

Recognizing Barriers

Version 12

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A barrier is anything that keeps a person with a disability from participating fully in society because of his or her disability. Barriers are obstacles and make shopping, working, going to a movie or taking public transit difficult, and sometimes impossible, for people with disabilities. Seneca's goal is to be barrier-free by 2025.

Types of barriers

- **Attitudinal** - (the biggest obstacle of all) negative attitudes of employers and co-workers
- **Architectural** - design, layout and components of buildings and structures create barriers
- **Physical** - features of the environment that impede access such as a washroom sink placed too high
- **Communication** - the transmission, reception and interpretation of information
- **Information** - anything that negatively affects access to information
- **Technological** - as a result of design of technology and devices or from the absence of appropriate assistive devices
- **Systemic** - barriers that are a result of an organization's policies, practices and protocols if they restrict persons with disabilities

Physical barriers

Physical barriers can be:

- steps, stairs and elevators that are too small or not assigned for use by people with disabilities

- small washrooms
- counters at inconvenient heights
- narrow aisles or pathways
- heavy doors
- handles, latches and locks that are difficult to use
- curbs
- obstructed pathways
- poor lighting or signage
- no Braille signage
- water fountains, pay telephone and parking meter coin slots that are too high
- computer screens that are too small
- telephones that don't have telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD or TTY)
- uneven floors or pathways
- websites with no alternative text formats

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