

## Accessibility Review

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### Bell Island Ferry Service

Department of Transportation & Works  
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MV Legionnaire



MV Flanders

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## Introduction

The Dept. of Transportation and Works have engaged in a partnership with InclusionNL to review the accessibility features available on the vessels operating on the Bell Island Ferry Services (BIFS). As a part of this partnership, InclusionNL has completed an accessibility review of the MV Legionnaire and the MV Flanders. Staff has also spoken with passengers using the BIFS and have received complaints regarding barriers they may have experienced related to the accessibility on either of the vessels.

The Bell Island Ferry Service is operational with two passenger ferries, the MV Legionnaire and the MV Flanders. Both ferries have unique characteristics related specifically to the accessibility of the ferry as passengers move from the vehicle deck to the passenger lounge decks.

MV Flanders is older than the MV Legionnaire and has approximately half the vehicle capacity of the MV Legionnaire. When boarding the Flanders, passengers with disabilities who require the use of the lift to leave the vehicle deck receive supports from a crew member to operate the vessel lift to a small passenger lounge designed specifically for individuals with disabilities.

The new MV Legionnaire has a larger vehicle/passenger capacity than the Flanders and hosts many accessibility features. Upon boarding this vessel, passengers with disabilities are directed to a passenger elevator that can be accessed via a ramp on the vehicle deck, and independently operate the elevator to the passenger deck where a multiple passenger lounges are available.

### **Ferry Accessibility – Code of Practice**

When accessibility features are being review for ferries, the Canadian Transportation Agency (CTA) developed guidelines to support the reduction of barriers for travelling Canadians with disabilities. For this review, the [Ferry Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities; Code of Practice](#) (CoP) was used as measurement for assessing the accessibility features on both vessels. This code is used for vessels travelling between

provinces and territories with a weight capacity of 1000+ gross tons. This is the only guideline available for measuring ferry accessibility; there are no provincial guidelines currently available.

The Code covers five main aspects of accessibility for ferry vessels and services for persons with disabilities. For the purposes of this report, the first section on Vessel Accessibility was used as reference for this review.

### **1. Vessel Accessibility**

This section provides an overview of the physical features of each ferry. It outlines specifications in items such as signage, lighting, features in stairways, and specifications for handrails. This section covers accessibility and codes of practices for areas such as cafeterias, washrooms, elevators, vehicle decks etc.

### **2. Maintenance**

This section articulates that procedures should be in place to ensure all accessibility features on a ferry are maintained in good working order.

### **3. Communication**

This section articulates parameters of practice relating to the provision of transportation-related information to passengers and highlights various features relating to providing information in multiple formats, ensuring websites are accessible for passenger interaction, and providing communication on equipment features of the vessel.

### **4. Disability-Related Services**

This section articulates procedures and practices relating to crew members responding to passenger with disabilities requests for specific services and supports. This section also articulates practices in the carriage of service animals and mobility aides as baggage.

### **5. Personnel Training**

This section articulates practices for crew training specific to providing disability related support to passengers.

## Section I – Vessel Accessibility

	Item	CTA Requirements	MV Legionnaire	MV Flanders
1.0	Signage	Positioning, Height fr floor, Sign glare, Adequate font size.	Signage met guidelines in most areas. Policy Notice in Passenger Lounge needs larger fonts and lower positioning	Signage met guidelines in most areas. Policy Notice in Passenger Lounge needs larger fonts and lowered positioning
1.1	Lighting	Directed and controlled to minimize glare. No sharpe intensity contrasts	Lighting met guidelines throughout passenger deck	Lighting met guidelines in designated passenger lounge
1.2	Stairways	Uniform in height, handrails, contrast colours, tactile warnings, firm tread	Stairwells have double handrails on both sides for support. High color contrast tape is required across the width of each step on all stairwells.	Stairwells have single handrails on both sides. High contrast colour tape would be required across the width of each step.
1.3	Handrails	Sturdy, height & length, obstruction free, colour contrast, diameter 4cm	Double handrails present on all stairwells. Colour contrasting is needed	Handrails present on stairs near designated passenger lounge
1.4	Corridors & Passageways	Min clear headroom 203cm, clear width of 150cm, no protrusions	Corridors met headroom measures	Corridors met headroom measures
1.5	Floors	Slip resistant, carpeting secured	Floors are slip resistant, no carpet present	Floor is slip resistant, no carpet present
1.6	Doorways & Doors	81cm wide. Level handles, 80-120cms fr floor. Door sills beveled & ramped	Door sills would require portable ramps to increase accessibility.	Door sills would require portable ramps to increase accessibility.
1.7	Counters	Height between 73-86cm, non-glare surface, with colour contrast	Height measures at 96cms with no section cut for passengers using wheelchairs. Surface is metal, doesn't have colour contrast, and has a handrail along the length.	Not applicable
1.8	Operator Provided Wheelchair	Wheelchair on each passenger deck provided by operator	Wheelchair available and visible on vehicle deck. None visible on passenger desks	Wheelchair available and visible on vehicle deck. None visible on passenger desks
1.9	Elevators	Clear directional signs, signs about usage, hand rails on all walls inside elevator	Passenger elevator available, observed being used in transit. No signage indicating elevator not operational in conditions where the vessel's roll exceeds elevator safe	Passenger lift available with supports to operate from crew member

	Item	CTA Requirements	MV Legionnaire	MV Flanders
			operating guidelines	
1.10	Vehicle Decks	Freely exit vehicle with easy access to wheelchair lift	Designated walkways are available however cars parking over them make them inaccessible. A ramp is available to access the elevator. A "Crew Only" elevator is also available on this vessel.	No designated walkways on the vehicle deck which would make it difficult for passengers to access the lift easily. A ramp is available to access the elevator.
1.11	Passenger Lounges	5% seating in each lounge should be designated as accessible seating -Signs	There are no designated accessible areas in the passenger lounges. Lounge tables height meets accessibility code.	The designated passenger lounge is small and would reach capacity quickly. Two 3 sided tables with seats to accommodate less than 12 passengers
1.12	Cafeterias	5% tables designated with signs. Table height 73-80cm. Menu display clear.	No tables currently designated. Tables meet height requirements	Designated passenger lounge from passenger lift. Tables meet height requirements
1.13	Cabins	5% accessible cabins or a minimum of 1 designated accessible cabin, buttons, switches 40 – 120 cm fr floor	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
1.14	Washrooms	One accessible for each gender on each deck with measurement criteria for each. Push force on the door – 1lb of push force	There is a gender neutral accessible washroom on the passenger deck of the Legionnaire. Met measurement requirements. The push force of the door is heavier than articulated code	The washroom in the designated passenger lounge has a number of accessibility features present and would require additional features to meet accessibility criteria
1.15	Relieving Area for Service Animals	Designated area clearly marked with signage. Staff are aware of location	There is currently no area designated for service animals to relieve themselves	There is currently no area designated for service animals to relieve themselves



Additional Details – MV Legionnaire - Photos



Designated walkways must be free and clear for passengers to access safely



Elevators are only to be used when ferry is docked and not during crossings. Signs required informing passengers. Handrails needed for each wall of elevator



Elevator buttons high contrast and tactile. Operator wheelchair available on vehicle deck. Elevator has a ramp for easier access on vehicle deck. Handrails should be on each elevator wall

Additional Details – MV Legionnaire - Photos



The push force for opening this door needs to be set 2.24kgm force (1lb push force)  
Door is extremely heavy



High contrast colour tape required around flush control button above toilet seat.  
Recommend washroom have a sharps container



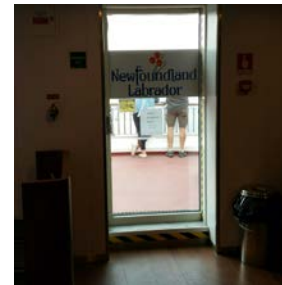
Minimum of 5% of tables in each passenger lounge should be designated with the International Symbol of Accessibility



Platform stairlift to the next level with this door,  
Door sill would require a portable ramp. (None visibly available)



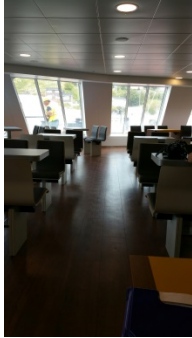
Great to install double handrails  
High contrast colour tape is required across the width of each step  
Evac chairs would be required on both vessels for emergency egress



High Contrast colour tape with Press & Hold signage needed. Availability of portable ramp



## Additional Details – MV Legionnaire - Photos



The width of passenger deck hallways and walking space in passenger lounges meets accessibility requirements

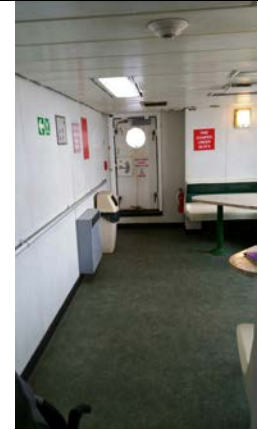


Departmental policy statements should be posted in a minimum 14point sans serif font with no surface glare and positioned on the wall so that a person using a wheelchair can read it.

## Additional Details – MV Flanders Photos



Lift available from vehicle deck. Must be accompanied by a crew member. No designated walkways on this vehicle deck.



Designated passenger lounge is small with limited accessibility capacity for passengers using wheelchairs. Door sill requires a portable ramp.



Bathroom doorsill requires maintenance. Limited space for maneuvering. Flush control button not easily visible, no emergency call button



Near elevator in designated passenger lounge. Recommend high contrast colour tape for button. Evac chair should be available for emergency egress



Policy statements need to be available in accessible formats for all passengers



Main lounge equipped with ample signage informing passengers of procedures.

## Section 2 - Maintenance

2.0 According to the CTA Code of Practice, a ferry operator should have procedures in place to ensure that all accessibility features on a ferry are maintained in good working order.

**InclusionNL recommends** developing an operational manual with accessibility checklists included. InclusionNL can provide supports to have this manual developed in partnership with Dept. TW- Marine Services. Accessibility checklists for the built environment are currently available at [inclusionNL.ca](http://inclusionNL.ca). Customized ferry accessibility checklists can be created using the CTA Code of Practice guidelines.

## Section 3 - Communication

3.0 CTA Code of Practice indicates ferry operators should develop and follow a multiple format policy to ensure that information related to the successful execution of a trip is available to all travellers in a format that is accessible to them.

3.1 Ferry operators should have a means to make vessel accessibility features and services (ie: information on elevators, accessible seating, other disability-related services etc.) known to passengers.

3.2 Websites should be made accessible to persons with disabilities by following WCAG 2.0 standards. Web-based information related to the successful execution of a trip should also be made available by other means of communication upon request.

3.3 If a ferry operator makes announcements to passengers, such as announcements concerning delays, schedule changes, and onboard services, the operator should have the means on board the vessel of visually and verbally providing these announcements to persons with disabilities.

3.4 When supplemental safety briefing cards are used, a ferry operator should provide large print and braille supplement passenger safety cards on a vessel. If a ferry operator gives pre-travel safety briefings, it should ensure that passengers with disabilities receive an individualized pre-travel briefing and demonstrations, if needed.

3.5 Upon request, crews onboard ferries are to give oral, written, or visual information about the equipment features of the vessel (such as the location and function of call or control buttons at seating and washroom features) to passengers with disabilities.

3.6 If modular jack public phones are onboard they must meet certain height requirements for passengers seating and standing be situated such that the instructions and shelf adequately illuminated and noise from the surrounding environment is minimized.

3.7 If a ferry is equipped with an alarm system, the system should be visual and audible and, when activated, display continuously in all public places. Visual alarms should be a flashing light that is strategically placed and significantly brighter than the ambient light

***InclusionNL recommends*** that an Accessibility Manual for passengers with disabilities be created which highlights the currently accessibility features and services, outlines

the vessel's safety plan and emergency egress protocols, and provides the passenger with information about the designated crew member responsible for passenger with disabilities support during the crossing. Upon completion, inclusionNL has the capacity to convert this into multiple formats such as large print, braille, and MP3 files.

***InclusionNL recommends*** when auditory announcements are provided to passengers about safety and operational procedures, vessel service locations, and returning to the vehicle deck; that visual announcements are also provided for passengers with disabilities.

***InclusionNL recommends*** that a review of the current safety plan and protocols is completed to ensure the inclusion of accommodations for passengers with disabilities. Where safety cards are used, multiple formats of these should be available to passengers with disabilities.

***InclusionNL recommends*** the presence of an emergency Evac Chair onboard for passengers with mobility disabilities for emergency egress measures.

## **Section 4 – Disability-Related Services**

4.0 A ferry operator should provide the means for passengers to get information or assistance once onboard the ferry and recognizes that the passenger with disabilities may have to self-identify to take advantage of available services. For services in a cafeteria where there is a menu displayed, a ferry operator should provide assistance, if requested, to a person with a disability by either reading the menu out or have it available in braille and large print.

Ferry operators should accept a service animal for carriage without charge if the operator is satisfied that the animal is required for assistance, has been trained by a professional institution and properly harnessed. [NL Service Animal Act](#)

## **Section 5 - Personnel Training**

5.0 Ferry operators must ensure that they train employees and contractors who provide transportation-related services and who may be required to interact with the

public or to make decisions in respect of persons with disabilities.

***InclusionNL recommends*** that staff of the ferry interacting with passengers complete professional development training to increase disability confidence. An outline of the training has been developed by inclusionNL staff. Timelines for the delivery of this training and subsequent online training are to be confirmed. An outline of the training includes:

- Disability and Accessibility: What are they all about?
  - Demystifying with definitions and real life examples
- Myths about People with Disabilities
  - Breaking down myths, sharing real like examples
- For Employees and Crew Members who
  - Provide physical assistance, handle mobility aids, assist with special equipment and aids
- Practical Tips for Serving Passengers with a variety of disabilities
  - Hands-on approach to passenger interaction
- Inclusive Safety Plans for Passengers with Disabilities
  - Information to maintain safety everywhere



## Overview of Recommendations

**InclusionNL recommends** where financial resources permit, that the necessary upgrades, revisions, and purchases be made to increase ferry accessibility and enrich the experiences and safety of passengers with disabilities. Operator-provided wheelchairs available on each passenger deck of each ferry, stairs equipped with high contrast tape. Tables and chairs in passenger lounges designated with the [international symbol of accessibility](#), safety announcements and procedures also available through visual means.

**InclusionNL recommends** the purchase of a moveable/portable ramp(s) that would accommodate the difference in depths of door sills for external ferry doors. The ramp decline grade would be a considering factor in this purchase.

**InclusionNL recommends** developing an operational manual with accessibility checklists included. Accessibility checklists for the built environment are currently available at inclusionNL.ca. Customized ferry accessibility checklists can be created using the CTA Code of Practice guidelines.

**InclusionNL recommends** that an Accessibility Manual for passengers with disabilities be created which highlights the currently accessibility features and services, outlines the vessel's safety plan and emergency egress protocols, and provides the passenger with information about the designated crew member responsible for passenger with disabilities support during the voyage. Upon completion, inclusionNL has the capacity to convert this into multiple formats for the ferry.

**InclusionNL recommends** when auditory announcements are provided to passengers about safety and operational procedures, vessel service locations, and returning to the vehicle deck; that visual announcements are also provided for passengers with disabilities.

**InclusionNL recommends** that a review of the current safety plan and protocols is completed to ensure the inclusion of accommodations for passengers with disabilities. Where safety cards are used, multiple formats of these should be available to passengers with disabilities.

**InclusionNL recommends** having an emergency Evac Chair onboard for passengers with mobility disabilities.

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International Association  
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MEMBER