

2017 Safety and Accessibility Report

Date: April 24, 2017

Compiled by: Alex Jurgensen on behalf of the Camp Bowen Society for the Visually Impaired

Introduction:

The following report was compiled by the Camp Bowen Society for the Visually Impaired, herein referred to as "the society", to outline concerns raised by its members about the safety and accessibility of the Bowen Island Lodge, herein referred to interchangeably as "the lodge" and "the facility". These concerns affect the ability of the lodge's principal use group, as defined in the restrictive covenant that governs the Bowen Island Lodge, located at Lot 37, Block 3, District Lot, Plan 11068, to safely and independently utilize the facility.

As per the covenant, the lodge "...operates facilities on the Lands (the "Facilitator"), principally for use as a recreation, training and meeting centre for the benefit of the blind, deaf blind, and visually impaired persons. The Grantor also rents out use of the Facilities on a short term basis to unaffiliated groups on an "as available" basis."

1. Lack of a Safe Transition Between the Dock Ramp and Dock at the Lower End

Type: Poses severe risk to safety

Concern:

At the bottom of the ramp that leads from the upper section of the dock to the lower section, there is a step that was created by the removal of a metal plate that created a sloped transition between the lower end of the dock ramp and the dock to which it connects. The height of the step varies with the tide as the gradient of the ramp changes. Such a step poses a risk for any individual, regardless of vision level, to lose their balance and end up in the water of Deep Bay/Mannion Bay.

Background:

The metal transition plate described above was removed sometime in either 2015 or 2016, when the lodge was under the ownership of owners who are no longer affiliated with the property.

Recommendations:

I. The metal plate at the bottom of the dock ramp should be replaced.

Lodge notified under current ownership on: July 14, 2016

Lodge Response: The lodge has indicated that this is in progress, though the society has not yet received a date for the completion of this project.

2. Lack of Clear Yellow Lines to Indicate Ridges on the Dock Ramp

Type: Poses severe risk to safety

Concern:

On the ramp between the upper section and lower section of the dock, there are ridges intended to create grip for individuals ascending or descending the ramp. Since the ridges are not marked in such a way as to make them visible to visually impaired individuals, the risk is that visually impaired individuals will trip and end up in the waters of Deep Bay/Mannion Bay.

Background:

The dock ramp was replaced in either 2015 or 2016 by owners no longer affiliated with the property. The former dock ramp featured ridges that were painted yellow for high visibility.

Recommendations:

I. The ridges on the dock ramp should be painted yellow to ensure they are visible to visually impaired individuals.

Lodge notified under current ownership on: July 14, 2016

Lodge Response: The lodge has indicated that this will be done if the weather cooperates. The society has not yet received a date for the completion of this project.

3. Lack of Clear Yellow Lines to Indicate the Edges and Other Features of Pathways

Type: Safety

Concern:

The yellow lines that indicate the edges of pathways, changes in their elevation, the presence of stairs, and other features of the pathways that are on the property have not been maintained. The paint is so faded at this point that some visually impaired guests are no longer able to make use of the landmarks it provides. This creates a safety concern as changes in elevation and the presence of stairs, when encountered without prior warning, can cause injury.

Background:

The lines, which were regularly maintained over the years by previous owners of the lodge, provide valuable safety information about the pathways on the property to visually impaired guests. Features of the pathways, such as changes in elevation and the presence of stairs are indicated by special markings painted on the pathways in yellow paint. Changes in elevation are distinguished by a set of three solid lines across a pathway, while the presence of stairs is distinguished by a single dashed line across a pathway.

Recommendations:

I. The yellow markings on the pathways should be examined to determine the level of fading that has occurred.

II. If the markings on the exterior stairs are found to be faded, the type of this concern should be raised to "poses severe risk to safety".

III. The yellow lines should be repainted.

Lodge notified under current ownership on: July 14, 2016

Lodge response: The lodge has stated, "This will not be done, no funding available".

4. Lack of Yellow Lines on the Edges of the Patio

Type: Safety

Concern:

There is a small step where the patio meets the grass that is just high enough to present a tripping hazard to guests, especially those who are visually impaired or have other disabilities.

Background:

The edges of the patio were formerly painted yellow to ensure that they were visible to guests, especially those who were visually impaired. In 2011, the patio was repainted grey by the then owners of the facility who are no longer affiliated with the property.

Recommendations:

I. The edges of the patio should be repainted with a line of yellow paint no narrower than 4 inches in width.

II. Ensure that the colour chosen for the patio contrasts with the yellow lines at a contrast ratio of 3:1 at a minimum.

Lodge notified under current ownership on: August 9, 2016

Lodge response: The lodge has indicated that they hope to repaint the whole patio weather permitting, though the society has not yet received a date for the completion of this project. The lodge have shared that yellow lines on the edges of the patio will be painted if they get the patio done.

5. Lack of Railings on Dangerous Areas of the Property

Type: Poses severe risk to safety

Concern:

There are two areas of particularly steep grade and one area that features a cliff on the property that do not have railings to prevent falls. The areas of concern can be found at the following locations:

A. Along the path down to the water front (steep grade)

B. Across the hill between the two paths that meet at the bottom near the beach (steep grade)

C. Near the cottage (cliff)

Background:

Permanent railings were previously installed at the above three locations. They were removed by owners no longer affiliated with the property. A temporary railing solution was commissioned and funded by the Camp Bowen Society for the Visually Impaired. The temporary railing solution, designed to be removed when visually impaired, blind, and/or deaf blind guests were not staying at the facility. The temporary railing solution was being stored on the grounds of the facility. It went missing prior to the summer of 2016. The Camp Bowen Society for the Visually Impaired was not notified that the temporary railing solution was missing until the week of August 8, 2016.

Recommendations:

I. Permanent aluminum railings should be installed at the three locations indicated above.

Lodge notified under current ownership on: July 14, 2016 with an update on April 16, 2017

Lodge response: The lodge initially investigated the matter and

informed us that they could perhaps use lengths of either wooden dowel or PVC pipe to form a railing solution. When we informed them that we had received professional advice that wooden dowel or PVC pipe of the thickness permitted by the existing bases (1.5 inches) would be unsafe, the lodge indicated that at this time they do not have funding for this project..

6. Lack of Braille and Large-Print Labeling of Guest-Facing Devices and Items

Type: Accessibility

Concern:

Devices and other items, that are guest-facing are not adequately labeled to for independent use by visually impaired, blind, and/or deaf blind guests. Devices and items that are not labelled include but are not limited to the recently installed beverage station, the complimentary body wash, and the televisions installed at various locations around the property.

Background:

Under owners no longer affiliated with the property, guest-facing items were properly labelled for use by visually impaired, blind, and/or deaf blind guests. For example, the water cooler that the aforementioned beverage station replaces was labelled with Braille for blind and/or deaf blind guests and colour-coded for visually impaired and other guests.

Recommendations:

I. Any guest-facing device or item should be properly labelled for use by guests who are visually impaired, blind, or deaf blind.

Lodge notified under current ownership on: April 16, 2017

Lodge response: The lodge put the onus on the society to complete and fund any solution to the aforementioned concern.

7. Lack of Braille and Large Print Production of any Text that is Guest-Facing

Type: Accessibility

Concern:

Text made available to guests staying at the facility, if any, is not being produced in Braille or large print for guests who are visually impaired, blind, or deaf blind. This leads to guests being dependent

on sighted assistance to access the aforementioned text.

Recommendations:

I. Text made available to guests should be offered in Braille and large print formats for guests who are visually impaired, blind, or deaf blind.

Lodge notified under current ownership on: April 16, 2017

Lodge response: The lodge has stated that there is no text posted in rooms. They have not responded as to whether or not text viewable by guests is posted elsewhere on the property.

8. Unclear Fire, Earthquake, and Other Evacuation Procedures

Type: Poses severe risk to safety

Concern:

It is unclear at this time whether or not evacuation procedures guests must follow in cases of fire, earthquakes, etc. take into consideration the needs of guests with disabilities. Furthermore, copies of the aforementioned procedures are not being shared with guests with disabilities. This is concerning because evacuation is often a more involved process for people with disabilities. It is important that people with disabilities understand the evacuation process of a facility so that they can ensure they get appropriate assistance while evacuating.

Background:

Under owners no longer affiliated with the property, visually impaired, blind, and deaf blind guests were given an orientation to evacuation procedures. This often included a fire drill to ensure guests were familiar with evacuation procedures.

Recommendations:

I. The emergency evacuation procedures the lodge has in place should be reviewed to ensure they meet the needs of guests with disabilities.

II. Copies of the aforementioned procedures should be shared with guests who have disabilities.

Lodge notified under current ownership on: April 17, 2017

Lodge response: The lodge has not acknowledge the society's request for a copy of the procedures it has in place for the above.

9. Unclear Procedures and Safe-Guards for the Safe Evacuation of deaf blind Individuals

Type: Poses severe risk to safety

Concern:

The measures the the lodge has in place for the safe evacuation of individuals who are deaf blind is unclear. For example, it is unclear whether the lodge employs a system for notifying deaf blind individuals of an evacuation.

Recommendations:

I. The lodge should ensure that procedures for notifying deaf blind individuals of evacuation and the safe evacuation of deaf blind individuals are in place.

II. (See the previous concern listed above)

Lodge notified under current ownership on: April 17, 2017

Lodge response: The lodge has not acknowledged our request for information on the measures put in place to ensure the safe evacuation of deaf blind individuals.

10. Lack of Contrast Between Room Doors and Surrounding Walls

Type: Accessibility

Concern:

After the repainting of room and service doors carried out over the last year, there is concern that the colours chosen do not provide sufficient contrast for guests who are visually impaired.

Background:

The original colour scheme employed at the lodge was selected specifically to address the needs of visually impaired individuals. In the hallways and around the room known as "The Cove", room doors were designated a darker brown to ensure they created a high-contrast with the surrounding walls. On the other hand, service doors, such as the ones to the laundry room, were designated as a lighter colour to help them blend into the surrounding walls so set make it easier for visually impaired guests to find their rooms. The recent repainting has altered the colour scheme in such a way that all doors (excluding doors at the end of the hallway, exterior doors and between the lobby and dining hall), regardless of purpose, are the same colour.

Recommendations:

I. Further investigation as to whether or not the colour selected for room doors provides a sufficient contrast to the surrounding walls should be carried out to ensure a contrast ratio of 3:1 at minimum.

II. If a contrast ratio of 3:1 at minimum is not found to be present, the recommended action would be to repaint the doors in a colour that creates this contrast ratio.

Lodge notified under current ownership on: April 17, 2017

Lodge response: The lodge has not yet responded to this concern.

11. Lack of Visibility of Doors That Feature Large Glass Panels

Type: Safety

Concern:

The lodge employs liberal use of doors that feature large glass panels. The doors themselves do not always have sufficient contrast with the surrounding walls and the glass panels do not have any markings on them to indicate to individuals who are visually impaired whether or not the doors are closed. When taken in combination, these factors are cause for a safety concern. The concern in this case is that guests who are visually impaired may walk into the closed doors, believing them to be open. This could lead to injury.

Background:

Doors with large glass panels were not installed at the facility until 2011 by owners no longer affiliated with the property. Doors at the facility prior to 2011 did not present risks to visually impaired, blind or deaf blind individuals.

Recommendations:

I. The contrast between the doors and surrounding walls should be increased to at minimum a contrast ratio of 3:1.

II. Markings should be installed at eye level on the glass panels in addition to the change in contrast listed above to increase visibility. Markings could be created in such a way that they compliment the look and feel of the facility.

Lodge notified under current ownership on: April 17, 2017

Lodge response: The lodge has not yet responded to this concern.

12. Lack of Distinguishable Edges to Sets of Stairs

Type: Safety

The interior stairs employ the same colour carpet on the risers as they do on the treads. This does not allow for proper contrast sufficient to accommodate the needs of visually impaired individuals. This will lead to incidents of individuals who are visually impaired tripping up or falling down stairs because the stairs are not easily visible.

Recommendations:

I. Bullnoses should be installed on each step. The contrast ratio between the carpet of the stairs and the bullnoses should be 3:1 at a minimum.

Lodge notified under current ownership on: April 17, 2017

Lodge response: The lodge has not yet responded to this concern.

13. Single Railings on Sets of Stairs

Type: Safety

Concern:

A railing is only installed on one side of both the interior and exterior stairs. In both cases, railings are installed only on the right-hand side when descending stairs. This will lead to incidents of collisions between visually impaired, blind, and deaf blind individuals. These collisions will arise when one individual is ascending the stairs while another individual is descending using the same railing.

Recommendations:

I. Railings should be installed opposite the existing railings.

Lodge notified under current ownership on: April 17, 2017

Lodge response: The lodge has not yet responded to this concern.

14. Sections of Cracked Pavement that Have Become Raised

Type: Poses severe risk to safety

Concern:

There is at least one section of cracked pavement that has become raised. Such pavement poses a risk for tripping, especially by visually impaired, blind, and deaf blind individuals. One such stretch of pavement is on the right hand side of the parking lot, near the entrance, when exiting the parking lot.

Background:

There is at least one documented case of injury to a visually impaired individual caused by the aforementioned stretch of pavement in the parking lot. Although the case of injury in question occurred while the lodge was operated by owners no longer affiliated with the property, the risk posed has not been addressed.

Recommendations:

I. An evaluation of all pavement on the property should be carried out to determine areas where cracking has occurred.

II. Where uneven pavement is deemed to pose a tripping hazard, the affected area should either be blocked off or the pavement in question ground down to eliminate the risk of injury.

III. If blocking off and/or grinding of the affected area does not fix the issue, the pavement in question should be replaced.

Lodge notified under current ownership on: April 18, 2017

Lodge response: The lodge has not yet responded to this concern.

15. Lack of a Safe Swimming Environment

Type: Poses a severe risk to safety

Concern:

What steps will be taken to create a safe swimming area for visually impaired, blind, and deaf blind individuals off the dock?

Recommendations:

I. In the past, a buoy line anchored by a chain and cinderblock pair that was dropped into the water and periodically retrieved has proven to be an effective way to create a safe swimming environment for visually impaired, blind, and deaf blind individuals at the facility and should be adopted.

Lodge notified under current ownership on: July 14, 2016

Lodge Response: The lodge stated on July 14, 2016 that they would

search for the buoy line previously stored on the property but have not yet responded to a further inquiry made on April 18, 2017.

16. Lack of Braille Signage

Type: Accessibility

Concern:

There is currently no Braille signage to compliment the print signage available to sighted guests. This reduces the independence of individuals who are visually impaired, blind, and deaf blind.

Background:

Under previous owners no longer affiliated with the property, Braille signage was installed at the facility. In 2011, under owners who are also no longer affiliated with the property, the Braille signage was replaced with signage that did not feature Braille.

Recommendations:

I. Braille signage should be installed to compliment the existing print signage.

Lodge notified under current ownership on: Late February of 2017

Lodge response: The lodge has agreed to meet with the society on May 9, 2017 to discuss the possibility of implementing Braille signage.

Conclusion:

The society has determined that until all concerns categorized as "poses severe risk to safety" are addressed, the lodge is unsafe for members of its principal use group. The society furthermore deems the current safety and accessibility level of the lodge to negatively impact the use of the lodge by its principal use group and that therefore the lodge is in violation of the intent of the restrictive covenant. As per the covenant, "...The principal use of the facilities will be as a recreation, training and meeting centre, being the use of the Lands and/or Facilities to provide recreation, training and meeting facilities related to the care and rehabilitation of persons with disabilities including overnight guest and staff accommodation and shared eating facilities (the 'Principle Use')".

The society makes the following recommendations concerning the use of the lodge by members of its principal use group:

I. The lodge should ensure that all concerns in this report categorized as "poses severe risk to safety" be addressed prior to

July 31, 2017 or prior to another booking that includes members of its principal use group, whichever comes first.

II. The lodge should address all concerns in this report categorized as "safety" before December 1, 2017.

III. The lodge should address all concerns in this report categorized as "Accessibility" by April 30, 2018.