



Easy ways to make restaurants more accessible

Everybody wins by making our communities inclusive and accessible to as many people as possible. Given that almost 1 in 4 Nova Scotians lives with some kind of disability, having a barrier-free restaurant isn't just the right thing to do – it makes good business sense.

1. Have **Large Print (14 point bold)** menus available. These menus may not be as artistic as your regular menus – plain black text on plain white paper is optimal for those with lower vision. Ensure there is enough light at a table for a person to read – atmosphere is important, but no one wants to have to hold the menu up to a candle to see what is available for dinner. If you'd like to go one step further, consider getting your menu put into Braille.

Brailing services are available through a variety of reasonably-priced outlets, such as:

Canadian National Institute for the Blind <https://www.cnib.ca/en?region=ns>

Phone Numbers: 902.453.1480 or 1.800.563.2642

Contact through written communications: <https://www.cnib.ca/en/form/contact-us?region=ns>

2. **Train your staff** in basic disability etiquette – this is as simple as introducing them to correct terminology, reminding them not to pat or talk to guide dogs, and inviting them to use pen and paper to communicate with someone who is deaf or hard of hearing.

3. **Ensure some or all of your tables have movable chairs.** This allows space for wheelchairs, and also lets individuals choose how close or far away they would like to sit both from the table and from other people.

4. **Leave corridors** of 1.1 m (3.6') between tables wherever possible to allow for comfortable passage by persons using all manner of devices.

5. **Have clear signage** indicating where washrooms are located. Consider adding grab bars to one stall, even if you can't renovate for full accessibility. These can be a great help to persons with mobility and agility concerns. While you're at it, why not add levered handles to the taps on the sink?

6. **Consider the impact** of steps or stairs. If your entryway is not level with the pavement, even a small temporary ramp can make a big difference. If you do this, make sure you have a way to contact someone to put it in place. Try to avoid using more than one level inside your restaurant or ensure that raised or lowered sections are accessible.

For additional information on accessibility please contact NSLEO at 902.455.6942 or info@nsleo.com