

Access SUPPLIED

How to make sure your retail facility is ADA-compliant. BY CHRISTINA HANSEN

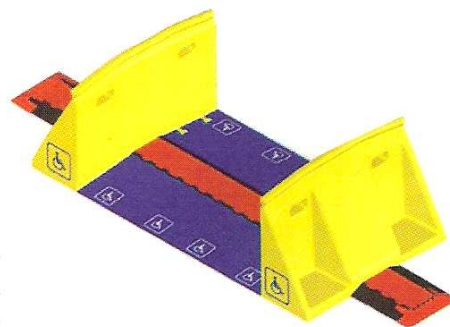
The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) went into effect on July 26, 1992, it has dramatically improved the lives of disabled individuals by making all public places in the United States both accessible to and usable by those with disabilities. But even though the ADA has greatly improved the quality of life for disabled people over the past 25 years, changes didn't happen overnight, and are, in fact, still underway.

It is important to realize that ADA compliance is a process, with many steps that must be considered on an ongoing basis. Here are a

few guidelines:

PARKING

One of the most recognizable hallmarks of the Americans with Disabilities Act, designated handicapped, or accessible, parking is a key convenience for disabled people who aren't able to traverse moderate to long distances through parking lots. Whether you're constructing a new facility or currently occupy one that hasn't been fully updated to ADA standards, be sure that your parking area meets the following guidelines:



In instances where handrail assistance may be needed, rail barriers can be added to ADA-compliant crossings over cables and hoses.

- To determine how many parking spaces should be designated for disabled clients, customers, or employees, consider the total number of parking spaces your facility has. The general rule of thumb is that one parking spot in every group of 25 or fewer spaces needs to be handicapped-accessible. That would mean dedicating one accessible spot per every 25 or fewer spaces, two accessible parking spaces for lots ranging from 26 to 50 spaces, etc.
- Each accessible parking space must be marked with a sign bearing the international symbol of accessibility.
- Accessible parking spaces should be the ones closest to a wheelchair-accessible entrance, and be located on level ground that is free from potentially dangerous sloping.
- Accessible parking spaces should be bordered on the right or left by a clearly marked access aisle, which allows disabled individuals plenty of room to enter and exit their vehicle, and comfortably transition to a wheelchair or other mobility device. Access aisles for van-accessible spaces should be at least 8 feet wide, while those adjacent to car-accessible spaces should be 5 feet in width.
- A flat, stable, slip-resistant, stair-free accessible route must lead from each access aisle to the nearest accessible building entrance. If the access route must cross through an area with vehicular traffic, a marked crosswalk should be provided.

ENTRANCES

The most vital element of an ADA-compliant facility is an accessible



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t which many disabled people would be prevented from business or facility. One of the key actions in creating an entrance is to remove any and all stairs leading either up or down — even a single shallow step can be enough to make impossible, the entry a person who is wheelchair-bound. Her mobility limits some additional work in the creation of the entrance:

y has more than they don't all have. However, all non-slip surfaces must have a texture directing the way to the accessible entrance.

Entrance facilities, such as ramps, must be left clear during business hours. An accessible entrance should not be locked because it turns relating to its use. It should be equipped with a doorbell so that people are aware when to use the entrance. An intercom, buzz-to be mounted at a height no more than 4 feet 6 inches.

of steps general-ly the installation of a ramp you'll be replacing the ramp, the ramp should allow a slope as shallow as 1:20.

If a ramp is 1:20, its total vertical rise is 1 inch for every 20 inches, the ramp should be equipped with handrails, the stability of those rails, and to prevent tripping off — or rolling

grade the ground around the ramp to match the surface — this prevents tripping and increases the stability of the ramp.

Ramps must be at least 36 inches wide.

Door hardware should be able to handle that twisting, turning, and pushing. A latch can be a problem, particularly for people with mobility issues or those who use loop handles

are the easiest types for everyone to use, and are excellent choices for accessible entrance hardware.

- Large stores, entertainment venues, and other facilities equipped with turnstiles and/or security gates should be built or modified so

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who use wheelchairs, canes, crutches or walkers can get in and exit. Suitable options include removing a turnstile, installing an accessible turnstile, or providing an accessible gate instead of a standard turnstile.

CORD COVERS AND RAMP

Ramps may play a key role in creating accessible entrances, but they're also an appropriate, and



Cover extension cords, data cables and hoses with a low profile, heavy-duty cord cover that complies with ADA standards.



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often necessary, means of helping those with disabilities to safely and successfully cross ground and floor obstructions like cables, hoses and air lines. In cases where such objects need to be routed across halls, pathways and other public-access areas of your facility, maintain ADA-compliance in the following ways:

- Cover extension cords, data cables and hoses with a low profile, heavy-duty cord cover that complies with ADA standards.
- If the low profile cord protectors mentioned above aren't appropriate for your application, use standard heavy-duty polyurethane cord protectors that can be connected to ADA-compliant ramps. We recommend gently sloping, slip-proof access ramps, which easily connect to several different types of cord covers, and can be fitted with an optional ADA-compliant side rail system added safety.
- In instances where handrail assistance may be needed, rail barriers can be added to ADA-compliant crossings over cables and hoses. **RFB**

For a complete list of ADA compliance guidelines, please see the U.S. Department of Justice's ADA Standards for Accessible Design: <http://www.ada.gov/stdspdf.htm>

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