

# PROGRESS REPORT

## 2024

Ferries.ca



## GENERAL

The following is an update to Northumberland Ferries Limited (NFL) and Bay Ferries Limited (BFL) customers on the Companies' ongoing progress with respect to our Accessibility Plan (2023-2025), which was published June 1, 2023.

BFL-NFL recognize the needs of guests with physical, cognitive, behavioral, and psychological disabilities. As per the Canadian Transportation Agency (CTA), Accessible Transportation for Persons with Disabilities Regulations\* (ATPDR), we are committed to providing a stress-free travel experience with a variety of accessible and assisted services. As a transportation service provider, our goal is to provide a positive, accessible transportation experience for all persons with disabilities regardless of physical or sensory impairments.

As is stated in the 2023-2025 Accessibility Plan, "NFL-BFL takes seriously the responsibility to remove barriers to travel for persons with disabilities and is proud of the achievements to date. The companies will continue working to remove additional barriers and make the organization and its services even more accessible in the future."

The mandate of the Accessibility Committee is to shepherd this plan through its three-year lifespan and through engagement with customers and employees, implement improvements to our service offering for each customer. The Committee trusts you will find the following update useful, and we also hope you will provide any feedback that you feel will continue to move our goals forward.

Sincerely,

### BFL-NFL Accessibility Committee members:

- » Jeff Joyce, General Manager, NFL & Vice President, Marine Operations BFL-NFL
- » Jim Kerr, General Manager, BFL
- » Rick Wilson, Terminal Manager, BFL
- » Shawna Smith, Executive Director of People & Culture, BFL-NFL
- » Jessica Gillis, Director of Marketing & Customer Experience, BFL-NFL
- » Donna MacNeill, Customer Relations Coordinator, NFL
- » Lindsay Shepard, Quartermaster, NFL

### Feedback and Alternative Formats

NFL-BFL welcomes feedback on any accessibility-related items. The Chair of the Accessibility Committee is the designated contact to receive accessibility feedback on behalf of the companies and informs and involves other departments as required based on the content of the feedback.

Feedback can be submitted in the following three ways:

1. Directly to the Chair of the Accessibility Committee.
2. By utilizing the feedback form located in the Accessibility tab for each service.
3. By clicking on the link to the feedback process located on the main landing page of the website.

Anonymous comments can be submitted using the feedback form or by completing the contact information on the form. A Company representative will be able to respond to the feedback.

The Company will respond to feedback using the same medium that it was received.



#### CONTACT

**Phone**  
(902) 629-5981

**Accessibility Company Contact**  
Jeff Joyce, Vice President  
Marine Operations

**TTY**  
Bell Canada TTY 771

**Email**  
jjjoyce@nfl-bay.com

**Address**  
137 Queen Street, Suite 303  
PO Box 634  
Charlottetown, PEI  
C1A 4B3

*This plan is also available in alternative formats: print, large print, braille, audio format, and an electronic format. Requests for one of these alternative formats, or the submission of feedback, may be made through the contact information provided or through any of the companies' social media channels which include Facebook, X, LinkedIn, Instagram, and YouTube.*



## Progress Report:

The 2023-2025 BFL-NFL Accessibility Plan (Plan, or the Plan) was published June 1, 2023, the goals of which stretch over the three-year period between June 1, 2023, and June 1, 2026. A requirement of the Plan is that the Committee provide progress reports to the Plan in June 2024 and June 2025, with a new Plan being published on June 1, 2026. This is the first progress report of the Plan.

The Plan is published on the NFL-BFL website. It contains a summary and provides options for feedback and alternative formats. Key components of the Plan include:

- ✓ Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)
- ✓ Communication, other than Information Communication Technology (ICT)
- ✓ Procurement of Goods, Services, and Facilities
- ✓ Design and Delivery of Programs and Services
- ✓ Transportation
- ✓ The Built Environment
- ✓ Provision of Canadian Transportation Association Accessibility-Related Regulations
- ✓ Employment and Training
- ✓ Consultations

Throughout the Plan, a total of 10 Action Items were identified, some of which have been completed and others being progressed, including:

## Completed:

- ✓ Provision of key metrics for ongoing measurement of progress on Accessibility issues has been completed. This includes a detailed project tracking spreadsheet, as well as ensuring that performance metrics discussions are on the committee standing agenda.
- ✓ Accessibility has been highlighted as a key consideration in the procurement process for upgrades/renewals to customer shuttles.
- ✓ Procurement Policy and Processes have been reviewed and amended to include Accessibility considerations.
- ✓ Provision of Accessibility training for all employees: This includes both new employees as part of their onboarding, as well as ongoing refresher sessions for all employees (every three years). Quarterly reports on training status to the Committee by the People & Culture Committee representative are also reviewed as part of the Committee's standing agenda.
- ✓ Recruitment of employees who have Accessibility issues in their close circle to be Committee members: The Committee has successfully completed this action.

## Commenced/In Progress:

- ✓ The Committee, working with the Infrastructure Manager and local Health & Safety Committees, is continuing a review of existing administration and operational buildings to inventory existing physical barriers and begin exploring options for accessibility improvements. Progress continues on this action, and it is expected to be completed by the end of 2024.
- ✓ A comprehensive list of Accessibility features, including equipment and requirements for each public site has been developed to ensure ample inventory and an appropriate inspection and maintenance schedule.
- ✓ Planning continues on updating the BFL-NFL booking interface to include more detail regarding Accessibility issues if and as provided by the customer.
- ✓ Web compliance, with respect to CTA regulations, has been completed, but continues to be monitored. This included an internal review of internet resources to identify gaps and potential improvements to published customer information.

## Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)

NFL-BFL utilize numerous information and communication technologies both internally and externally. In general, NFL-BFL telecommunication, computer, and network systems use industry-standard equipment and software.

## Communication, other than ICT

Communication with internal and external audiences can take many forms depending on the purpose and circumstance, but the overall goal is to communicate information in a way that is most useful to the intended audience.

As a part of BFL-NFL's accessibility awareness training, employees are trained in the importance of obtaining information from the person about what method of assistance they prefer, whether it is an alternative means of communication or another kind of assistance.



## Procurement of goods, services and facilities

NFL-BFL have an internal purchasing policy that lays out how items are to be purchased (i.e., optimal quality, lowest cost, buy local when price is competitive, Accessibility considerations, etc.).

## Design and delivery of programs and services

From shipping large volumes of freight to offering quality passenger amenities, NFL and BFL strive to exceed customers' expectations in providing a safe, reliable, and quality travel experience that is accessible for all.

- » BFL-NFL are governed by various acts and regulations including the Canada Labour Code, Transportation of Dangerous Goods Act and Regulations, International Maritime Dangerous Goods Code, Marine Liability Act and Regulations, Canada Shipping Act and Regulations, Financial Administration Act, Domestic Ferries Security Regulations, Sulphur Emission Control Areas Regulations, and Accessible Canada Act and Regulations.

## Transportation

Most BFL-NFL customers access the service using their own vehicles, which they drive onboard themselves. The Yarmouth-Bar Harbor and Digby-Saint John services provide a shuttle to take foot passengers between terminal buildings and vessels. Shuttle buses are accessible, featuring a wheelchair lift in the rear of the vehicle.

## Built Environment

Accessible facilities are a key component of BFL-NFL's operational infrastructure and vital to supporting the achievement of its mandate. The companies operate four vessels and six terminals, as well as various administration office spaces. Work continues to ensure that both the current and future built environment is considerate of accessibility requirements.

## Provisions of CTA Accessibility-Related Regulations

As federally regulated marine transportation service providers, BFL-NFL are subject to the Accessible Transportation for Persons with Disabilities Regulations from the Government of Canada, which has the goal of removing barriers to transportation for persons with disabilities.

- » As BFL-NFL are both carriers and terminal operators, sections of the regulations applicable to NFL-BFL include: 1-25, 28, 31-35, 37-39, 42, 46, 48-61, 134-138, 140, 142-144, 153, 164, 178, 212-223, and 225-231. Information on the activities and services covered by these sections has been presented in the preceding sections.
- » BFL-NFL maintain an open dialogue with representatives of the CTA and participate in its ongoing consultative processes.

### Feedback Information

Progress has been made in gathering both internal and external input to the Plan. BFL-NFL's intention remains to hold ongoing sessions with both employees and customers over the remainder of the plan. This will allow the committee to best appreciate where improvements to the Plan should be prioritized.

## CONSULTATIONS

Accessibility Committee meets quarterly and has a mandate to include annual community and employee consultation. An annual feedback/review session will be held with representative Persons with Disabilities and employees. In preparation for developing its 2023-2025 Accessibility Plan, BFL-NFL consulted with a number of specific disability groups as well as persons with disabilities. BFL-NFL consulted with:

- » Hear PEI, a non-profit, volunteer run organization dedicated to improving life for those with hearing loss
- » Person with visual impairment
- » Resource Abilities, a voluntary, non-profit, non-government organization that is governed by a sixteen-member Board of Directors, at least nine of whom must have a disability,

Representatives from the above stakeholders were all given tours of all publicly accessible areas of the Confederation, a passenger ferry, for their feedback on the vessel's accessibility from their individual perspective as persons living with aural, visual, or physical disabilities. All stakeholders were also provided the same accessibility training that BFL-NFL staff receive and were invited to provide their feedback.

The feedback received from consulting with the stakeholders above through tours, open-ended qualitative questions, and a review of BFL-NFL's accessibility training for staff, was used to develop the Company's 2023-2025 Accessibility Plan as well as revise and enhance the Company's accessibility training for staff.

Since publishing the 2023-2025 Accessibility Plan, BFL-NFL's accessibility committee meets quarterly and has a mandate to include annual community and employee consultation. An annual feedback/review session will be held with representative Persons with Disabilities and employees.

The next update to the BFL-NFL Accessibility Plan will be published in June 2025. Between now and then, please let us know through the feedback link on our website if you have any questions, suggestions, or feedback to offer as we progress to a more accessible future.



Ferries.ca

