

Transcription of ArtsBuild Ontario Learning Series Webinar: Safety, Fire Codes and Accessibility for Creative Spaces

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>> THEA KURDI: (Reference slide 1) Hello, everyone. Welcome to our webinar Safety, Fire Codes and Accessibility for Creative Spaces. This is the fifth webinar in the series. My name is Thea Kurdi. I'm the vice-president of DesignABLE Environment. We are working with ArtsBuild Ontario and consultants on both this webinar series and the creation of a new toolkit to support accessibility in all creative spaces. We are delighted today to have Marnie Peters of Accessibility Simplified and Martin Day of Safety Media joining us as featured presenters.

(Reference slide 2) I will hand things over to them in just a minute. First we have a few housekeeping items before we get started. The first is please be aware that you can hear us, but we can't hear you. Your microphones have been

disabled for the webinar. But we hope you can hear us through your speakers and headphones.

You can adjust the sound by clicking on the speaker icon at the top of the meeting window. And number two, we are offering closed captioning today throughout the webinar. The closed captioning appears at the bottom of the meeting room screen called caption stream pod where you as a split can change your font size, color, font type, to suit your needs.

Would a participant please confirm by typing in the chat box at the bottom right of your screen that they can see the closed captioning box at the bottom of the meeting room? (Pause.)

>> THEA KURDI: Excellent. Thank you so much. A text of the closed captioning will be emailed to participants and made available on our website. Three last things before we get started. One, we will record this session and a link will be emailed to everyone following the webinar.

Two, also very important, we will be emailing you a quick survey after the webinar. We ask that you complete the survey so ArtsBuild Ontario can continue to improve their learning series for creative spaces.

Lastly, we will have approximately ten minutes at the end to answer your questions. Please use the chat box at the bottom right to type in your questions and we will get to as many as possible. Please note that unfortunately the chat box function at the bottom right of your screen is not accessible using the screen reader. So if the chat box is not working for your needs and you do have questions, please email them instead to Erin@artsbuildontario.ca. You can see it on your screen. We will answer as many questions as possible during that period.

(Reference slide 3) We have a really cool agenda today. We are going to start by recapping about the AODA legislation and what we covered in the last seminar, Best Practices for Architects, Designers and Creative Spaces on Accessibility. Then we will be moving on to presentations on fire safety, codes, accessibility in creative spaces. And then we will conclude with a question and answer period.

(Reference slide 4) Okay. So let's quickly do a recap. One of the things we talked about in the first seminar was what exactly is a disability? People with disabilities are really the minority of everyone. Everyone either currently has a disability or knows of someone with a disability or will acquire a disability as they age.

(Reference slide 5) We also reviewed than understanding what the AODA legislation is about. So AODA stands for Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act. The goal of the legislation is to make Ontario accessible by 2025. The basis of the legislation is focused on equality, dignity, and respect. And there are five key areas of requirements that are all grouped under what is called the integrated accessibility standard. The first of the five is customer service. The second is information and communication. The third is employment. The fourth is transportation. And the fifth is the design of public spaces.

(Reference slide 6) So focusing on the built environment we are looking at the design of public spaces. In most buildings we are focusing on the accessibility of any exterior paths of travel, outdoor public use eating areas and outdoor play spaces. It also focuses on accessible parking and there are two types: Type A, a van sized parking spot although anyone can park in them and type B is a car-sized

parking space. Finally there are three areas about obtaining services that can extend into the building. The first is service counters. The second is fixed queuing guides. The third are waiting areas where we focus on any fixed seating, we have to provide at least 3 percent of the seating for people with mobility assistive devices.

(Reference slide 7) Lastly, of course, if we are talking about codes we need to mention the Ontario Building Code, also referred to as the OBC. The Ontario Building Code does have accessibility requirements. But like the AODA there are limited requirements.

So the question is: Can we build a building that fully complies with the building code, will it be fully inclusive? Well, the OBC really focuses mostly on the needs of individuals who are using wheeled assistive devices like wheelchairs. It really doesn't solve for the full range of abilities that people have.

(Reference slide 8) In fact this is what most people don't understand, we have a hierarchy to the laws we have in the Ontario and the Ontario Human Rights Code has primacy over legislation. When there is a difference of conflict between the code and other Ontario law, the Human Rights Code has priority unless the other laws specifically state otherwise. As such, the plan can act, Ontario Building Code and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act must comply with the intent of the Human Rights Code unless otherwise noted. Organizations are required to meet the objective of creating spaces that do not discriminate against people with disabilities unless it will cause undue hardship.

That is a lot of information. You may want to look up more information at the Ontario Human Rights Code website. There is a fabulous resource available

and it's created by an organization called Gates, that created this with the accessibility director of Ontario and is made available in the resources here in the webinar as well as in the toolkit.

(Reference slide 9) So speaking of resources, when you get a copy of this presentation you'll see that there is a link here to more information about AODA customer service and the type of training you need to do with your staff. AODA information and communication, how to provide alternative formats for people with accommodation needs and things like your website. There is also information about the AODA employment requirements and what that looks like and what you need to be including. And then finally, of course, as I mentioned more information about the built environment in the design of public spaces.

(Reference slide 10) If you have any questions about the AODA and the design of public spaces standard you are welcome to contact the ministry for seniors and accessibility. This shows a variety of ways to contact them through their website, through a toll free number or TTY, through Twitter, through Facebook, through YouTube, or through an email address, accessibility@ontario.ca.

(Reference slide 11) So just before we get started with our new topic we wanted to do a quick recap of what happened in our seminar number four, Best Practices for Architects, Designers and Creative Spaces on Accessibility. The first part of the presentation was done by Amy Pothier, an inclusivity specialist at a company call Gensler. She had an amazing presentation with stunning images with important ideas. She addressed how important it is to empower and have an accessibility Advisory Committee collaborating with your design team. She

focused on how the request for proposal, also known as RFP process, and how it can be used to direct teams to use an accessibility Advisory Committee.

She was talking about mandatory site visits, workshops, how to use additional resources like the City of London or the City of Ottawa accessibility design guidelines or the CNIB clearing our path. She was looking at integrating the material, furniture, way finding and signage presentations. And how the AAC can be involved with sign-off for all material choices. There was lots that she included. Definitely worth going back and watching.

(Reference slide 12) We also were lucky enough to have Corey Timpson who spoke to us about design for creative spaces, how can creative spaces go beyond the standard. Corey has a wealth of experience in creating a variety of different accessible spaces. And he focused us on the importance of defining the ethos and ecosystem of design to drive home outcomes that are effective and efficient as possible. We want to make sure that the sum of all the parts equals something that is accessible. We spent some time looking at the largest gallery in the Canadian museums for human rights focusing on their signage, kiosk and design solutions.

He covered the approach and authority for clarity of terms, conditions, roles and responsibilities, and how important that is to get right. But also allowing time for prototyping and testing for things that may not be of the market solutions. He also spent some time talking about the importance of redundancy and the solutions available through technology. So definitely worth going back to check out Corey's presentation as well.

(Reference slide 13) Now I would like to introduce you to our amazing presenters for this, our fifth webinar. Starting with Marnie Peters. Marnie has extensive experience in ensuring the inclusion of persons with disabilities with respect to addressing fire and life safety and emergency and disaster preparedness. Marnie managed the “On Thin Ice” project. A three year project, addressing preparedness needs for persons with disabilities living in Canada's north.

Marnie also participated in the development of planning for safety, evacuating people who need assistance in an emergency, which is created for the Canadian government. She worked on several other documents as well. Marnie's company is Accessibility Simplified, specializing in major institutional and commercial projects. Primarily large public use facilities and environments.

Our second presenter today is Martin Day. After ten years of experience at Bell Canada, Laidlaw and Intraitems, Inc., in 2002 Martin moved to smaller entrepreneurial companies, including Barkley payments. In 2016 he acquired Safety Media and has been actively working on developing new innovative approaches for fire and life safety. These have included a full line of accessible fire and life safety signage and evacuation maps and most recently a software application to help organizations meet their compliance requirements. I am now going to turn things over to Martin to get us started.

>> MARTIN DAY: (Reference slide 14) Thank you very much, Thea. I'm very honored to be speaking to you today and very excited to be talking about fire and life safety, particularly as it relates to being an accessible organization.

(Reference slide 15) Quickly, I'm going to do a quick introduction, spend just a few minutes on the Fire Code. I would like to talk specifically about what I call the four Ps of compliance and fire safety planning. Then talk about some emergency signage principles.

(Reference slide 16) First, who is Safety Media? We provide Fire Code compliance products all the way from workplace health and safety compliance products to AODA compliance products to standard and custom signs. In fact, we have over 4,000 products. What we don't have we make for our clients as they need it. We also provide professional services to assist our clients in meeting their needs from a fire and life safety compliance.

The products we have, you can see some very small pictures. And what they describe is some of those products for fire and life safety planning. We have fire and safety planning kits all the way to fire warden kits to notifications for fire drills and anything you would require for fire and life safety planning, fire protection equipment, emergency lighting and some extinguishers, some first aid and safety products including kits and capabilities to keep all of the first aid and safety products together. We do a lot of log books, training in codes, again signs and custom products. We really work with our clients across the many organizations, and work to keep all of our products relevant and of course meet all of compliance needs.

(Reference slide 17) Before I start I would like to make a quick observation in the marketplace today. For those of you that manage properties, we hear all of our clients tell us that their Risk is increasing. At the same time the complexity of

what they are working on is increasing. For example, we worked with a church not so long ago that was actually a collection of nine different buildings put together over 55 years. And the complexity of managing in that environment just grows and grows and grows year over year. Oversight is also increasing. Toronto Fire for example has hired another 25 Fire Inspectors they have a mandate to inspect every high rise building once each year. Of course, in this day and age who has time? It's decreasing every day we go forward.

(Reference slide 18) Let's go to the fire protection and prevention act. Issued in 1997, it is law in Ontario. It gets modified very frequently. Most recently on March 15th of this year to make a change which is very small yet very substantial where they've taken the code to say that you must keep records, but they don't actually have to be written. It is a very interesting change that has been made that will play out over the next few years.

It is a companion to the Ontario Building Code. In fact, it legally sits below it. And the other key point about it is that the local fire inspectors are assistants to the Fire Marshal. They have full authority to enforce the code. They are the regulators and enforcers of the code.

(Reference slide 19) The key thing for property owners or people that are managing properties is who is responsible under this code? And unless otherwise specified, the owner is responsible for carrying out the duties of the code. And this duty is not transferable. So the owner means any person, firm or corporation having control over any portion of the building and property under consideration and includes persons in the property or building.

(Reference slide 20) It talks about supervisory staff, and supervisory staff are people that have some sort of delegated responsibility for the fire safety of other occupants under the fire safety plan. It can be anybody in the building that works for the owner or who has a relationship with the owner. So as you can see from the picture, it could be the property manager. It could be the construction company. It could be maintenance personnel, or in fact it could be the cleaners working late at night when there's an issue.

It is really important to note that the diversity of staff that is called supervisory staff has nothing to do with the fact that people have people working for them or something that we would in a co-management context think of as supervisory staff.

(Reference slide 21) The general duties of the supervisory staff are A, promote fire safety attitude in your building. How can you do that? First of all you have to know the emergency procedures for your staff and occupants. You have to understand the building features. You have to be sure to make sure you have sound knowledge of all the life safety features in your building and you must keep egress routes clean and maintain door operations effectively.

How many times in a small community organization has somebody thought: "Oh, I'm just going to leave my pram out in front of the door". "Oh, if this box is here for a little bit of time it will be okay". Or how about the coat rack that gets put in the fire exit room because somebody couldn't find anywhere else to do it? All of those are actual violations of the code and are very serious should there ever be a fire.

You must also have keys available for firefighters to use and keep them available. Supervisory is supposed to go to a fire panel if there is a fire and be able to communicate with the firefighters where the particular rooms that they need to go are and what the routes are they need to get there. And you must always review your building's fire plan because it will tell you all the duties and it will tell you all the work that you need to do on a regular basis to be compliant under the code.

(Reference slide 22) We call the four Ps of compliance, part 2 and part 6 to be very careful about what we are specifically talking to. There are many other parts in the code but many of them deal with the built environment. Particularly what I'm talking about is the maintenance and management of the building under the code.

You need a fire safety plan for each building. It is defined in the Fire Code which buildings are required to have a plan and they vary from the size of the building, the number of floors, the number of people that will be in the building, the size of the occupancy, the type of the occupancy. And if you are unsure about your building, it is best that you ask any certified fire inspector or to call your local fire department.

You need people that are knowledgeable and capable of performing their specific roles within the fire safety plan. Those can include conducting regular checks, inspections and tests. Or they can include the people that are going to be called by the fire Department on an as-needed basis.

You need property, functioning equipment properly maintained. I always find it interesting when I think of buildings: What does that really mean? Well,

the Fire Code says it means anything that will cause, that could cause a fire. What does that mean? Well, that could mean the furnace, that could mean the flue to the chimneys, it could mean any equipment and of course it means the fire safety equipment that we all know and understand as such: Fire pumps, alarm systems, smoke signals, fire extinguishers, emergency doors. All of those things must be kept in a functioning way.

Finally you need to have proof that the equipment is being maintained, which is defined as checking, inspecting, and testing as per the code. This proof is required should there ever be a fire and is always called as soon as the fire department comes. They will pick up two documents. They will pick up your log book or your records. They will pick up the fire safety plan.

(Reference slide 23) Let's talk about fire safety plans. These are a very helpful document. They are required, but they are designed to minimize the possibility of a fire. They are designed to provide occupant safety and they are designed to provide effective utilization of fire safety features.

All buildings will have some sort of fire safety features in them. It is so important to understand how they work, when to inspect them, when to check them, who is doing it, how are they going to do it. That is the role of the fire safety plan. It is important also to note that it must be reviewed at least annually. It must be updated with any changes in the building's structure or use. So a small change in the lobby is something that must be reviewed in the fire safety plan to see how it would potentially change that plan.

(Reference slide 24) What's in a fire safety plan? Obviously there is an introduction which just describes the building typically. It talks about the building

and the human resources. So it would say, for example, how many elevators are in the building. What is the type of sprinkler system? What kind of fire exits are there? All those kinds of things that are intended for the safety of the personnel inside. They will also define who the supervisory personnel, how they are reached, all those kinds of things. It will provide emergency procedures. It will provide a short definition of how to control, confine and extinguish fires. It will always have alternative measures and fire watch, two things that are used, for example, if the fire alarm panel isn't working. You are required to conduct a fire watch throughout the building, which means that somebody must walk through the entire building every hour and log that there has been no fire.

It defines the fire drill procedures. It defines the fire life and life safety systems and provides schematic drawings at a very high level of the building. If there was ever a fire only really the building and human resources component and the schematic drawings will be used by the fire department. So it is important that these are very easy to access and readily available.

(Reference slide 25) To make a fire safety plan, and it is really of great interest to us, how do you make a fire safety plan accessible? What does that really mean? Under the code it says that the fire safety plan must have a persons required assistance list. This is meant to be updated on a regular basis. Well, that's very helpful, I think, but it doesn't really help you in a place where people with various levels of accessibility will be coming in and out of that building on a regular basis. So it is important to consider what we are going to do about that. We'll talk about that in the upcoming pages.

It also is in some cases important to have an individual fire safety plan for people with specific disabilities. That needs to be noted in the whole fire safety plan and building evacuation plan.

(Reference slide 26) We believe that it is really important to engage In inclusive evacuation planning and drills. Really important to invite people that require assistance to participate and to actively use the drills that are required under the code to update the list of persons requiring assistance. Should there ever be a fire one certainly doesn't want to be practicing this stuff because the seconds are all you have.

(Reference slide 27) Under the part for people, the owner and the delegates, things that can't be delegated. You are required to be knowledgeable and you are required to have both knowledge of self and also people who are capable of performing their duties under the fire safety plan. In fact, for the superintendent or the building manager, they should be reading the fire safety plan before they start on their first day. They should have an understanding of it and where their role is in the advent that anything should happen, because it is never going to happen when everybody is ready. So we advise that you have proper training plan in place, that you practice your key drills and procedures as required by your plan.

(Reference slide 28) Next Finally, I've spoken a fair bit about this already, but functioning equipment. The Fire Code requires that all equipment that could create a fire hazard be maintained properly. That includes the furnace. That includes the fire chimney, the stairwells, any of the fans that may be accessible to those particular stairwells to ensure that the stairwells stay safe throughout.

(Reference slide 29) This is always validated by checks and are always recorded in either a log book or some sort of record. It is advised that people keep a record of what they see on a daily basis. For example, you may be walking through the building and note that the light in an exit sign is out. That should be logged and fixed as quickly as possible. And as I mentioned earlier, the two things, in the advent of an emergency that a fire department will look for is your log book and your fire safety plan.

>> ALEX GLASS: Martin this is Alex, I'm letting you know you have about five more minutes. As well as when you are speaking, if you could speak directly into the microphone that will be beneficial for our listeners. Five-minute warning.

>> MARTIN DAY: Thank you. Sorry, I thought I was. My apologies. I'll adjust.

(Reference slide 30) Emergency signage. The key thing here, keep it simple, keep pictograms, keep it tactile and work with Braille. And balance the inevitable tension with various laws, regulations and requirements that exist.

(Reference slide 31) When you are building and placing accessible evacuation map, we recommend that it be tactile, that it use grade 1 Braille, that it have large text, have a high traffic location. Be easy to orient. But have limited but important information.

How many evacuation plans have we all seen that are on the size of an eight and a half by 11 piece of paper, with every single fire piece of equipment, every single smoke alarm and every single pull station, all things you won't need if you need to evacuate. Keep it simple, keep it large and make it work as quickly as you can.

(Reference slide 32) I'm going to skip this fairly quickly. One of the key benefits that has been recently released to help all of us in this process is a new standard called the CSA B651, which provides for signage best practice. It provides how to build the sign and where to put the signs to enable the built environment be easily accessible.

Some of the keys that it talks to are to avoid shadows and glare. Keep the text sans serif, upper and lower case, minimum contrast of -- sorry, upper and lower case, minimum 25-millimeters in height. Make sure your tactile is of a sufficient depth, .8-millimeters to 1.5. Make sure the pictograms can be seen, being 150-millimeters in height and make sure it's properly locate the above the floor and away from the door jamb.

(Reference slide 33) Signage examples, accessible exits with areas of refuge, differentiated. Tactile and Braille. Make it easy for people to get where they need to go as quickly as they can. The floor levels and higher levels account for smoke. If you put the sign down low if you are crawling out of the building you can see it. If it's eye level or above the door you probably won't even see it. Keep the egress path clear and keep them well located and well signed. Of course, keep your "In case of fire 911" signs.

(Reference slide 34) I mentioned grade 1 Braille. One of the things I notice is that most buildings actually use grade 2 Braille or contracted Braille because it is the U.S. standard for ADA.

Grade 1 Braille which is adopted by the CNIB is the Canadian standard. And being nice Canadians, the ruling says as long as you can fit the Braille in, you are

supposed to use grade 1 Braille. The signage, our perspective, that is the only acceptable solution in Canada.

(Reference slide 35) So rushing along here, we do recommend that people go beyond the minimum. Codes are constantly changing. There are many low cost options to improve building safety for both able-bodied and disabled people. Fire safety best practices are constantly evolving. And accessible fire safety is a differentiator.

(Reference slide 36) All that I've spoken about in the fire safety plan doesn't necessarily require you to hire anybody. Fire departments will all provide a template for you to create a fire safety plan. They will generally provide assistance. If you want help, there's lots of people who will help if you require it. You can make a difference through all of this. You can certainly help with the accessibility. And we think it's a great way to move forward and meet requirements of the code long before 2025. With that I will turn that over.

>> THEA KURDI: Thank you very much, Martin. I'll summarize some of the excellent points you made today. The Fire Code is a companion to the Ontario Building code, which most people don't know. It is important to promote fire safety attitude in the building. I love your overview of the fire safety plan, how you summarized the four Ps under parts 2 and 6. How you gave us an overview of the table of contents which many people have never seen and then thinking about the accessibility and how to keep people with disabilities safe. Which I'm sure Marnie is going to be talking about more. And the options for accessible signage requirements and those details. Without further ado I'll pass it over to Marnie. Marnie, take it away.

>> MARNIE PETERS: (Reference slide 37) Thanks very much, Thea. I'm excited to be here today to speak to you about accessibility in creative spaces. And I hope everybody can hear me okay.

(Reference slide 38) So I have been working in that field of accessibility of the built environment for over 20 years. And I guess of relevance to this particular conversation is some of my most recent work I did was working with the Ottawa art gallery. I worked with the new build of the Ottawa art gallery. As part of that we went through the heritage buildings of arts court and looked at how we could integrate the two buildings but also how to address the accessibility of the old building as well as the fire and life safety component. I also had the opportunity to work on the Museum of Nature and we again looked at the fire and life safety within the heritage context. But also as part of the building was being redeveloped we also looked at signage as well as the exhibit space and how to make exhibits themselves accessible.

(Reference slide 39) The first part of my presentation is about accessibility of the built environment and addressing fire and life safety.

(Reference slide 40) How I got into fire and life safety is working on lots of the built environment. So for so long people with disabilities have sort of had that fight of accessibility, get me into the building, get me into different facilities. What have been lacking is the same attention being paid to egress and the ability to get out of buildings.

The Ontario Building Code was updated in 2015 with a number of specific amendments related specifically to accessibility. And one of those changes addresses ensuring signage where the egress route differs. So we are all familiar

with the exit sign and of course the new running man that has been adopted by the national building code and is being adopted throughout the rest of the provincial building codes.

What is lacking often, and you can see from this photo which is of the running man with an arrow saying the exit is this way. You get there and find out that there's four stairs. Obviously this is not an accessible egress route. And so where the accessible egress route differs from the ambulatory route there needs to be specific signage now noting what the difference is. And so this photo illustrates the inaccessible egress route but also some different ways of providing information. So in this case it is using the hand rail and the hand rail at the top and bottom has the addition of some tactile and Braille information. So it tells you, you are on the fifth floor. It sort of tells you obviously which way is up, which way is down. It is a different way of providing information related to the built environment.

(Reference slide 41) So when we talk about building code requirements, Thea touched on it earlier about sort of the supremacy and hierarchy of building codes and standards. And as I mentioned, the Ontario Building Code was updated to indicate where the accessible egress route is different it needs to be signed. We also want to talk about things like illumination in stairwells, stairs and ramps, doors and exit signage, fire pull heights. They are all standardized.

But also not only where the fire pulls are but often the things that we do to impede access to the poles, putting garbage cans, different pieces of furniture. So we have to remember, this is like safety equipment and it needs to be maintained

clear at all times because you don't know who is going to be that actually pulls that fire pull in an emergency.

We talk in the built environment about visual alarms and visual alarms are especially important for people with hearing disabilities. Who cannot hear the fire alarm going off. So they need another means of getting the message, the notification that there is an emergency.

Visual alarms originally in the code were required in big open spaces which, you know, is a bit redundant really. In a big open space where there's lots of people, for a person who is deaf or hard of hearing, if everybody starts running out of the building, I assure you they are also going to run out of the building. They won't know why, but they will leave.

It is important to have visual alarms and similar notification systems in places where people could be alone such as washrooms, such as small offices. It is important to think about where people won't get sort of that obvious message by what other people are doing.

The other thing that we like to talk about and I try and work with my clients to incorporate is visual signage that provides real time messaging. So if you are operating a really large facility like an art gallery and you have a PA system and it says we are having an emergency on the third floor, please, everybody evacuate. If you are deaf or hard of hearing you don't get that message. Real-time signage would, people would be able to see and read. Oh, there's an alarm? Evacuation because there's a fire on the third floor.

We need to think about alternative ways of providing information. While the building code doesn't require it, the Ontario Human Rights Code actually requires

that you not create a facility that discriminates. By only having audible announcements you are in fact discriminating against people who cannot hear. That is important to keep in mind.

(Reference slide 42) The building code is not the end all and be all that you are working to achieve when it comes to accessibility. The building code as it relates to accessibility is the lowest bar. It essentially is saying you cannot do any worse than this.

So when it comes to fire and life safety which is not well addressed in the building code it is really important that you push for more. That you say no, we need to think about who all of our users are. This is where Thea touched on the use of the RFP as a tool. You can require in your RFP the different codes and standards that your contractors and architects must meet. You can say I want the best of all these different things and by doing that you are able to go beyond what is the minimum and look at ways of meeting the needs of everyone. So this is where I talk about code improvements too.

So right now I mentioned the requirements for evacuation routes. Also now there is more incorporation of areas of refuge or areas of rescue assistance. Essentially the same thing, but one is more an American name and one is more Canadian.

There is only a requirement in certain circumstances for areas of refuge and rescue assistance. If somebody has a mobility disability, they don't care if they are on the second or tenth floor. The point is that they still can't go down the stairs. Having areas of refuge or areas of rescue assistance in stairwells and other

protected areas is of benefit to a lot of people and not just on the tenth floor. So it is important to consider where you might be able to do better.

When we talk about evacuation instructions, everybody runs to the elevator and it says do not use the elevator in case of fire, but it doesn't tell you what you are supposed to do. So it is important to think: I can't just tell them not to do it. I have to tell them what it is I want them to do.

So use of elevators in emergency situations. So the elevators are becoming more commonly used in new-builds and properly being built so that they can be used in emergency situations independently without firefighters. It requires a specific build of the elevator but that is possible to do. It needs to come with public education, though, about yes, you can use this elevator as opposed to always being told that we can't.

(Reference slide 43) Here we have an area of rescue assistance. So it has very specific components. It needs to be identified by signage. It needs to have a communication system that is always monitored. It needs to have space allocated outside of the flow of the evacuation route for people who use mobility aids. It needs to have positive air pressure. That is to make sure you don't have smoke in the space. It's not just that we have extra space in this stairwell. It can be an area of rescue assistance. There are specific design components that go into assuring a safe waiting space.

The point of this space is not so that you don't have to make an individual evacuation plan or don't have to worry about it. It really is meant as a temporary waiting space until either the flow of people have left and you can now execute

your evacuation plan and evacuate with people who are able to assist you or you can wait there for firefighters.

(Reference slide 44) So Martin talked a little bit about signage. You'll see a bunch of photos there. That is the progression of where we have gone with exit signs. First, you know, with the words. Which is not great if you don't speak English or French in Quebec. We have seen the progression of signage universally move away from text and move towards pictograms. This shows the evolution of the exit and the running man. Now we are starting to recognition that people using mobility aids, people who are pregnant, people with a broken leg all the people who can't run down the stairs also need a means of exit. We are looking at more universal's evacuations routes also. Not just like this is the way everybody who can run can go and this is the way that everybody using a mobility aid is going to go. It's about thinking about the design and making sure it's a route that everyone can use so that everyone is going in the same direction.

(Reference slide 45) Elevators for evacuation. I touched on that not only as a code change but also a sort of design change. They have a specific sign – Emergency Evacuation Lift. So it's to understand that it can be used in fires.

I know we are pressed for time and I want people to be able to ask for questions. Sorry that I'm rushing through.

(Reference slide 46) Martin touched on evacuation maps. This is what we see, a tiny little map where you can't see where you are and where it is you are supposed to be going.

(Reference slide 47) So we want sort of like bigger signs, also only showing the key points. It is too bad I made this picture kind of small, but I really like this

particular evacuation map I saw on a building, they actually had the wheelchair logo on the doors that had the accessible egress routes. And so as somebody who uses a wheelchair, for me I'm like oh, my God! Somebody thought about what my needs are. It ensured that I knew that there was directions and places I could go that were accessible.

So it is a little bit of thinking outside the box goes a long way when it comes to fire and life safety.

(Overlapping speakers.)

>> MARNIE PETERS: Go ahead?

>> THEA KURDI: You have five minutes left. Thanks.

>> MARNIE PETERS: (Reference slide 48) So this is a tactile map, similar to what Martin has shown, showing the key important things. This one has tactile and Braille. Just letting people know where they should go.

(Reference slide 49) So this part of my presentation, though, is about addressing the expect needs of people with disabilities and functional limitations.

(Reference slide 50) And so in facilities such as art galleries, theaters, you just never know who is going to come. So it is important that you have information for staff and visitors. Having tactile maps available.

Having available evacuation plans. Some people are going to want to know, when they walk up to the person at the front, how are you going to get me out of this building if something happens while I'm in here?

Providing emergency information in various formats is important. And also having your information on your websites about emergency procedures is important so people can look it up in advance in the format they are able to receive it in.

(Reference slide 51 and 52) The Canada labor code only applies to the Federal Government. I mention it because it has some really great information about how to create individual emergency evacuation plans. For staff and also you can use it as the basis for creating plans for, “this is what my staff is going to do if it's a person who uses a wheelchair”. “This is what my staff is going to do if it's a person with low vision”. There's great information in it. There's the link there, the part 17 safe occupancy of the workplace. That's where you'll find information about creating individualized plans.

(Reference slide 53) So here we talk about personal emergency evacuation plan. It is, you know, you can make it for each different type of disability, as I mentioned, whether it's staff or visitors. And don't assume that people with, that there won't be people with hidden disabilities. Not every disability is visible. We often think, oh, yeah, that's a wheelchair user. Obviously they have a disability. That person is using a long white cane, so they have a disability. We need to think about my mother who is 70 and had a heart attack. She is not going to run down the stairs any time soon. It is about keeping an open mind and trying to plan for and address all the different types of disabilities.

(Reference slide 54) When we talk about evacuation issues, Martin mentioned people with disabilities rarely take part are in evacuation exercises. It is important that that be practiced at some point. People with disabilities often

don't necessarily self identify or say hey, I'm going to be in the building. Does your staff and people working in your building have different ways to communicate? Do they have different ways of communicating with people with different disabilities? Have the staff been trained? Thea mentioned the customer service standard required by the AODA.

I talked about temporary disabilities. Some people with disabilities may refuse help or assistance, whether they might need it or not, they might just feel they can manage on their own. So you can offer assistance, but don't be offended and if they don't say yes, don't expect them to take it just because you offered.

(Reference slide 55) Staff training is important. And developing personal emergency evacuation plans like I mentioned for staff. And if you have a frequent visitor, somebody who is there often and they have a disability, you may wish to work with them to develop a specific plan for when they are in your facility. And it is important to document your emergency procedures and what you are going to do for all those people with different types of disabilities.

(Reference slide 56) Staff training. I mentioned that just a little bit. I'll just keep going.

(Reference slide 57) My final part is, we are all human. Ultimately, each of us is responsible for our own fire and life safety and emergency and disaster preparedness. That includes when people go to your facilities. That doesn't mean they are always going to be prepared, which is why it is important that your facility be prepared to address all those different needs.

Did I make my five minutes?

>> THEA KURDI: (Reference slide 58) You sure did. that's okay, you did great. Before I get to questions I wanted to summarize the amazing points. Thank you for pointing out your work at the Ottawa art gallery and museum of nature. When people are in Ottawa those are good places to go look for some things.

I appreciated your point about the importance of being able to get out of the building, on an accessible route and that you need to provide directional signage for where those accessible exits are. I really appreciate too that you were talking about how even though the OBC was updated in 2015, that those requirements including things like the visual alarms and where those locations really need to be placed to be useful, that also the building code is the minimum or the least you're allowed to get away with doing and doesn't necessarily meet the Ontario Human Rights Code requirements.

The fact that you talked about the audible announcements that might be made and how to think about how to make them visible so that people who are deaf can get that important information.

Again emphasizing that the RFP is a great tool to set higher standards as a part of your design contract with the architect and the contractor, and the other people involved with the process.

And then mentioning things like areas of refuge or rescue assistance that many people haven't heard about. The use of something called an evacuation chair which again many people may not be familiar with. I appreciate that both you and Martin were talking about tactile evacuation maps which are recently new to the marketplace.

The importance of providing information for both your staff and the visitors and ways to do that. And then the fact that the Canadian labor code which is not required for everybody to use is a good resource.

Okay. So now we'll just quickly have time for some questions. We started a couple minutes late so we'll go just past 1:00 o'clock to get started. If you would like to ask a question to the presenters, type that in the chat box in the bottom right-hand corner. As they come in I'm happy to read those.

So we have one question already from Natalie from the art gallery of Northumberland. The question is about fire safety plan. She says my art gallery is within another building. Do we need a separate fire safety plan? Or can we rely on the one for the main building? Martin, maybe that would be best going to you.

>> MARTIN DAY: That's a very great question. The answer is it rather depends. It is best to have your own fire safety plan. Often if the art gallery is within another building, as long as that fire safety plan covers the unique requirements of your locations it generally is acceptable to the fire department.

>> MARNIE PETERS: I would also just add, though, if you have staff or frequent visitors with specific disabilities, I would recommend that you create your own specific plan for how your organization is going to address the needs of people with disabilities within your space.

>> THEA KURDI: We have some people typing. While they are typing, Marnie, I wonder if you might talk to people a little bit about how they need to think about their space planning when they are perhaps, even before they hire

the architect. If they are going to include something like an area of refuge, what does that mean in terms of how much space that is going to need?

>> MARNIE PETERS: Right. So when we are talking about -- what Thea is talking about has a term, called functional programming. Architects deal usually with a set of parameters, existing parameters for functional programming. That often doesn't account for the additional space that is required for wheelchair users or people who use large mobility aids such as power wheelchairs and scooters. When we are talking about areas of refuge, you want to make sure that there is enough space for two mobility devices. And so the space is about 800 -- so we do everything in millimeters. So 800-millimeters by 1370-millimeters. 1.3 meters.

You want to make sure that it is clear, out of the evacuation route so people aren't being trampled. It is important when you think about these things you don't leave it to the architect to say: Oh, we are going to put stairs over here when you are thinking I want my stairwell to have multiple functions, you need mechanical to look at it for positive pressure, you need electrical. Its about identifying the needs that you want to have addressed, not just leaving it up to the architect to come up with certain things like, as I mentioned, oh, we'll just fit the stairs in here.

So think about your own needs before you engage the architect and have a list of things that you want to have incorporated so that kind of forces the architect and designers to maybe look at things from a different perspective.

>> THEA KURDI: We have time for one last question. The question is: Our small theater is upstairs with only elevator or stair egress. How do we find out if our elevators are able to be used?

>> MARNIE PETERS: So usually elevators in existing buildings most likely have not been designed and built to the fire requirements necessary for fire elevators. So they are typically used right now only under the supervision of the fire department. So in that case, you would want to set up an area of refuge or rescue assistance. If you are in an older building you also will probably have trouble meeting all of the requirements in terms of positive air pressure and separated space. It is important then that you work with your fire department and say we identified this is a challenge. We want to make sure we can safely evacuate people in an emergency and work with them to identify a safe waiting space either near by the elevator or near by the stairs so when the fire department does arrive people are in a place that is easy to access for the fire Department to facilitate the evacuation.

>> THEA KURDI: Thank you very much, Marnie and Martin. That was an amazing set of presentations. I appreciate everybody who signed up for today. Apparently the event was sold out. Fantastic.

(Reference slide 59) We want to conclude, talking about our next webinar. Our sixth and last webinar is called Invisible Disabilities and Creative Spaces. This will be held on Tuesday, May 14th of this year, with presenters Alex Bulmer from the accessibility consultant and actor and Andrew Gurza, who is a disability awareness consultant. So be sure to sign up for that as well.

(Reference slide 60) Of course, we would like to very much thank our ArtsBuild's Accessibility Advisory Committee for their information and input into these webinars in the six-part series.

(Reference slide 61) We would also like to acknowledge and thank the government of Ontario for supporting this project. Just as a reminder, please look for the email that we will be sending you with the recording from today's webinar and please complete the survey that will be attached.

Thanks again to Martin and Marnie for your wonderful presentations. Be sure to check out the rest of the Learning Series and the previous webinars on the ArtsBuildOntario.ca website. Thank you so much for attending. Have a great day.

(The presentation concluded.)