. are the only persons who enter these premises. No uninvited member of the public would be permitted on or have a need to visit this site.

The Halifax terminal office also changed location in the last year. The new Oceanex office has automatic doors. All rooms can be entered without having to go over a step. There are no steps to climb and service dogs are allowed. Hallways are clear and the conference room is accessible. The building is also accessible on ground level at the back door. The fire alarm is a sound alarm with no visual alert. The bathrooms within our office space are not readily accessible by persons in a wheelchair, but there are bathrooms in common areas of this building that are accessible by persons in wheelchairs. There are no automatic doors in the bathrooms in common areas. No uninvited person would ever be asked to or have a need visit our office at this site.

Finally, we have added a new trailer at one of our terminals in St. John's. This trailer is not accessible to people with disabilities and is intended to be used by Oceanex security and operations. It is located inside our St. John's Terminal that is not accessible to members of the public. The only persons who would be working within this building or who would visit it are persons who have security clearances to work in this building. The only persons who would be visiting it are likewise workers at Oceanex's St. John's Terminal site, regulators having jurisdiction, or truckers or service or supply personnel attending at Oceanex's St. John's Terminal. This trailer is relatively small with 2 offices on premises without any hallways, bathrooms or conference rooms. There are stairs to enter the trailer and the doors are not automatic. Because of the safety sensitive nature of the operations that go on at Oceanex St. John's Terminal site, persons having mobility challenge issues, visual and auditory disabilities are not allowed to work at this site. No service dogs are allowed on this site or in this building, except periodically for sniffer dogs used by police and other authorities such as Canada Customs and Border Services Agents conducting work at this site. This new building will be equipped with functioning hardwired fire alarms.

As a result of feedback received from our employees, service dogs will be permitted in our headquarters office located in St. John's.

## **Information and Communications Technologies**

Oceanex is in the process of taking a fresh look at its public French and English websites with a view to enhancing a number of its features to make it more user friendly to persons with disabilities. For example, we will explore options like adding read aloud features and options to enable visually impaired persons to easily access larger, more easily readable font versions of the information found on those sites.

## **Communication, other than Information Technologies**

Oceanex continues to use a similar communication strategy to that which it had in place when it filed its Accessibility Plan one year ago. We use state of the art secure information technologies such as emails, Microsoft Teams software, phone calls, in person meetings, or internal mail to communicate internally and with external parties. We are committed in keeping with the spirit and intent of the Accessibility Act and our corporate philosophy of respect for all we deal with to communicating and dialoguing with all persons we deal with in the way that works best for them and also for us. In this regard, our Sales and Operations Teams always ensure that communication with our clients is done in a way that his appropriate for them. Although it did not happen in the last year, we are committed to providing, upon request, communications with clients in other formats, such as larger characters, print version, audio format, etc. As part of our initiated training on Harassment in the Workplace for our employees, and consciousness raising when it comes to dealing with persons of disabilities, we are seeking to cultivate and further enhance our employees appreciation in how they deal with or how the perception of how they deal with or are seen to deal with, persons with disabilities may be perceived so that hidden or perceived situations where persons with disabilities may think they are being discriminated against or inappropriately treated may be avoided. The goal is to have all employees so trained and to complete this training before year end. This training will add to the insights of our employees in such regard and enhance further tools they have in their knowledge regarding how to avoid and deal with such situations while at the same time increasing their knowledge and awareness about diversity and inclusion.

## **Conclusion**

In ending this progress report, Oceanex recognizes that there are still many areas with opportunities to be fully accessible to all people and are committed to continue to work to improve the accessibility of our workplace. We have made progress in the last year and more remains to be done. As such, we will continue to raise awareness and deal positively and constructively with accessibility issues within and affecting our organization, to continue the work with our employees, our customers, and the community we serve to address accessibility issues and to build on the work we have done to date.