



# GUIDE TO RHF ACCESSIBILITY CERTIFICATION

v3.0 (May 2020)

# Accessibility Matters

Every day in Canada, more than 1,000 people turn 65 years old. With this shift in demographic, there is an increased concern regarding future accessibility—not only for the impact that decreased physical ability may have on daily lives, but also how it could affect loved ones.

## Accessibility Affects Canadians



**24%**

of Canadians self-identify as having a mobility, vision, or hearing disability or challenge\*



**47%**

of Canadians are spending time with or helping someone who has a physical disability or challenge\*

**2/3<sup>rds</sup>**

of Canadians are concerned that they, or someone in their life, may face new or worsening disability issues in the future\*

**30%**

of Canadians (roughly 9 million adults) say accessibility is a consideration when they're thinking about which places they frequent and which they avoid\*

## Accessibility is Good for Business



**550,000+**

the number of Canadians with disabilities who could find meaningful employment if barriers were removed\*\*

**\$16.8B**

the increase to Canada's GDP should barriers be removed to ensure people with disabilities can find meaningful employment\*\*

\*Accessibility is a source of future anxiety and a significant consideration for Canadian consumers today, Angus Reid Institute, Jan 2019

\*\*The Business Case to Build Physically Accessible Environments, Conference Board of Canada, February 2018

# Why Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification™?

**Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification™ (RHFAC)** is a rating system that measures the accessibility of buildings and Sites. It promotes increased access through the adoption of Universal Design principles.

Whether you are a property owner, building or facilities manager, architect or engineer, RHFAC will give you a real snapshot of your building's current level of access, helping you discover where and how to improve.

## RHFAC is the first program of its kind to:

-  **Measure the level of meaningful access of a Site**, based on the holistic user experience of people with varying disabilities affecting mobility, vision, and hearing
-  **Qualify trained professionals to conduct RHFAC ratings** through the RHFAC Professional designation
-  Recognize an organization's commitment to accessibility through certification of their Sites as either **RHF Accessibility Certified** or **RHF Accessibility Certified Gold**

**Getting rated will position your organization as a leader in building a sustainable Canada that's accessible for all.**



# How to Get Rated

Follow these six easy steps to have your Site rated. Further details and clarification are found in the corresponding sections.

## Plan

1

### Create your Organization Account on the RHFAC Registry



Once you submit your request, CSA Group finalizes registration via e-mail. This process typically takes three business days. For the RHFAC Registry, visit [rhfac.csaregistries.ca](http://rhfac.csaregistries.ca).

2

### Find a designated RHFAC Professional



1. While you await confirmation of your Organization account, find an RHFAC Professional to work with. The RHFAC Professional Directory can be found at [rickhansen.com/RHFAC-professional-directory](http://rickhansen.com/RHFAC-professional-directory).
2. Note that you must have an agreement with an RHFAC Professional before you can register your Site(s).

## Do

3

### Register Site(s) to be Rated



Login to your account and register each Site you want to have rated.

4

### Schedule your On-site Visit



Work with your RHFAC Professional to schedule a time for your on-site visit and determine estimated timelines to complete the rating.

Note: If you have registered a Site for a Pre-Construction Rating, final design drawings and other details are required in-lieu of an on-site visit.

---

## Celebrate

---

**5**

### Discover your Rating

Once CSA Group has received payment for the Application Fee and the rating has been adjudicated, you will receive a Scorecard, Letter of Certification and Rating Summary on your dashboard (found in your Organization account) on the RHFAC Registry.

**6**

### Celebrate your Accessibility

1. If your Site achieves certification, list publicly on the RHFAC Registry and receive a complimentary e-label. You can also order plaques and window decals for an additional fee.
2. If your Site does not achieve certification, the Scorecard and Rating Summary will still provide valuable information about the current level of accessibility and highlight areas for improvement for your Site.



# Plan



15 ELEVATION ACCESSIBLE WASHROOM SCALE: 1/20

ID-11

16 ELEVATION ACCESSIBLE WASHROOM SCALE: 1/20

Rick Hansen Foundation



# 1. Create your Organization Account on the RHFAC Registry

Begin the rating process by creating an account for your Organization on the RHFAC Registry at [rhfac.csaregistries.ca](http://rhfac.csaregistries.ca). As you move through the rating process, either yourself or an organizational representative will manage this account. You can add as many users as you like.

It may take up to three business days to have registration confirmed by CSA Group.

To understand the relationship between RHFAC and CSA Group, see **Appendix A**.



**Note for property management organizations:** Create an Organization account on the RHFAC Registry under your organization, then register the strata corporation and address as a Site.



## 2. Find a designated RHFAC Professional

As you await confirmation of your Organization account request, take this time to find an RHFAC Professional to work with. The list of designated RHFAC Professionals can be found on the Directory: [rickhansen.com/rhfac-professional-directory](http://rickhansen.com/rhfac-professional-directory).

This list includes details about the RHFAC Professionals including geographic location, experience and areas of expertise. Once you determine which RHFAC Professional you would like to engage, it is important to confirm their availability and fees directly prior to coming to an agreement.

### What is an RHFAC Professional?

RHFAC Professionals are trained to conduct RHFAC Ratings of the built environment using RHFAC methodology. RHFAC Professionals take a 48-hour training course offered at select post-secondary institutions—followed by an exam (administered by CSA Group)—in order to achieve their designation. RHFAC Professionals can also become members of the Accessibility Professional Network (APN) to stay up to date on resources and best practices in the industry. To learn more about RHFAC Professionals, RHFAC Training, and the APN visit [RickHansen.com/RHFAC](http://RickHansen.com/RHFAC).

**Note:** You must have an agreement with an RHFAC Professional before you can register your Site(s) to be rated.

# Do





## 3. Register Site(s) to be Rated

Once your Organization account is approved and you have engaged an RHFAC Professional, you will need to register an individual Site for each building that you want to have rated. Sites can be rated as either “Existing” or “Pre-Construction”. Sites that are under construction or undergoing major renovations should be registered as a **Pre-Construction Rating**.

**Note:** If you choose to list publicly (optional), the information you submit when registering a Site on the RHFAC Registry will be included in your public listing—so be sure to review your information carefully!

After you register your Site, CSA Group will verify and approve it. Allow three business days for approval. Once approved, you will receive an invoice by email with an RHFAC Application Fee for each Site, and your RHFAC Professional will be notified. A full breakdown of the registration and rating fees can be found in **Appendix B**.

**Note:** Your Application Fee must be paid in full to receive the results of your Rating.



## 4. Schedule your On-Site Visit

Once CSA Group has approved the Site, your RHFAC Professional will connect with you to collect information about the Site and schedule an on-site visit.

### What to expect during your Rating

#### An RHFAC Rating consists of:

1. Either an on-site visit for an Existing Site or a review of drawings for a Pre-Construction Site; and
2. The submission of the rating on the RHFAC Registry.

This process ranges between approximately 20 to 40 hours, depending on Site size and complexity.

It is important to note that the size of a Site does not always determine the number of hours required to complete an RHFAC Rating. For example, a small Site may contain more elements to review to complete the RHFAC Rating Survey than a large Site with less elements. The RHFAC Professional will provide a more accurate estimate after reviewing the initial information provided before the on-site visit.

**Note:** The above estimated hours of completion apply to the tasks required to complete an RHFAC Rating only and do not include additional consulting services that RHFAC Professionals may offer. These consulting services are outside of the scope of an RHFAC Rating.

## **BEFORE the On-Site Visit**

### **You will be expected to provide your RHFAC Professional with:**

- Address and description of the Site
- An on-site contact person who will be available to provide access throughout the rating
- Useful background information about the Site, including year of construction, size, relevant history, and information about users and spaces/facilities provided at the Site
- Copies of site plans and building plans, if available.

**Note:** For Pre-Construction Ratings, architectural drawings, such as site plans, elevation and section drawings, specifications, schedules, schematic drawings, and material boards will be required.

### **Your RHFAC Professional will confirm:**

- Details regarding the on-site visit and expected scope of rating
- Estimated time to complete the rating (e.g., on-site visit and rating submission on the RHFAC Registry) based on the size and complexity of the Site.

For information about what is included in the scope of rating for owned and tenanted Sites, see **Appendix C**.

## **DURING the On-Site Visit**

### **Your RHFAC Professional will:**

- Gather information to complete the RHFAC Rating Survey
- Use simple measuring tools (i.e. measuring tape, light meter, inclinometer, etc.)
- Take photographs that will be submitted to the RHFAC Registry for adjudication (these photographs will not be made public).

### **You will be expected to:**

- Allow access to all areas of the Site included in the scope of rating
- Inform your staff that an RHFAC Professional is conducting a rating
- Answer any Site-related questions that arise during and after the on-site visit, if required.

## AFTER the On-Site Visit

### Your RHFAC Professional will:

- Complete the RHFAC Rating Survey on the RHFAC Registry, using the information collected during the on-site visit
- Submit the completed rating for adjudication
- Address any issues identified by the Adjudicator, if required.

The RHFAC Rating Survey is used to look at the accessibility of the Site in the following 10 categories, as applicable to the Site:



Vehicular Access



Exterior Approach and Entrance



Interior Circulation



Interior Services and Environment



Sanitary Facilities



Wayfinding and Signage



Emergency Systems



Additional Use of Space



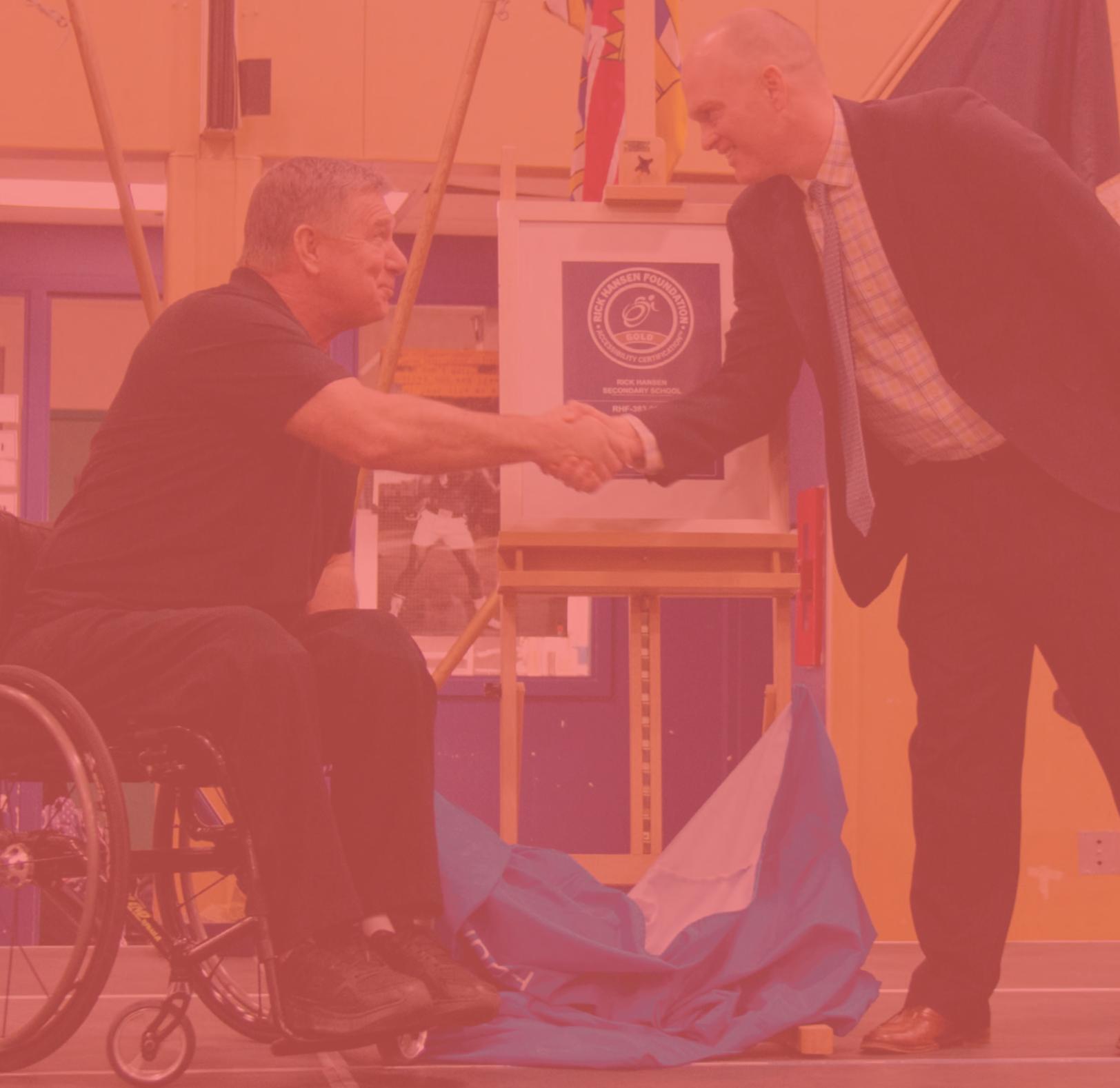
Residential Units



Trails and Pathways

**Note:** To view the RHFAC Rating Survey, go to [rickhansen.com/rhfac-rating-survey](https://rickhansen.com/rhfac-rating-survey).

# Celebrate

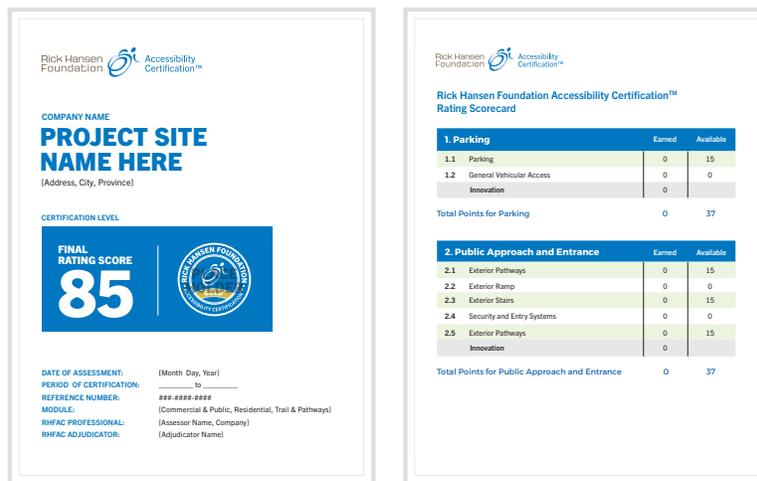


## 5. Discover your Rating

When a Rating is approved by CSA Group, the Site's primary contact will be alerted via email that the Scorecard, Letter of Certification and Rating Summary are ready. To view, you must login to your Organization account on the RHFAC Registry.

### Scorecard

The Scorecard provides a breakdown of the scores received in each category of the RHFAC Rating Survey. It also includes the final rating score, corresponding certification level and period of certification of the Site. To learn more about certification timelines and renewal, see "Maintaining your Rating & Certification".



Example of the Rating Scorecard.

### Letter of Certification

Should the Site achieve **RHF Accessibility Certified** or **RHF Accessibility Certified Gold**, a formal Letter of Certification will be provided to confirm that the Adjudicator and CSA Group have reviewed and approved the rating.

### Rating Summary

Your RHFAC Professional will also provide a high-level summary identifying the key areas of success and improvement for the Site. This information is provided directly to the primary contact on the RHFAC Registry dashboard.

**Note:** This Rating Summary will only be visible to you, even if you list publicly.

## Understanding your Results and Certification Level

There are two levels of certification: **RHF Accessibility Certified** and **RHF Accessibility Certified Gold**. The certification level of a Site is determined by:

1. Achieving the minimum rating score; and
2. Meeting the Mandatory Certification Requirements and Mandatory Gold Certification Requirements.

For more information about the Mandatory Certification Requirements, see **Appendix D**.

Certification Level	Rating Score	Meet Mandatory Certification Requirements	Meet Mandatory <b>GOLD</b> Certification Requirements
<b>RHF Accessibility Certified <b>GOLD</b></b>	<b>80%+</b>		
<b>RHF Accessibility Certified</b>	<b>80%+</b>		
	<b>60–79%</b>		
<b>Not Certified</b>	<b>0–100%</b>		
<p><b>Note:</b> Sites are required to meet the mandatory certification requirements to be certified, regardless of their rating score.</p>			

**Note:** For Pre-Construction Ratings, Sites will receive **RHF Accessibility Certified Pre-Construction** or **RHF Accessibility Certified Gold Pre-Construction**.

## ✓ 6. Celebrate Your Accessibility

If your Site is **RHF Accessibility Certified** or **RHF Accessibility Certified Gold**, you can choose to showcase your achievement in the following ways:

### List your Site publicly on the online RHFAC Registry.

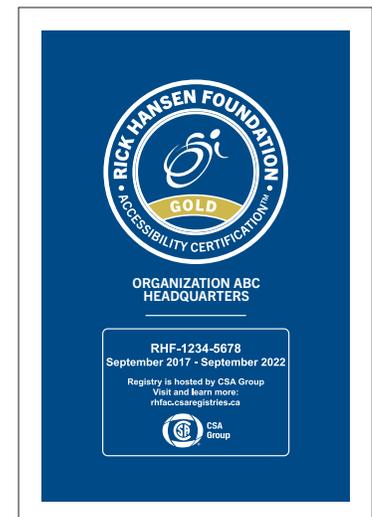
This free option means that your Site's Scorecard and Letter of Certification, picture of the Site, address, and Primary Contact information will be listed publicly on the RHFAC Registry along with other publicly-listed Sites. This is an easy way to show that your organization is dedicated to creating an accessible and inclusive community where you live and work.

If you choose to list publicly on the RHFAC Registry, you can:

- **Order and display an electronic label (free).**  
Provided by CSA Group via email, you can use this customized electronic label in various digital formats, including e-signature and website.
- **Order and display a physical plaque or window decal at your Site.**  
These materials can be ordered through the RHFAC Registry and are provided by the CSA Group for an additional fee. See **Appendix B** for the full list of fees.



*Example of the e-label.*



*Example of the plaque and window decal.*



# Maintaining your Rating & Certification

Certification is valid for five years. In order to maintain certification during this time, you must complete a short mid-term questionnaire after two and a half years to confirm that no major changes and renovations have taken place.

All major changes and renovations to your Site must be communicated to RHFAC to confirm that they have not affected the Site's accessibility. An RHFAC Professional and/or Adjudicator may investigate any declared changes to determine if the Site continues to meet certification. RHF reserves the right to withdraw RHF Accessibility Certification at its own discretion.

After this time, you must receive a re-rating for your Site. We encourage you to get re-rated after five years in order to keep your certification.

**Note:** Pre-Construction Rating certification is valid for five years or until your Site receives a building occupancy permit. Once completed, an RHFAC Professional must rate your physical site if you choose to pursue certification.

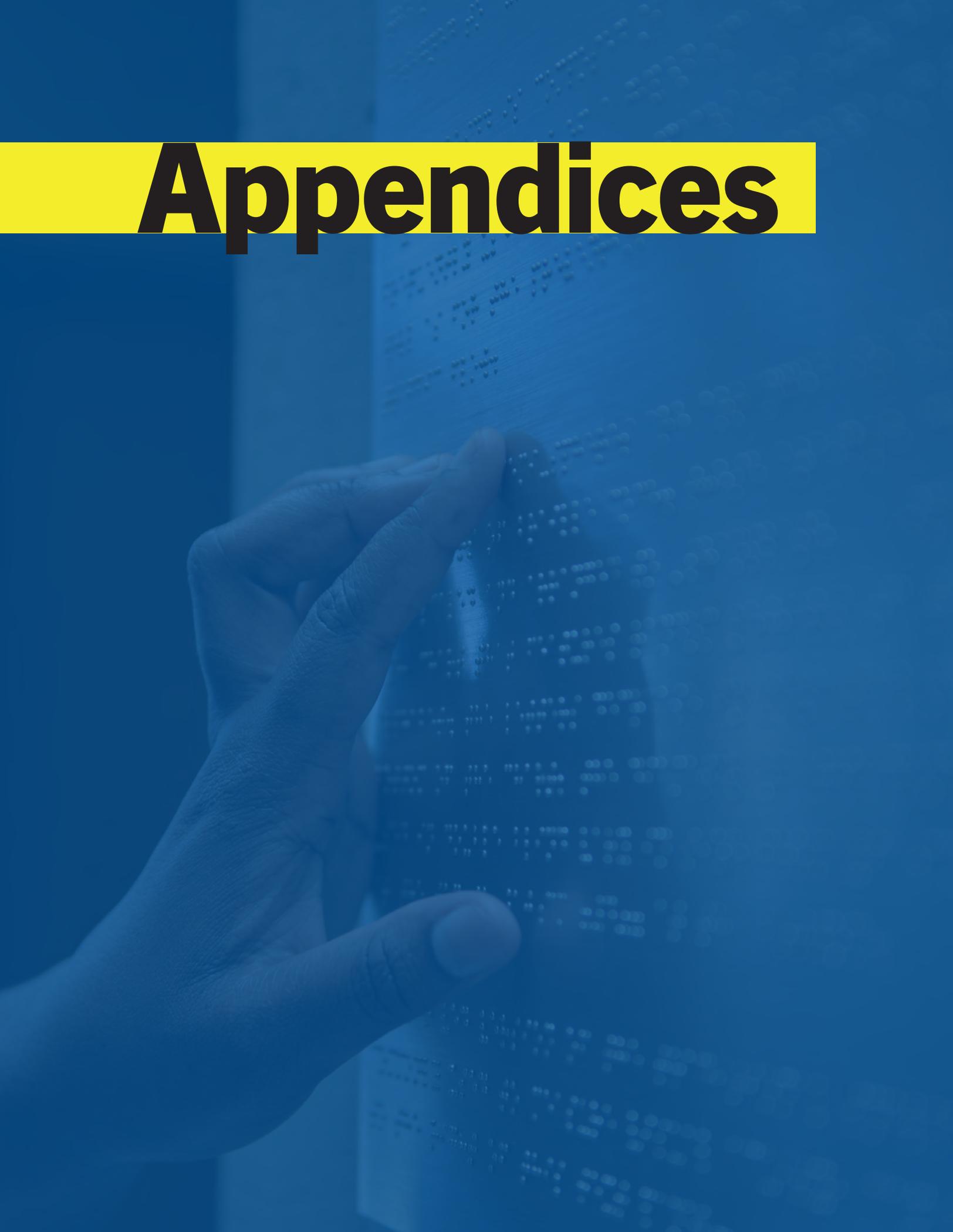


## Thank you!

Thank you for taking action to learn more about your building's accessibility, and to create a world that is inclusive for everyone, everywhere.

Thanks to organizations like yours, people of all abilities can look forward to a more inclusive and accessible future.

# Appendices

The image features a hand reaching towards a document with a blue overlay. A yellow horizontal bar at the top contains the word "Appendices" in bold black text. The background is a blurred document with a blue tint, and a hand is visible on the left side, touching the paper.

# Appendix A: Relationship with CSA Group

RHFAC partners with CSA Group to ensure RHFAC is operated independently and is transparent to the public. This verification happens in the following ways:

## RHFAC Registry

The online RHFAC Registry is hosted by CSA Group. The RHFAC Registry is where organizations create their account, register Sites and receive their final Scorecard. Upon approval, you will receive your official rating and have the option to list your Site on the public facing area of the RHFAC Registry to be recognized publicly for your commitment to accessibility.

## Ratings & Certification

All RHFAC ratings are submitted to CSA Group for a final review before approval. This process ensures that all ratings are subject to third-party verification prior to being released to the Organization.

## RHFAC Professional Exam

CSA Group also administers the RHFAC Professional exam. In order to become a designated RHFAC Professional and to conduct RHFAC ratings, individuals must successfully complete the RHFAC Training and RHFAC Professional exam. Only individuals who pass this course and exam will obtain their designation.



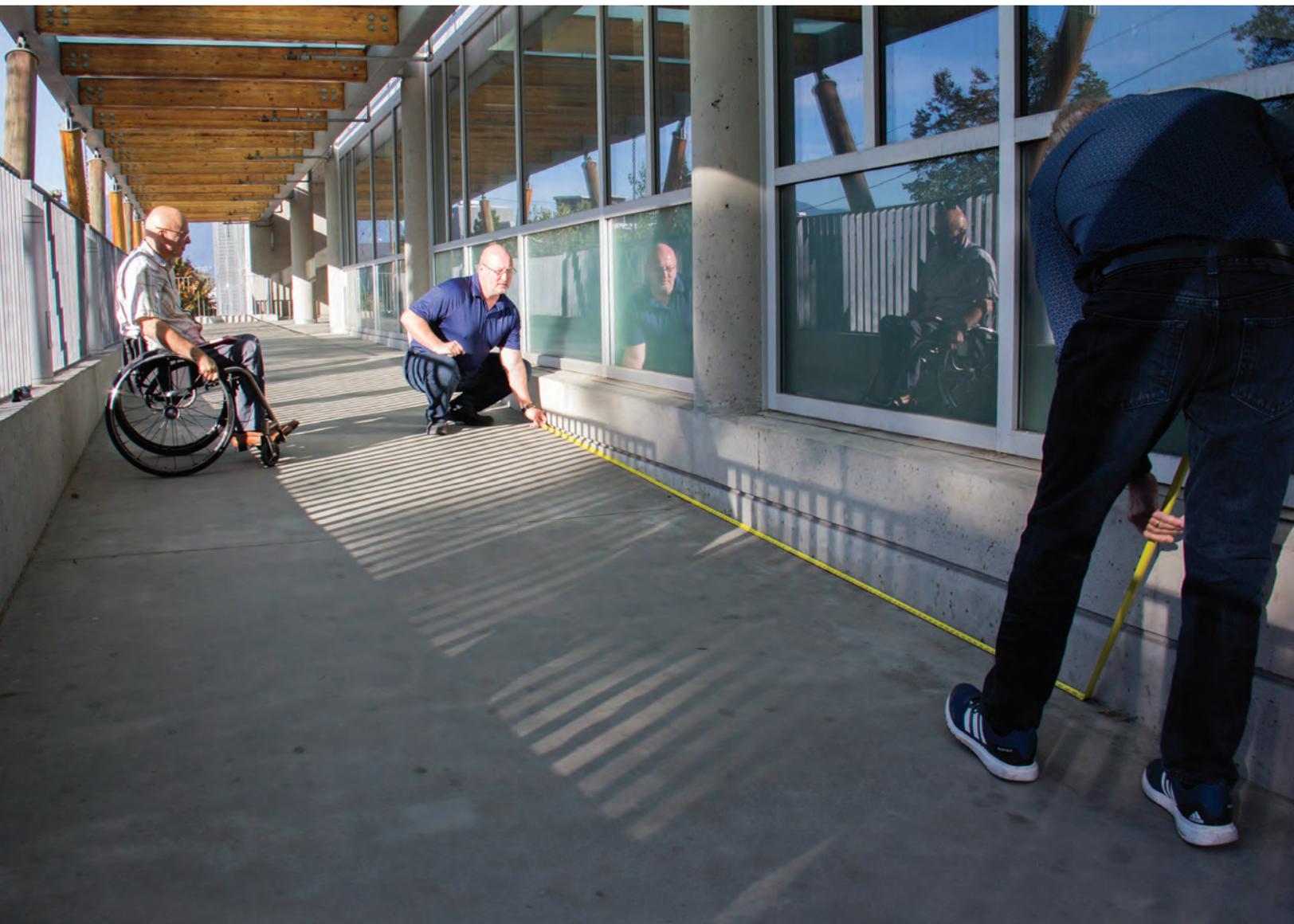
# Appendix B: Fees

## Application Fee

All participants must pay an Application Fee of \$2,350. This fee is invoiced by and paid directly to CSA Group when creating a Site on the RHFAC Registry. You will not receive your Scorecard, Letter of Certification and Rating Summary until this invoice is paid to CSA Group.

## Rating Fee

The RHFAC Professional Rating Fee is charged directly by your RHFAC Professional to conduct both an on-site visit and to complete the rating report to submit for adjudication. Please speak to your RHFAC Professional directly for rates.



## Labelling Fee (optional)

When you choose to list your Site publicly on the RHFAC Registry, you will receive a complimentary e-label and can purchase physical plaques and/or window decals directly from CSA Group.

Label	Fee (CAD)
Public listing on RHFAC Registry	Free
RHFAC electronic label	Free
2 window decals (8" x 12")	\$250
1 plaque (11.5" x 17.5")	\$300
2 window decals (8" x 12") and 1 plaque (11.5" x 17.5")	\$350
1 accessible plaque (21" x 28")	\$1,250

## Appendix C: Owned vs. Tenanted Sites

If you are a Site owner, you must identify all of the spaces that you control to be rated. The Site should:

- Include all areas that are accessed by the public and employees
- Exclude restricted areas (e.g. boiler room, biohazardous areas, etc.)

**Note:** Tenanted spaces may be excluded if tenants are responsible and controls the space rather than the owner.

If you are a tenant, you must identify your tenanted space and the associated common areas to be rated, including:

- All areas available to the public and employees, within the leased space
- The closest accessible entrance (may include parking if facilities exist) and the direct route from the entrance to the tenanted space
- The closest accessible sanitary facilities and the most direct route from the tenanted space, if they are located outside of the tenanted space
- The most direct emergency exit route from the tenanted space

If a tenant occupies the entire Site, all areas will be considered common and therefore must be included in the rating.

**Note:** If you are registering for a Pre-Construction Rating for a tenanted space that is currently under construction, the common areas identified must still be rated even if it is not part of the renovation. The overall level of accessibility of the Site must be rated. In this case, both an on-site visit and drawing reviews will be conducted by the RHFAC Professional to complete the rating.

## Additional Permission/Requirements

### **Tenants of a commercial or public Site must:**

Obtain permission from the building owner prior to rating.

### **Strata corporations or property management organizations must:**

Provide your RHFAC Professional with detailed plans of different units and provide physical access to each floor plan option.

### **Owners/managers of trails and pathways must provide:**

- Length of trail (km)
- Name of trail
- Surface type of trail (e.g. paved, hard-packed aggregate, gravel)
- Amenities that specifically service the trail and brief justification
- Plans of the trail indicating start and end points, length, and amenities
- Contour map, indicating grade

# Appendix D: Mandatory Certification Requirements

## Mandatory Certification Requirement

### Applies to all Sites

To be RHF Accessibility Certified, a Site must have:

- An accessible public entrance; and
- Access to all key functional spaces

## Mandatory Gold Certification Requirement

### Applies to Sites that have achieved a rating score of 80%+

To be RHF Accessibility Certified Gold, a Site must have:

- Designated accessible parking space(s), if parking is provided for Site users
- Access to public transit, if the Site is located in an area serviced by transit
- Accessible path(s) of travel leading to building or trail entrance and throughout the building or trail
- An accessible primary entrance for public and staff (if separate)
- Access to all floors expected to be used by elevator or lift usable by everyone
- At least one universal washroom
- Emergency systems with visual and audible fire alarms in both public and private areas

- Wayfinding strategies in place to navigate throughout the Site
- Safety warning features, such as tactile attention indicators at the top of stairs and cane-detectable features, if there are overhead or protruding hazards along the path of travel
- Tactile markings for permanent room identification signs
- Assistive listening and communication enhancement technologies, when applicable to the Site
- Accessibility provision(s) for the key functional facilities of the Site

**For multi-unit residential Sites, they must have, in addition to requirements identified above:**

- Access to all floors by elevator or lift usable by everyone for residents and visitors
- Accessible or adaptable residential unit(s) for each type of units (e.g., bachelor, 1 bedroom, etc.) available



## Appendix E: Requesting a Review of your Rating

Questions and/or issues related to your Scorecard should be directed to your RHFAC Professional. Upon review of your questions, either you or your RHFAC Professional can request for RHFAC to review the question and/or issue. Requests for a rating review by RHFAC must be submitted within three months of the Scorecard issue date.

### How to request a review with RHFAC

Email [access@rickhansen.com](mailto:access@rickhansen.com) with your:

- Organization name
- Site name
- Registration number
- Exact element(s) or line items in your Scorecard you would like reviewed with the respective rationale
- Outcome of RHFAC Professional's review

After consideration of the request, RHFAC will make a final determination at its discretion and will be in touch with you regarding the final decision.

# Appendix F: Terms and Definitions

## Adjudication

The rating review process that includes a technical and completeness review. In order to ensure that the rating score and certification level are accurate, all RHFAC Ratings are required to undergo adjudication once RHFAC Professionals submit a rating. Once an independent adjudicator and CSA Group are satisfied with the rating, the client receives their Scorecard, Letter of Certification and Rating Summary.

## CSA Group

Canadian Standards Association Group, which develop standards in 57 areas including accessibility. They provide product certification and product testing services to Canada, the US, Europe, and worldwide. CSA Group is comprised of representatives from industry, government, and consumer groups.

## Meaningful Access

Meaningful Access is access that meets the real accessibility needs of all users of a Site, regardless of their ability. It recognizes that the accessibility of any given Site needs to be reviewed on the basis of the entire user experience, rather than by simply evaluating its physical access features. In other words, when it comes to accessibility, the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

## RHFAC Professional Directory

An online listing of RHFAC Professionals where organizations can search, find, and contact the right person to conduct a rating for their Site. The Directory: [rickhansen.com/rhfac-professional-directory](http://rickhansen.com/rhfac-professional-directory).

## RHFAC Rating Survey

The questionnaire used by RHFAC Professionals to complete the rating of a Site on the RHFAC Registry. The points on the Rating Survey ultimately determine the rating score.

## RHFAC Registry

The RHFAC Registry, hosted by CSA Group, is an online system that facilitates the rating and certification process. Specifically, it is used to manage Site ratings, to record rating and certification results, and to showcase Sites that have achieved RHFAC certification levels (if the clients decide to list publicly).

## RHF Accessibility Certified

A Site that has met the Mandatory Certification Requirements and achieved a final rating score between 60% and 79% on the RHFAC Rating Survey.

## RHF Accessibility Certified Gold

A Site that has met the Mandatory Gold Certification Requirements and achieved a final rating score of 80% or more on the RHFAC Rating Survey.

## **RHFAC Professional**

An individual who has completed the RHFAC Training course and successfully passed the exam administered by CSA Group.

## **Scope of Rating**

Areas that will be included in the rating. RHFAC Professionals will determine what will be included in the scope of rating based on the information provided about the Site before and during the on-site visit. Areas that are excluded from the rating must be justified.

## **Site**

A public, commercial, or multi-unit residential building, or trails/pathways. A Site can be either existing or in the pre-construction phase.

## **Universal Design**

The design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design.

## **On-Site Visit**

A scheduled time in which an RHFAC Professional is on-site to gather information for a rating at an existing Site, including taking photographs, measurements, and notes. On-Site Visits are scheduled directly with your RHFAC Professional.



PUSH  
TO OPEN



**Rick Hansen Foundation**

300–3820 Cessna Drive, Richmond, B.C. Canada V7B 0A2

1-800-213-2131 | [info@rickhansen.com](mailto:info@rickhansen.com) | [rickhansen.com](http://rickhansen.com) | [@RickHansenFdn](https://twitter.com/RickHansenFdn)

Charitable Registration Number: 10765 9427 RR 0001



The Standards Program Trustmark is a mark of Imagine Canada used under licence by the Rick Hansen Foundation.