

AGE-FRIENDLY BUSINESS

CHECKLIST

The following checklist provides a general template to assess your business’s age-friendliness. There are five Sections in this checklist: Outside, Safety, Comfort, Visibility and Respect.

Each item is assessed using the following system:

Assessment	Score
Excellent / Occurs all the time	4
Good / Occurs most of the time	3
Fair / Occurs some of the time	2
Needs Work / Rarely occurs	1
Does Not Apply	N/A

For each section, calculate your Section Score by dividing your total score by the number of items that applied to your business:

Total score (Total) ÷ Number of items that applied to your business (Items)

= _____ your Section score

Then add all Section scores together to calculate your Age-friendly Business score.

Outside + Safety + Comfort + Visibility + Respect = Age-friendly Business score

While this checklist is useful as a guide to identify areas that your business may or may not need improvement, one of the best ways to determine how to make your customers experiences better is to ask them. This can be through a quick survey, having staff take note of general comments made by customers or asking customers directly for feedback.

Outside

Creating an entry to your business that is clear, clean, safe and welcoming at all times of the day invites all people to approach it.

Sidewalks and parking lots are:

- Level and free of cracks and bumps.
- Free from litter and other trip hazards.
- Sufficiently and evenly lit.
- Have at least one stair-free entrance to the shop, either at ground level or via an appropriately sloped ramp.
- Ticket machines are easily identifiable with clear instructions and large print.

Entrance doors are:

- Automatic or lightweight, or a staff member is always available to open the door for people requiring assistance.
- Clear of obstructions such as store stock, street furniture, foliage and tied-up dogs.
- Wide enough for wheelchairs to enter.

Other:

- The entrance to the store, and disability access, is clearly marked.
- Disabled and pick-up only parking spaces are well-marked using large and clear print, and enforced. **TIP:** Consider installing 5 minute parking bays for people who do not have a disability permit themselves, but need to park to assist someone out of a shop and into the car.
- There is seating just outside your store for people to sit as they wait to be picked up.

_____ (Total) ÷ _____ (Items) = _____ **Your Outside Score**

Safety

Ensuring customer safety and wellbeing is core to maintaining a good customer base and reputation. Businesses that have layouts that consider accessibility and promote a safe working culture support people with reduced mobility or who live with disability, who will be more likely to return.

Stairs:

- Have sturdy handrails on both sides that extend to the ground level, rather than the final step.
- Edges are clearly marked with brightly coloured paint or reflective tape.

Floors are:

- Non-slip and non-shiny.
- Regularly cleaned to be free of trip hazards, spills and dust.
- Clear of store stock, displays and storage boxes.

Staff:

- Receive emergency training that addresses evacuation of people with mobility issues or who live with disability.
- Are trained to identify if a person is experiencing a medical emergency and can notify the appropriate service or authority.

Other:

- Mats are well secured and all edges fastened to the floor with glue or tape.
- Aisles are at least 1.2m wide so people with walkers, wheelchairs, scooters or prams can easily pass others comfortably.
- Obstacles and hazards are clearly marked (eg. Step Up, Step Down, Automatic Door, Wet Floor, Low Overhead etc).



Shelving and furniture is clearly identifiable and defined (no glass shelves or furniture that blends with the background).

Location of exits, amenities and toilets are clearly signed.

A map of the store is visible near the store's entrance.

_____ **(Total)** ÷ _____ **(Items)** = _____ **Your Safety Score**

Comfort

There is space at the front of the shop to:

Securely place packages or shopping.

Hook a cane so it doesn't fall.

Park a scooter.

Toilets are:

Available nearby for customer use, with at least one accessible toilet cubicle and hand washing area. **TIP:** Consider offering your business toilet open for non-customers, particularly for older people, people living with disability and pregnant women. This may also be a great way to get people into your store who may not otherwise shop there.

Regularly cleaned and re-stocked.

Consider including a gender-neutral toilet, particularly if you have transgender customers.



Other:

At least one customer service area is accessible by wheelchair.

Sturdy, regular-height seating with armrests are available in waiting areas, line-up areas and throughout the store (if large).

TIP: You may consider having a small mat and box of toys for young children next to seating for parents to have a quick break.

Staff are trained to offer to carry items to the customer's car and load them in without making people uncomfortable about their abilities, being gracious if someone chooses to refuse this help.

Temperature is maintained at a comfortable and appropriate level, taking into account customer activities while in the business (eg. sitting vs walking).

Background music is absent or low in volume, and is a mix from different periods and styles.

Speaker systems for public announcements are clear, distortion-free and not over-used.

Noises from loud machinery or activities are controlled by isolating them in other rooms or installing noise-absorbing measures.

A volunteer shopping and delivery program, or home-delivery service is available. Consider having staff drop items to customers on their way home if they live nearby.

Most products are within easy reach and popular items are placed at the front of the business.

_____ **(Total)** ÷ _____ **(Items)** = _____ **Your Comfort Score**



Visibility

Eyesight can reduce significantly as people age, but having good lighting and clear signage will help all customers to feel welcome and be able to find the information they need.

Signage and printed or written materials (price labels, receipts, catalogues, menus) have:

- Font in a sans serif style (ie. don't have decorative end strokes).
- Font is in vivid colours and contrasts well with its background (eg. black on white background).
- Limited decoration to detract from key information.
- Paper documents: at least 12-point.
- Signage has appropriately large font: a general guide from Australian Standards is for every metre required viewing distance, letters are a minimum height of 3mm (see *Guidance on Premises: Directional and Category Signage, Design for Dignity* in Age-Friendly Business Resources).

Website:

- Is clear, simple and easy to navigate.
- Has the ability to increase font size.
- Has accessible design (see *Tips to Make Your Website Accessible, Government of Western Australia* in Age-Friendly Business Resources).
TIP: Don't assume that older people are not online — the majority of them are. However, it is still important to ensure that online information is available in hard copy. This is not only for older people who may have poor digital skills, but for people in rural or remote areas who may have limited access to the internet, people on low incomes who may not be able to afford digital devices or plans, and people living with disability who may have difficulties using digital devices.

Other:

- The premises are well and evenly lit, particularly in entrances/exits and hallways, with flickering lights replaced quickly.
- Lighting glare is reduced by installing light shades.
- Small, direct 'task' lights are installed in areas where reading or other visually demanding tasks are necessary.

_____ **(Total)** ÷ _____ **(Items)** = _____ **Your Visibility Score**

Respect

Promoting a culture of respect and inclusion among staff for people of all ages, cultures and circumstances will ensure that everyone that uses your business feels valued and that their concerns are taken seriously. Staff who are able to communicate clearly and handle difficult situations with dignity make shopping experiences faster and more pleasant for customers.

Staff:

- Welcome customers to the business pleasantly.
- Are trained to be polite, patient and respectful of all customers, and not to assume their preferences or tastes.
- Are trained to recognise and avoid stereotypes and unconscious biases they may have towards people of different ages, cultures, backgrounds and circumstances.
- Trained to communicate on the phone respectfully and patiently.
- Take time to get to know regular customers and their preferences.
- Use simple, plain language and avoid jargon.

- Speak clearly and at an appropriate speed while looking directly at the customer.
- Avoid condescending behaviours such as speaking too loudly or familiarly (eg. calling someone 'dear' or 'sweetie').
- Can recognise disability and communicate appropriately with that customer and their carers to assist them.
- Are trained to manage situations, such as a fall or an outburst, that preserves the person's dignity.

Other:

- Customers can always find a staff member to ask for help.
- A quiet, private space is provided for discussing private business, such as medications, financial or sensitive concerns.
- Errors and customer concerns are addressed promptly and courteously.
- There is a clear customer complaints process in place that is followed through by management.
- The business is part of the Tasmanian Seniors Card program, clearly displays Seniors Card promotional material and staff are aware of discounts offered.
- Promotional materials include depictions of people with a range of ages, cultures and mobility.
- Service dogs are welcome in the business, and staff speak to service dog users rather than their service dog, treating the service dog as a working dog (eg. avoid petting, feeding or distracting it).

_____ (Total) ÷ _____ (Items) = _____ **Your Respect Score**



Your Age-friendly Business Score

Add all Section scores together to calculate your Age-friendly Business score.

$$\begin{aligned} & \text{----- Outside +} \\ & \text{----- Safety +} \\ & \text{----- Comfort +} \\ & \text{----- Visibility +} \\ & \text{----- Respect} \\ & = \text{----- Age-friendly} \\ & \text{Business score} \end{aligned}$$

How Age-friendly is your business?

Score	Age-friendliness
20-24	Outstanding
15-19	Good
10-14	Fair
0-10	Needs Work

No matter how well you score on age-friendliness, every business needs to continually develop and work to improve their age-friendliness. Continue to strive to learn about your customers, their wants and needs, and how to best serve them to ensure that your business will continue to flourish as our population ages.

For more information, have a look at COTA's Age-Friendly Resources and Case Studies. You can also contact COTA on 6231 3265 or email RosalindH@cotatas.org.au.