

ALL ABILITIES TOOLKIT

GUIDELINES FOR AN INCLUSIVE WORKPLACE FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

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Introduction & Definitions

At Alstom, we are committed to fostering a workplace where every individual can thrive. By doing so, we create shared value for our company and stakeholders while reflecting the diversity of the societies in which we operate.

Our dedication to Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (outlined in [Alstom's DEI policy](#)) guides us towards the creation of an equitable and inclusive environment. We aim to leverage on the full spectrum of abilities that come from embracing and nurturing diversity.

In this context, we cannot overlook the talents that disability inclusion can bring to Alstom. We have thus conceived this **All Abilities Toolkit** to provide some guidelines and recommendations for a more inclusive work environment.

Objectives of this toolkit

The main objective of this toolkit is to build a common understanding about disabilities, breaking down myths or misconceptions and enabling all Alstom employees to:

- Be aware of the different types of visible and invisible disabilities
- Be prepared to react and act in different situations when interacting with individuals with disabilities
- Be more inclusive in the work environment by reconsidering actions and ways of speaking.

What is a disability?

The World Health Organization defines disability as an umbrella term for impairments, activity limitations and participation restrictions:

- An impairment is a restriction in body function or structure
- An activity limitation is a difficulty encountered by an individual in executing a task or action
- A participation restriction is a problem experienced by an individual in different life situations.

Source: The World Health Organization's assembly (2013)

At Alstom, we add to this definition the fact that disability can be a permanent or a temporary status. We also acknowledge that disabilities can be visible or invisible. (more information in the upcoming pages).

Scope of the toolkit

This toolkit contains guidelines that can be applied in all Alstom units and by all Alstom employees.

While the toolkit considers several local legal requirements, it does not replace any laws. The definitions present on this toolkit might also vary according to the local legislations.

Introduction & Definitions

Visible and invisible disabilities

A disability is considered as visible when its impact on one's body or behaviour is easily observable, be it due to a body structure, to a behaviour or to the use of external devices (e.g. wheelchairs, white canes).

A disability is considered as invisible when its impact on someone's body or behaviour is not immediately apparent. [The UK Parliament estimates that between 70%-80% of disabilities are invisible.](#) Examples of those conditions include, but are not limited to:

- Mental health conditions (e.g. depression, bipolar disorder)
- Neurodivergences (e.g. autism, ADHD)
- Sensory disabilities (e.g. hearing or vision impairments)
- Intellectual disabilities (e.g. down syndrome, global developmental delay)
- Chronic health conditions (e.g. fibromyalgia)

Permanent and temporary disabilities

A disability is considered permanent when its effects are expected to last for a long period. Those disabilities are often congenital, injury-related, age-related, a result from diseases, chronic illnesses, progressive conditions, among others.

A disability is considered temporary when its effects are expected to convey a short/medium-term impact to the individual's functions. Those disabilities are usually injury or disease-related and, while treatable, will exert a negative impact in the individual's life.

For injury and disease-related disabilities, be them permanent or temporary, a physician must determine that the individual's mental or physical functions will be negatively impacted either in the long-term or even once the individual reaches the peak of their recovery.



Introduction & Definitions

Examples of impairments

People with disabilities suffer from impairments which limit activities and/or restrain participation in society. Those impairments and their impact on one's life can be very different from one individual to another.

Two people diagnosed with the same type of disability can have completely different experiences – according to the severity of the impairment, whether there is a single type or multiple types of impairments, etc.

Here are some examples of impairments (the classification might change according to the location and to the classifying body. This is not an exhaustive list):

- **Physical impairments** (conditions that impact movement, holding/grasping, among others)
- **Hearing impairments** (conditions that lead to a range of loss of hearing)
- **Visual impairments** (conditions that lead to a range of loss of vision or alterations on it)
- **Speech impairments** (conditions that impact one's ability to express clearly and/or fully understand what is said)
- **Psychosocial impairments** (a spectrum of conditions that impact cognition, emotions and/or behavioural control)
- **Intellectual impairments** (a spectrum of conditions that impact the ability to learn, solve problems, remember, among others)

Participation restriction

The World Health Organization defines participation restriction as *a problem experienced by an individual in different life situations*, acknowledging that an impairment might affect some situations but not others.

For example, an individual with colour blindness might struggle to work with colour codes – and have no issues in other contexts.

Not all participation restrictions involve conditions that are legally considered as disabilities, but openness and awareness are key to an inclusive workplace.

“Disability is part of being human. An estimated 1.3 billion people – about 16% of the global population – currently experience significant disability. This number is increasing due in part to population ageing and an increase in the prevalence of noncommunicable diseases.

[...] Inaccessible environments create barriers that often hinder the full and effective participation of persons with disabilities in society on an equal basis with others.

Progress on improving social participation can be made by addressing these barriers and facilitating persons with disabilities in their day to day lives.”

Source: [World Health Organization - Disability](#)

All Abilities in the workplace

Being inclusive

A colleague's disability (permanent or temporary) is a part of their lives. It shapes how they interact with the world and should not be ignored.

That being said, disabilities, whether visible or invisible, can also be a personal topic – and not all people with disabilities are at ease to talk about their disability in the workplace.

If you know someone with a visible disability or if someone discloses a disability to you, it is important to:

- Understand boundaries: a simple act such as asking if the person is comfortable to talk about their disability already sets a good foundation.
- Be open to learn: very often, showing honest curiosity and being open to understand how the disability affects the individual's life (and how/if you can provide any assistance) is the best step towards being inclusive.
- Offer your assistance... if it is welcome: disability is not the same as dependency. Rather than jumping into action, it is always better to ask whether the person needs help or not.
- Avoid assuming: unconscious bias often leads to thinking that people with disabilities are not as productive as everyone else – when, in fact, they have abilities that can (and will) be applied with mastery in many areas.

Acting inclusive

The best way to find out what someone needs and how they would like to be treated is by getting to know them. There is no magical formula that summarizes what behaviours are most appropriate. Here are a few simple, respectful ways to start this journey:

- Make eye contact and speak directly to the person (especially if they have a caretaker with them)
- Ask what kind of help the person needs and respect their space and independence
- Remember that there are several levels of disability – for example, someone with a sight impairment might be able to see partially – and, therefore, there are several ways of adapting to it.
- **For wheelchair users**, avoid pushing their wheelchair without permission. Walk at the same pace as them and prefer using ramps. Also, keep in mind to clear their paths of anything that could block them.
- **For sight impairments**, prefer using bigger fonts and / or alternative formats for written materials. Check the room lights. When offering help, ask before touching them and describe your next movements (e.g. "I am going to touch your arm so that you know where I am"). Be detailed and precise when giving directions.
- **For hearing impairments**, use facial expression and/or body language. Do not cover your mouth when talking and ensure to articulate well when speaking. In a presentation, let them sit near the presenter.

All Abilities in the workplace & Inclusive spaces

Acting inclusive – cont.

- **For people with autism**, be extra explicit about your expectations and explain the unwritten rules of the workplace. Help them structure their work environment and their routine – for example, setting up priorities, organizing tasks and break times, etc. If situations of stress happen, help by giving concrete solutions.
- **For people with learning impairments**, be patient when they are distracted and remember that there is a level of information that they may take more time than expected to process. Keeping a consistent daily schedule and positive feedbacks can help.
- **For people with seizure disorder / epilepsy**, check the lighting of the place where they work – flickering lights can trigger an epileptic episode. In case it happens, protect their head (to avoid concussions in case they fall) and contact your Alstom infirmary service. After the episode, ensure that they have time and privacy to compose themselves.

This list of behaviours is not extensive, and can vary according to your culture, the person's needs, their level of impairment, and many other details.

Inclusive spaces

You'll find here a few guidelines to make your physical spaces more inclusive. It is important to remember that each country has its own guidelines for inclusive buildings.

- **Entrances and Exits:** make sure to include in your plan how to make entrances and exits more inclusive: doors that are easy to handle, clearly visible interior signs and information, carefully evaluated lighting, colours and contrasts, among others.
- **Smoking areas and ventilation:** make sure that smoking areas are away from the entrance/exits, and that the ventilation system of the building is clean. This will help people with respiratory impairments or allergies.
- **Toilets:** accessible toilets with enough space for wheelchair users must be available in the building, preferably with bar handles.
- **Office spaces:** in addition to ergonomic settings, office workspaces must also be easily tailored to consider accessibility. The furniture should be easy to use for everyone – and customizations required by an employee due to an impairment or disability should be considered.
- **Cafeteria and public spaces:** make sure that all spaces are wide enough to allow everyone to move and walk as needed – walking aids, wheelchairs or not.
- **Event venues:** both for events inside or outside Alstom, consider what your audience needs in terms of accessibility.

Inclusive spaces

Inclusive spaces – cont.

- **Sending invitations:** visits, interviews, events – regardless of the invitation, ask the attendees for their accessibility requirements. Provide information about transportation (best routes, public transportation...), explain the local accessibility and provide information about potential flash photography and high frequency/volume sound or music.
- **Audio & visual systems:** ensure that the systems contain accessibility features (e.g. captions). Provide adjustable microphone stands and adjust the sound volume to avoid high frequencies. Advise the presenters to speak clearly and without covering their mouths.
- **Catering:** consider a variety of meals for all food diets and/or restrictions. If a participant has flagged a special food diet/restriction, inform the catering staff. Label the meals' allergenics clearly and ensure the table sizes are appropriate for people of all heights, including people in wheelchairs.

Did you know?

[The Great Big Workplace Adjustments Survey 2023](#), a research made with disabled employees by the UK Business Disability Forum, showed that:

- 49% said that workplace adjustments help them staying on the job
- 48% said that workplace adjustments help them being more productive.

Inclusive workspaces bring benefits to everyone



Welcoming new abilities (managers & HR)

Before onboarding

Inclusivity begins long before onboarding – and goes farther than it. When a candidate feels welcome, they are more likely to view the hiring experience positively – a sense of belonging that can influence their decision to join Alstom and inspire them to build a long career with us.

When welcoming someone, it is important to:

- Accommodate their needs: both for in person and virtual meetings, asking what you can do to make the person more comfortable builds bridges – even if the person did not disclose any disability beforehand.
- Consider their abilities: be open about what is needed for the position. Ask the same questions for all candidates and ensure to check if the candidate has the skills needed based on the position – not on a bias coming from potential impairments.
- Consider their impairments: detail the job description. Give precise directions as to how to meet you. For in person meetings, inform the candidates about potential barriers they might encounter. Regardless of whether the candidate disclosed a disability or not, check if they need a special assistance.

Disability Disclosure

[The Great Big Workplace Adjustments Survey 2023](#), research made with disabled employees by the UK Business Disability Forum, showed that 27% of employees think twice before describing themselves as disabled: they do it depending on the situation.

There are many reasons that lead to non-disclosure – most are related to the fear of how it will impact their career path and/or how the people around them will perceive it.

At Alstom, we strive to create a workplace where everyone feels free to bring their best version to work. If an employee chooses to disclose a disability to you, whether it is visible or invisible, permanent or temporary:

- Check if the disability affects any point of their work routine. If yes, focus on how and what can be adapted to make sure that the employee can feel comfortable – physically and mentally.
- Ask them what you need to know about the disability and be prepared and understanding if the employee decides to refrain from sharing some details.
- Avoid making decisions or conclusions based on the disability –create an open space for dialogue and consider the employee’s abilities instead.

Remember: the employee’s disability status must be considered as confidential unless they wish otherwise.

Other resources

The resources below should be adapted in compliance with applicable local laws and regulations before usage. If needed, consult your legal department.

Self-assessment tool from the International Labour Organization (ILO)

The International Labour Organization (ILO) provides a free self-assessment tool for sites to understand their status when it comes to disability inclusion and what are the next steps / working points.

The tool is available in English, French and Spanish as an interactive tool and in German and Arabic as a PDF to be downloaded.

[Click here to access the ILO self-assessment tool.](#)

Disability Passport (for Alstom employees only)

A tool created by Alstom UK&I to improve accommodation and tool adjustments, the Disability Passport is a document that can help managers, HRs and EHS teams to have a better idea of the impacts of a disability in an employee's routine.

The tool is available in English.

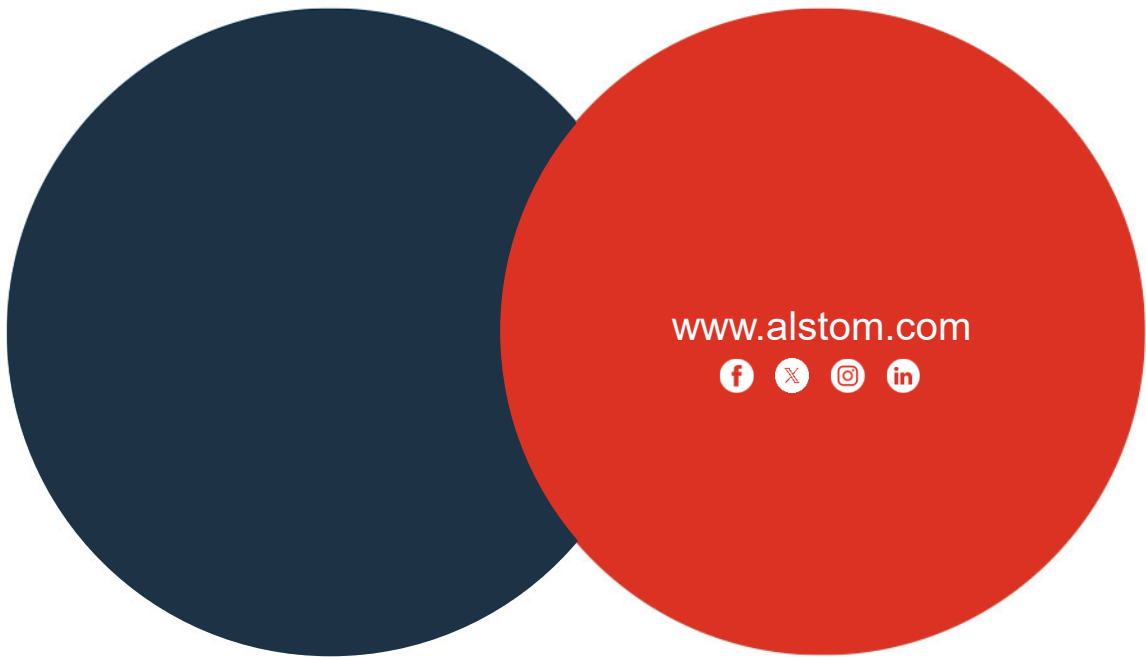
[Click here to download a blank copy of the Disability Passport.](#)

Inclusive interview invitation (for Alstom employees only)

A template based on best practices to encourage a positive experience during interviews. This template will help you describe how a candidate should access the interview, opening a channel for the candidate to let you know what potential accommodations they might need, both for in person and for virtual interviews.

This template is available in English.

[Click here to download the invitation template.](#)



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