NATIONAL COMMISSION
ON DISABILITY

Building Accessibility Handbook

2025



MINISTRY OF
HEALTH
GUYANA

Disability & Rehabilitation Services

Out of many hands...One great effort

Foreword

On this International Day of Persons with Disabilities 2024, we are proud to launch the Disability Accessibility Handbook—a cornerstone document designed to guide Guyana toward greater inclusivity and accessibility for all.

In a nation where diversity forms the foundation of our identity, it is our collective responsibility to ensure that every citizen, regardless of ability, has the opportunity to fully participate in society. This handbook represents the unwavering commitment of the National Commission on Disability to creating an inclusive environment by addressing and eliminating barriers—whether physical, attitudinal, or systemic.

This resource is intended to serve not only as a guide but also as a catalyst for meaningful change. It equips stakeholders across public and private sectors with practical tools, emphasizing the importance of inclusive infrastructure, accessible communication, and a transformative cultural shift in how we perceive and value persons with disabilities.

As we unveil this handbook, we are reminded that true accessibility is not a fixed goal but an ongoing journey. Together, let us ensure this document becomes more than just a guideline. Let it inspire actionable change, building a Guyana where everyone feels valued, included, and empowered to contribute.

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National Commission on Disability, Guyana
December 3, 2024


MINISTRY OF HEALTH
MINISTER'S SECRETARIAT

Table of Contents

1. GENERAL 6
- Modifications to this section of the code 6
- Access to buildings 7
- Building entrance 7
- Parking lot and building approaches 7
- Location of parking space 7
- Best Practice 8
- Curbs 9
- Interior Access 9
- Electrical switches, control, fire alarms 10
- Elevators (Lifts) 10
- Turnstiles and Checkout Lanes 11

2. RESIDENTIAL BUILDING 12
- Hotels 12
- Design of Dwelling Units 12

3. ACCESS TO SANITARY FACILITIES 13
- Toilet rooms 13
- Backing for Grab Bar Installation: 14
- Urinals 15
- Water Closet Spaces 15
- Water Closets / Bathroom 17
- Equipment and Fittings 17

4. COMMUNICATION 18
- International signs 18
- The International Symbol 18
- Additional Symbols 18
- Alternate Forms of Communication for People with Visual Disabilities 19

Signage 19
Accessibility for Persons with Visual Disabilities 20
Accessibility for Persons with Language Difficulties 20
Directories 20
Colour Contrast 21

5. DESIGN RECOMMENDATIONS 22

Design Standards 22
Unisex toilet facilities 22
Doors 23
Grip Bars and handrails 23
Position of fittings 24
Passageway width 24
Floor Finish 25
Viewing platforms 25
Walks, ramps, entrances and corridors 26
Surface finish 27
Steps and stairs 27

6. INFORMATION AND DESIGN BASICS FOR SENIORS AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES 28

Barrier-Free Design Basics for People who are Deaf 29
Barrier-Free Design Basics for People who are Hard of Hearing 29
Barrier-Free Design Basics for People with Communication and Cognitive Disabilities 29
Barrier-Free Design Basics for Seniors 30
Barrier-Free Design Basics for People Using Mobility Devices 30
Environmental Design Considerations for the Bariatric Population 30
Bathrooms / Showers 30
What are the features of a wet room? 31
Why are they popular? 31
Doorways / Corridors / Elevators 32
Accessible Entrances / Ramps 32
Bedrooms / Private Spaces 33

7. REFERENCES 34

8. IMPORTANT CONTACTS 35

1. General

All building designers should be aware of the requirements of the Persons with Disabilities Act, Chapter 36:05.

This subsection sets out requirements to facilitate access to sanitary facilities for persons with physical Disabilities.

The provision of the section shall apply to all levels and areas used by the general public, employees, persons visiting or on the premises for any reason, and shall apply to all occupancy classification except R-3 Houses, and Occupancy Group T-Temporary.

It is particularly applicable to transport (airport and seaport) terminals generally, but especially so where they may be used by patients in transit.

All buildings used by the public should meet additional requirements for accessibility, easy internal circulation, and swift egress by persons with disabilities.

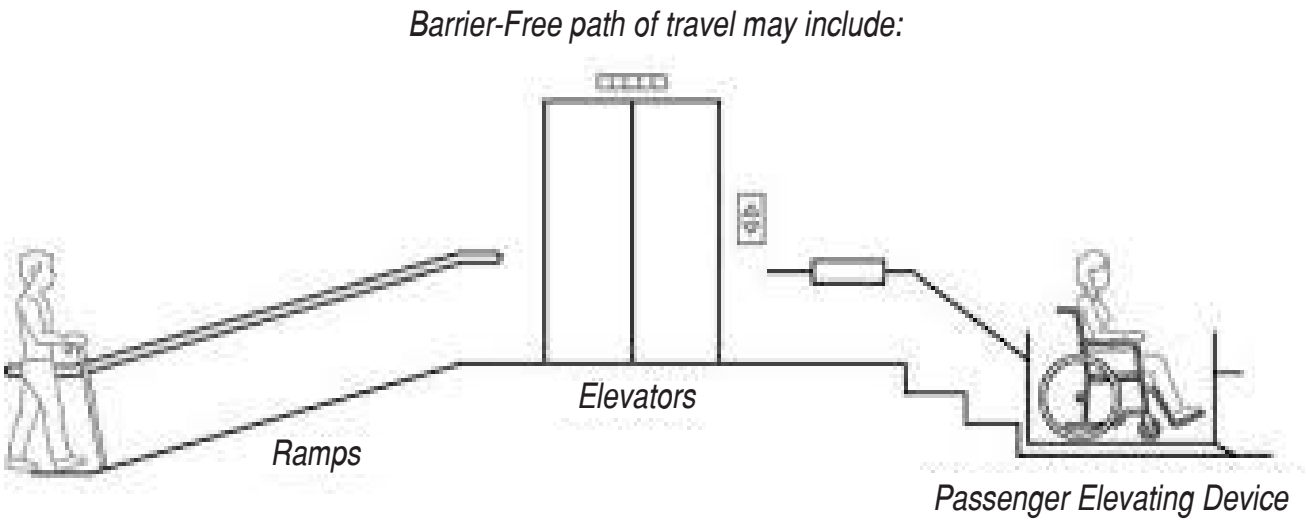
Minimum, provisions should be made for facilities to ease access of persons with disabilities in wheelchairs using public buildings such as, but not limited to:
Post offices, hospitals, asylums, health centres, assembly halls, hotels, public recreational fields/grounds/parks, schools and/or learning institutions, supermarkets, restaurants, stores, shops, shopping malls, banks, Ministries, Courts of Law, police stations, and corporate offices.

Modifications to this section of the code

Where it can be demonstrated that one or more of the following provisions does not apply to the proposed use and occupancy, modifications may be sought and a dispensation obtained from the building Authority.

Access to buildings

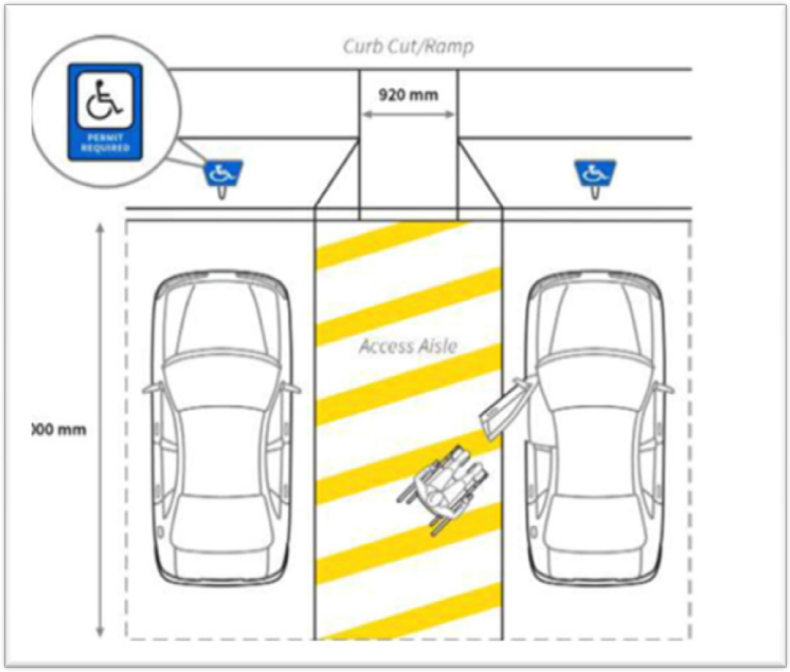
Building entrance



At least one primary entrance at each ground floor level of a building shall be accessible from the parking lot or the nearest street using walking uninterrupted by steps or abrupt changes in the level of the ground and shall have a width of not less than 1.5 m and a gradient of not more than 1.20m or a ramp meeting the requirements, except for enclosure.

Parking lot and building approaches

Any parking lot serving a building required to be accessible to persons with disabilities shall have level parking spaces as specified in Table -24 identified by signs as reserved for physical disability, each reserved parking space shall be not less than 3.6m wide.



Location of parking space

Parking space for persons with disabilities shall be located as close as possible to elevators, ramps, walkways, and entrances. Parking spaces should be located so that persons with disabilities are not compelled to wheel or walk behind parked cars to reach entrances, ramps, walkways and elevators.

The parking space shall:

a) have a firm, slip-resistant and level surface,

b) be clearly marked and identified by

(i) a vertically mounted sign, located near the centreline of each designated space, with the center of the sign between 1,600 to 2,500 mm from the finished surface;

(ii) the International Symbol of Disability painted on the ground of the parking space.

c) be located as close as possible to or adjoining a barrier-free path of travel leading to the nearest barrier-free entrance, and

d) be designed so that parked vehicles shall not obstruct access onto an elevated and level surface.





The vertical sign should be located so that it is visible to the driver of a vehicle approaching the parking space, but does not create a protrusion or a sightline or viewing hazard.

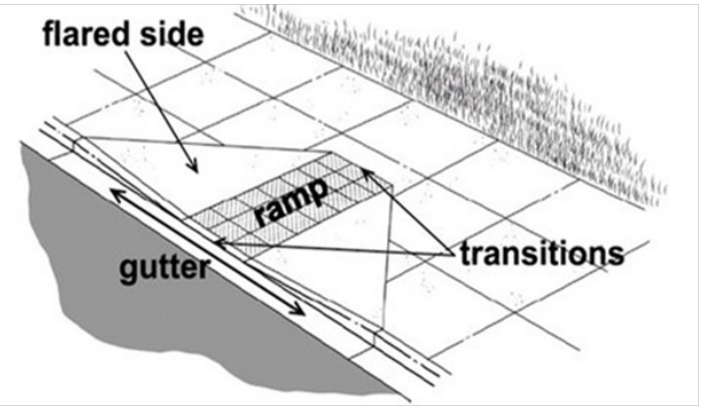
Parking for use by persons with disabilities shall be identified with the International Symbol of Disability and should include the words.

Best Practice

Where the location of the designated parking spaces is not obvious or is distant from the approach viewpoint, directional signs should be placed along the route leading to them.

Curbs

Where a curb exists between a parking lot surface and sidewalk surface, an inclined curb approach or a curb with a ramp of a not steeper gradient than 1.12m and a width or not less than 1.25m shall be provided for wheelchair access.





Interior Access

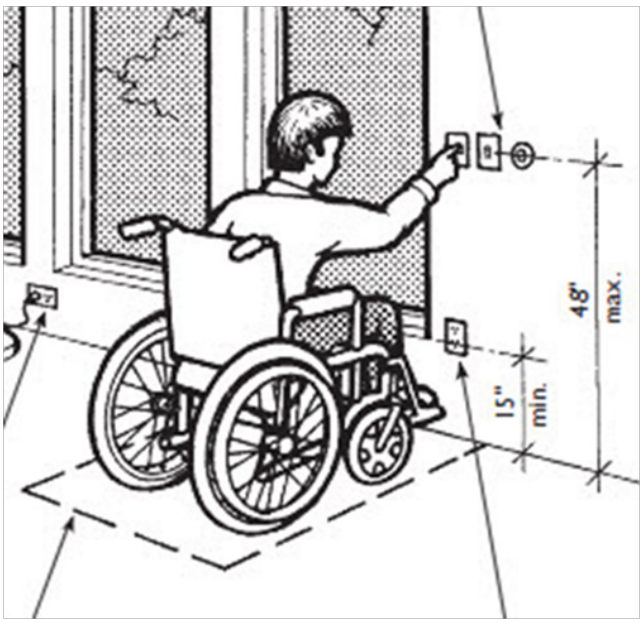
Interior means of access to all floor levels required to be accessible for persons with physical disabilities shall be provided by ramps meeting the requirements of section or elevators, and access to all points on each floor level shall be provided using passageways or corridors not less than 1.25 m wide (except as permitted in dwelling units at page 10).



Electrical switches, control, fire alarms

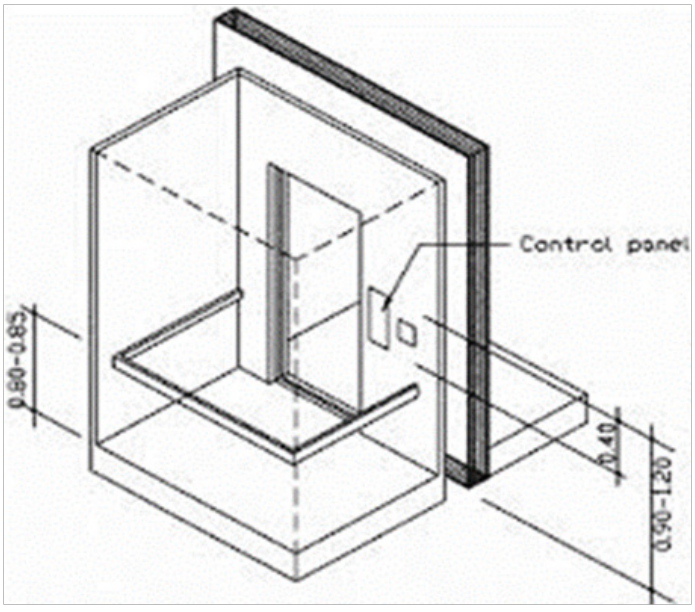
In the building required to be accessible by persons with disabilities, the following provisions are required:

a) Light switches, controls, and fire alarms, shall not be located at a greater height above floor level than 1.25m



Elevators (Lifts)

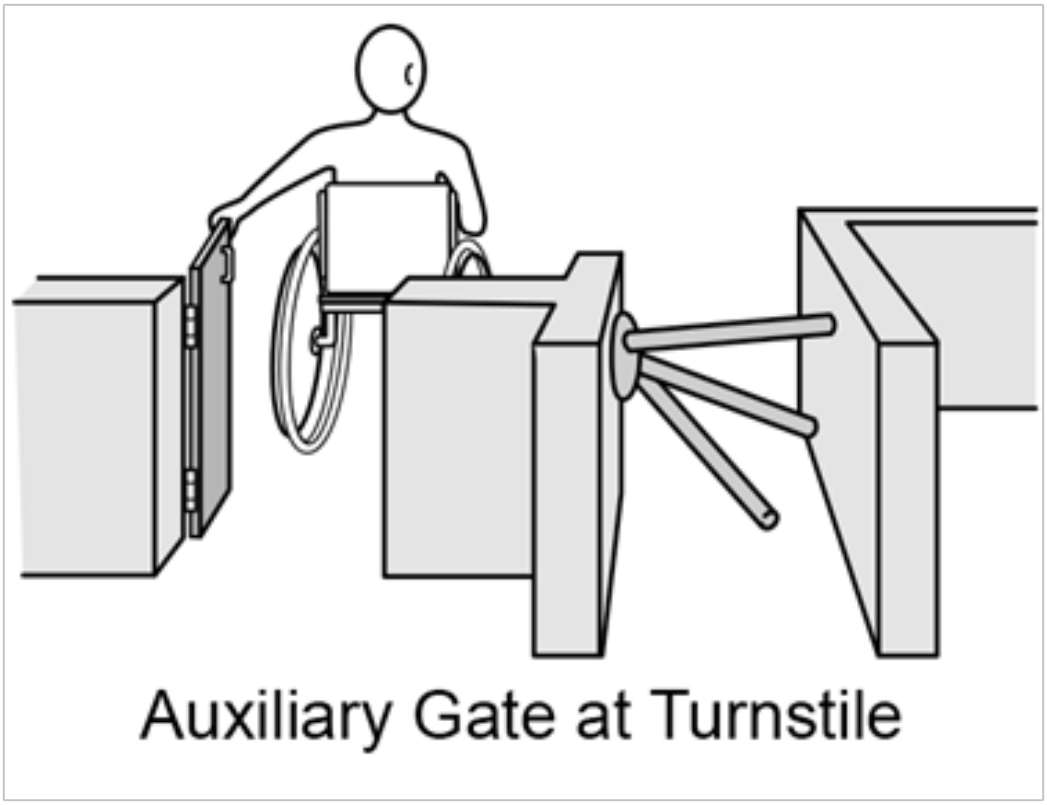
If interior access in a multi-store building required to be accessible by persons with disabilities is provided by elevators, at least one elevator shall meet the following requirements:

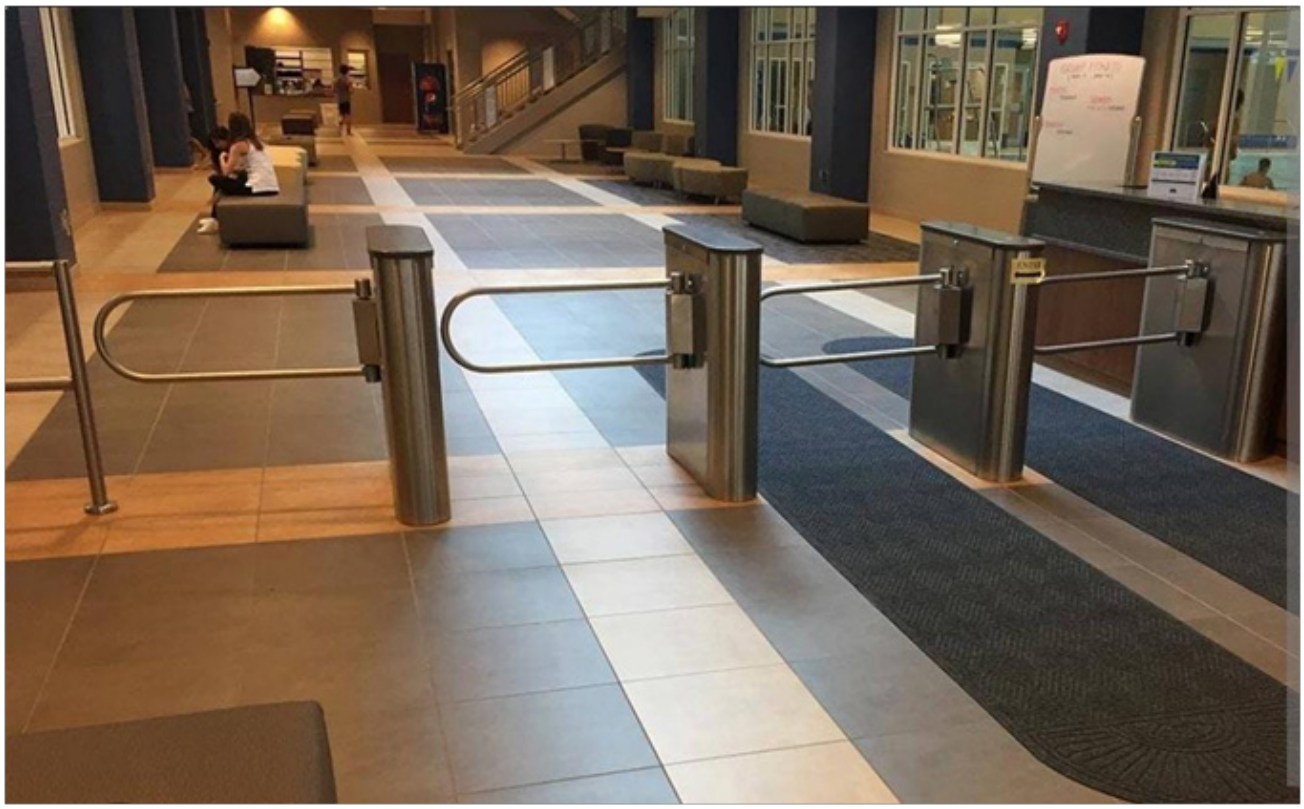


a) Lifts should be easily accessible on all floors and at ground level and should lead directly to the entrance;
b) The elevator cab shall have a clear area of not less than 2 m (Square) with a minimum dimension of 1.4m;
c) The elevator door shall have a minimum clear opening width of 800 mm;
d) The control buttons shall be located not more than 1.4 m above the floor in manual control lifts without an attendant;
e) Brailed plates should be provided adjacent to all cab control buttons and switches;
f) Braille plates provided for floor designation shall be fixed on the wall of each story not more than 1.4m above the floor at the open side of the elevator door;
g) Handrails should be provided at a height between 600-2400mm;
h) Lifts should be leveled with a maximum tolerance of 25 mm.

Turnstiles and Checkout Lanes

Buildings that utilize turnstiles to control traffic or check-out lanes which would normally not accommodate a wheelchair shall provide a marked alternative route for persons with disabilities which is at least 1m wide.





2. Residential Buildings

Hotels

In buildings, occupancy classification R-1 Hotels, at least 1 bedroom unit for each 25 bedroom unit or part thereof shall be made accessible to persons with physical disabilities . The bedroom units allocated for persons with physical disabilities shall be proportionally distributed throughout all types of units. All public facilities such as function rooms, and reception areas. Lounges, bars, restaurants, and shops shall be accessible from the barrier free units. Additional floors without public facilities is not required.

Design of Dwelling Units

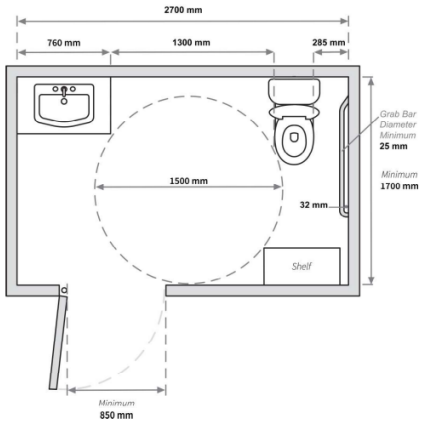
In dwelling units designed for the use of persons with disabilities:

a) Corridors and passageways shall be not less than 1m wide;
a) In the kitchen, a clearance of at least 1370mm shall be provided for all cabinets , worksurfaces, countertops, and appliances and knee space shall be provided under the sink to accommodate persons in wheelchairs;
a) In laundries a clearance of at least 1370mm shall be provided in front of the laundry tubs, washers, and dryers;
a) At least one bedroom shall be specially designed to allow free movement of a wheelchair within the room and any attached bathroom, walk-in-clothes closet or wardrobe floor shall be at the same level as the floor of the room it serves.

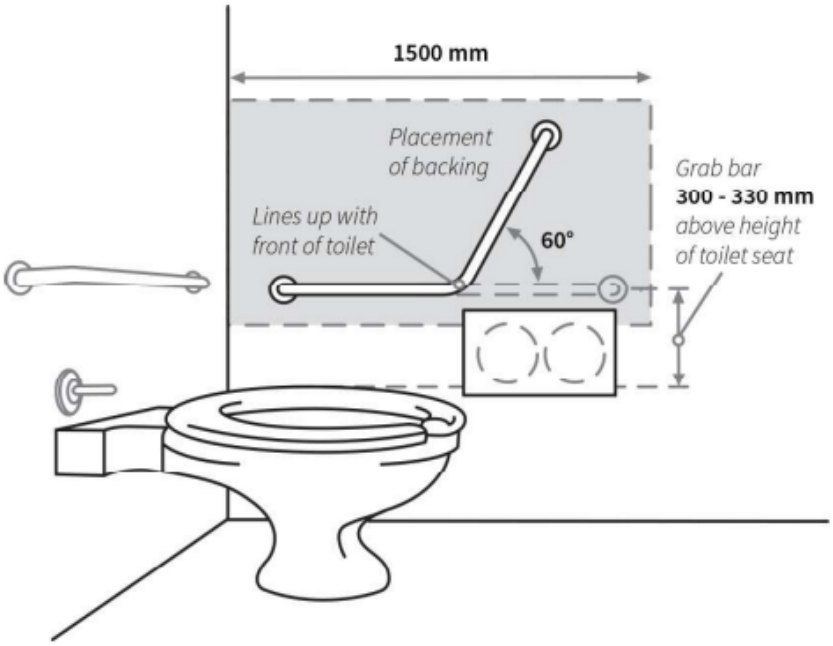
3. Access to Sanitary Facilities

Toilet rooms

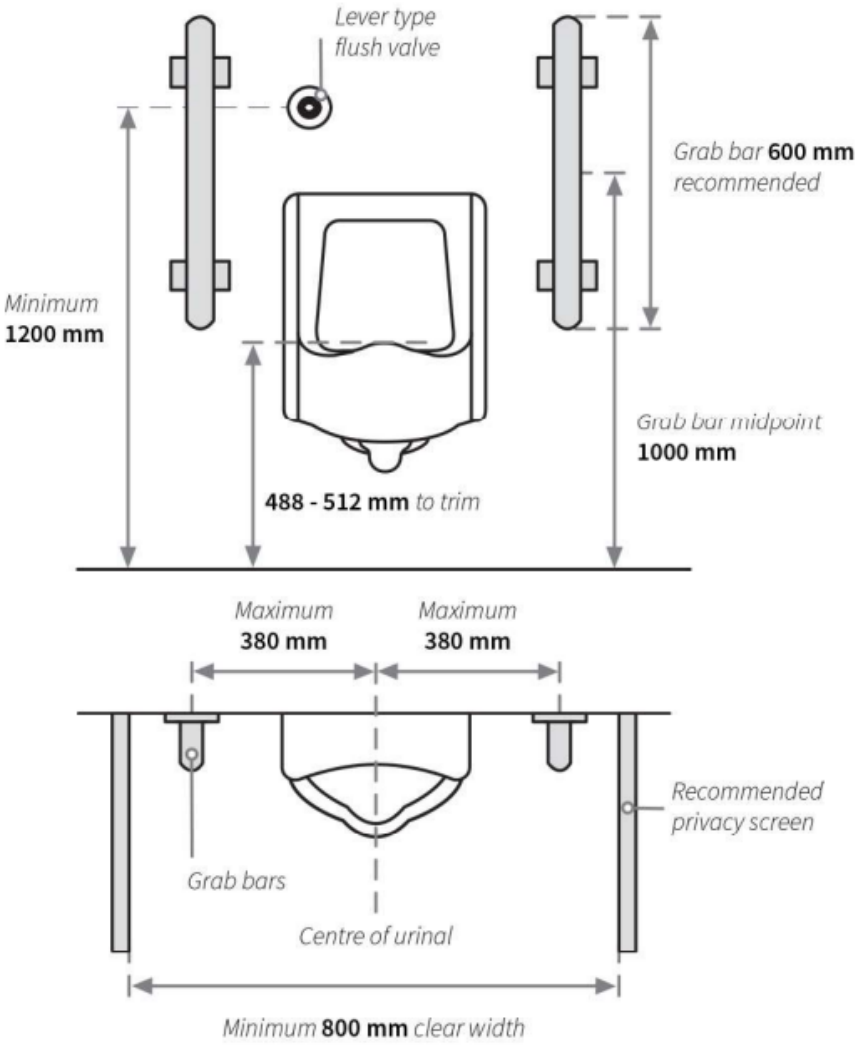


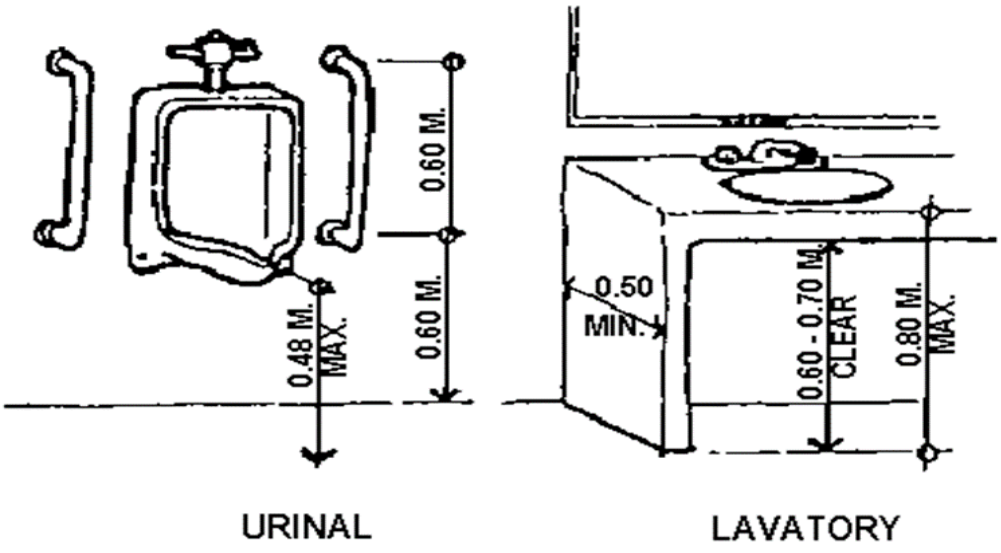


At least one toilet room and one fixture within such a room shall be accessible to and usable by persons with disabilities. A toilet room shall have a clear space whether access way , lobby or passageway beyond the room door swing of not less than 1.5m by 1.5m.



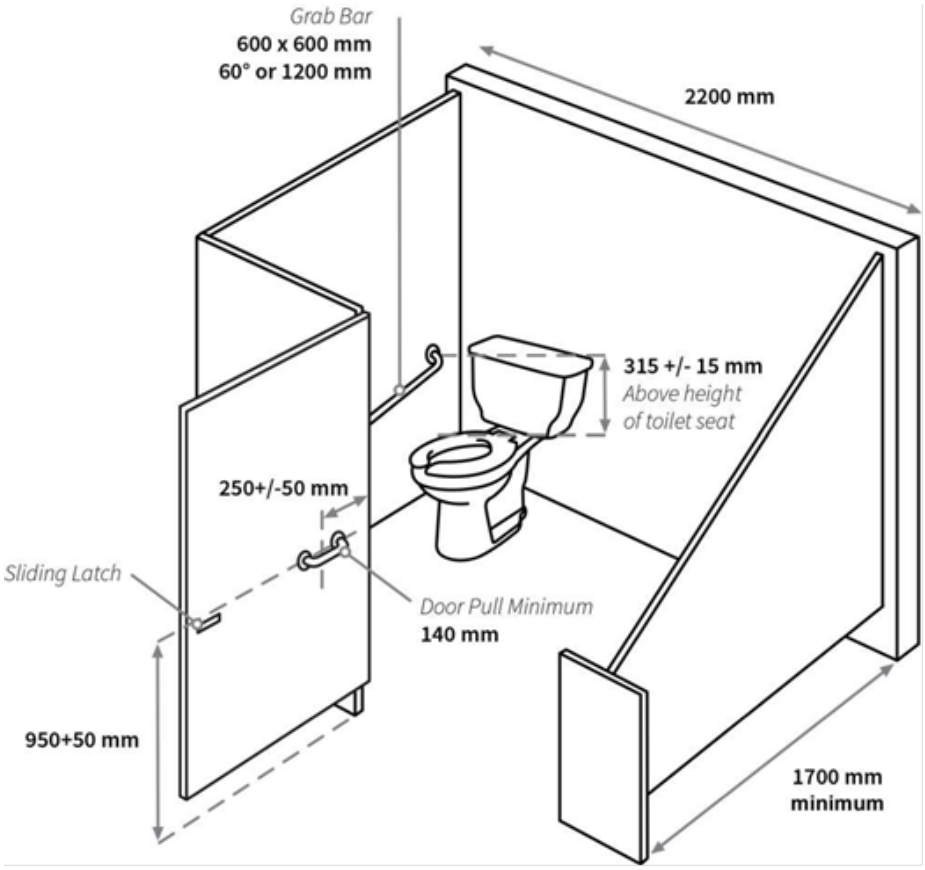
Backing for Grab Bar Installation: Sufficient backing (at least a 19 mm sheet of plywood or reasonable alternative behind cement board, floor to ceiling, is preferred for optimum strength and placement) is required for the installation of grab bars—in both vertical and horizontal positions—and towel bars, etc. Grab bars shall resist a load of 1.3 kN (132 kg) applied vertically or horizontally in water closet stalls, universal toilet rooms, change rooms, showers and bathing areas.





Urinals

If the toilet room for men has a wall mounted urinal the opening of the basin should be 480mm from the floor, or floor-mounted urinals that are level with the main floor of the toilet room should be provided.



Water Closet Spaces

The following requirements are only those relating to the design of water closet stalls.

Water Closet Space

1) A water closet stall or enclosure in a washroom required to be barrier-free shall

a) be designed to allow a person using a wheelchair to turn in an open space that has a diameter of not less than 1 500 mm,

b) be equipped with a door that

i. can be latched from the inside with a closed fist,

ii. provides a clear opening of not less than 800 mm wide with the door in the open position,

iii. swings outward, unless su cient room is provided within the stall or enclosure to allow the door to be closed without interfering with the person using a wheelchair,

iv. is provided with a door pull on the inside not less than 140 mm long located so that its midpoint is not less than 200 mm and not more than 300 mm from the hinged side of the door and not less than 900 mm and not more than 1 000 mm from the floor, and

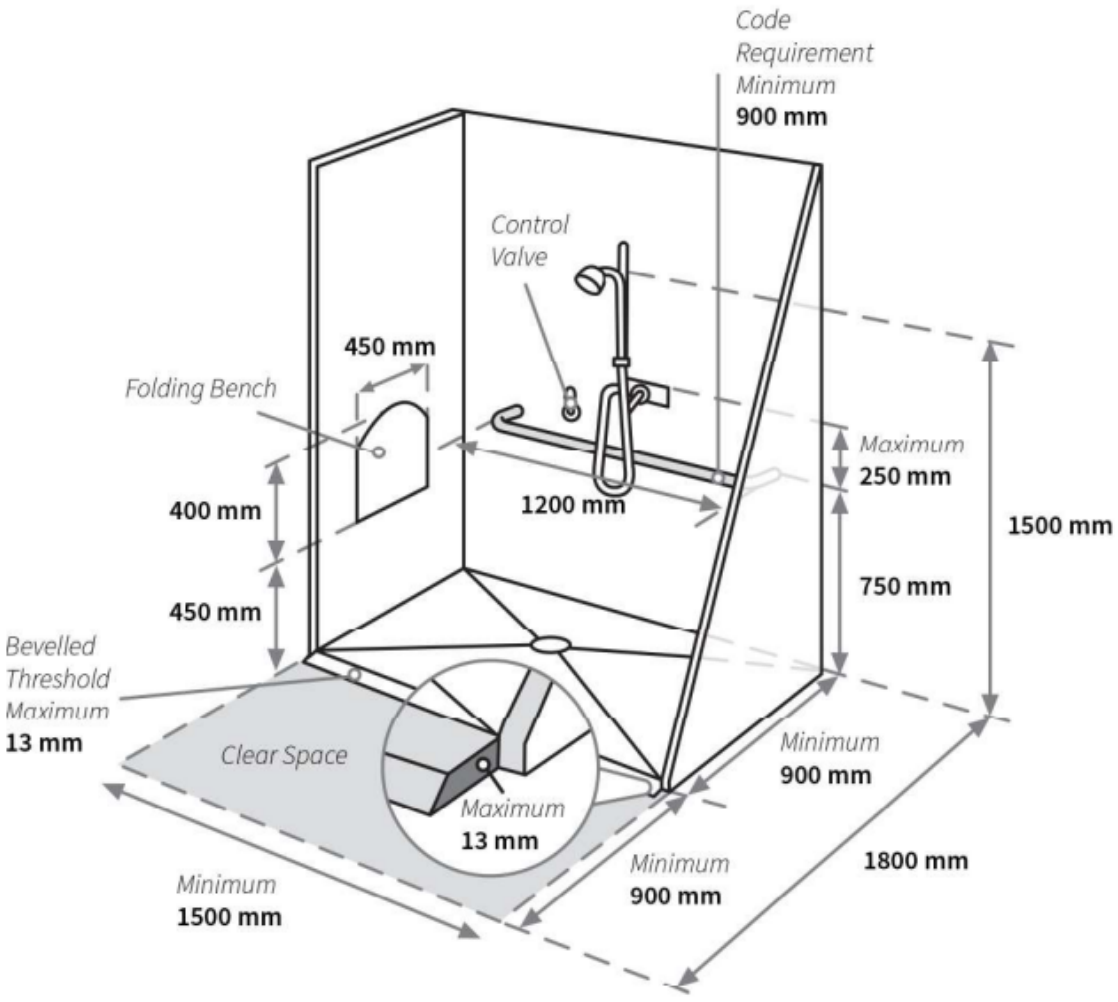
v. is provided with a door pull on the outside, near the latch side of the door,

c) have a water closet located so that its centre line is not less than 460 mm and not more than 480 mm from an adjacent side wall on one side,

d) be equipped with knurled finished grab bars as described in Sentence (2),

e) be equipped with a coat hook mounted not more than 1 200 mm above the floor on a side wall and projecting not more than 50 mm from the wall, and

f) have a clearance of not less than 1 700 mm between the outside of the stall face and the face of an in-swinging washroom door and 1 400 mm between the outside of the stall face and any wall- mounted fixture.



2) Commercial businesses, recreational facilities including but not limited to pool), hotels, guest houses, and all places where water activities are done should install grab bars around bathrooms, showers, toilets and bathtubs as a safety measure. Such grab bars shall:

   a) be mounted

      i. horizontally on the wall beside the water closet, and be not less than 1200 mm in length, located with its centreline between 300 mm and 330 mm above the height of the water closet seat and with its midpoint located in line with the front edge of the water closet or

      ii. on the wall beside the water closet and have a horizontal portion 600 mm in length with a 600 mm extension extending upwards to the front and away from the horizontal portion at an angle of 60° to the horizontal, with the centre line of the horizontal portion between 300 mm and 330 mm above the height of the water closet seat and the intersection of the horizontal and sloping portions located in line with the front edge of the water closet,

   b) be mounted horizontally on the wall behind the water closet, if the water closet does not have an attached water tank, centred on the toilet bowl and be not less than 600 mm in length.

Water Closets / Bathroom

Water closets required to be accessible to persons with disabilities shall:

a) Have a clearance between the doorway of the water closet stall and a wall opposite the entrance of not less than 1.25m;
b) Be not less than 1.25m wide, 1.65m to 2.0m deep, and have a doorway opening at least 800mm wide with a door (if any) swinging outwards;
c) Have handrails not less than 1070 mm long and not less than 25mm and not more than 32mm diameter. On both sides of the water closet, mounted 850mm above and parallel to the floor, with the front end positioned 610mm in front of the closet pan;
d) Have a water closet pan with the seat not higher than 500mm from the floor, and a narrow understructure that recedes sharply from the front and a trap that does not extend in front of or flush with the lip of the bowl. (Where only one water closet is required in the facility, a standard height model may be used).

Equipment and Fittings

A shelf disposal unit or the lower edge of a mirror shall not be more than 1m above the floor. A towel or other dispenser or electrical hand dryer shall not be more than 1.25m above the floor.

4. Communication

International signs

The International Symbol

The international symbol indicates that persons with disabilities will have reasonable freedom of movement within a building so signed. The symbol is usually white on a blue background. Where the colours do not stand out, the symbol can be in blue on a white background. Though other contrasting colours may be used, these should be avoided if possible. An arrow can be added to indicate direction or the location of an accessible space or facility.





Additional Symbols

Facilities provided for people with hearing impairments shall be indicated with a symbolic ear with the beginnings of a line through it.

Facilities provided for those with visual impairments shall be indicated with a figure using a white cane.



All buildings erected or altered which are required to comply with this section shall have the international symbol of accessibility for persons with disabilities prominently displayed in position as follows

a) At the main street entrance to the building. If the access ramp for wheelchairs is not actually at the main entrance, then it must have directing arrows or notice attached e.g. "(Access fire south door—50m)";
b) Adjacent to the actual ramp access if this is not at the main entrance;
c) On doors of all toilet areas, water closets, cubicles, or rest room designs for the use of persons with disabilities;
d) Adjacent to lifts /elevators installed for wheelchair access;
e) On the signs in parking lots reserved for persons with disabilities.



Alternate Forms of Communication for People with Visual Disabilities

Recent technology (such as a product known as Talking Signs) offers infrared wireless communication systems, where pedestrians who are visually impaired may use a receiver to pick up remote directional voice messages. Destination points in a structure can be equipped with infrared equipment that provides beams of invisible light to receivers that pedestrians would use. Verbal messages can then be provided through the receiver directly or through a headset. Such technology may be used in both internal and external environments. This would, for people who have visual impairments, either augment or replace the need for sighted guides or tactile/high-contrast directories.

Signage

People with visual disabilities rely on cues to find their way. Doors and openings that lead from public places and through which the public is permitted to enter should be identified by specific tactile signs with letters not less than 60 mm high, raised 0.7 mm above the surface, located 1 200 mm above the fl oor surface, and beginning not more than 150 mm from the door openings.

Accessibility for Persons with Visual Disabilities

Persons with visual disabilities rely on

- lighting cues, i.e., the intensity and distribution of lights used to accent areas and passageways,
- audible cues, i.e., subtle sounds, such as a fountain, clock, music, machine, or verbal announcement, to help with orientation,
- tactile cues, i.e., dię erent types of flooring that mark a pathway, or change from one area to another, thus serving as a warning that a change in direction is to take place,
- colour/contrast cues, i.e., used to define the location of doorways, building controls (such as light switches and thermostats) and protruding elements, such as handrails and fire extinguishers, and
- ergonomic cues, i.e., the design of rooms and the arrangement of furnishings that allow people to move efficiently and safely along pathways within rooms and from room to room.

Accessibility for Persons with Language Difficulties

The use of graphics or internationally recognized symbols to indicate direction or identify facilities and services will be beneficial to persons with

- developmental disabilities,
- learning disabilities,
- brain injuries,
- mental illnesses causing disorientation or confusion, and
- little or no knowledge of the local written language.

However, if wording is to be used on signs, the language on them should be simple and concise to be accessible for most building users.

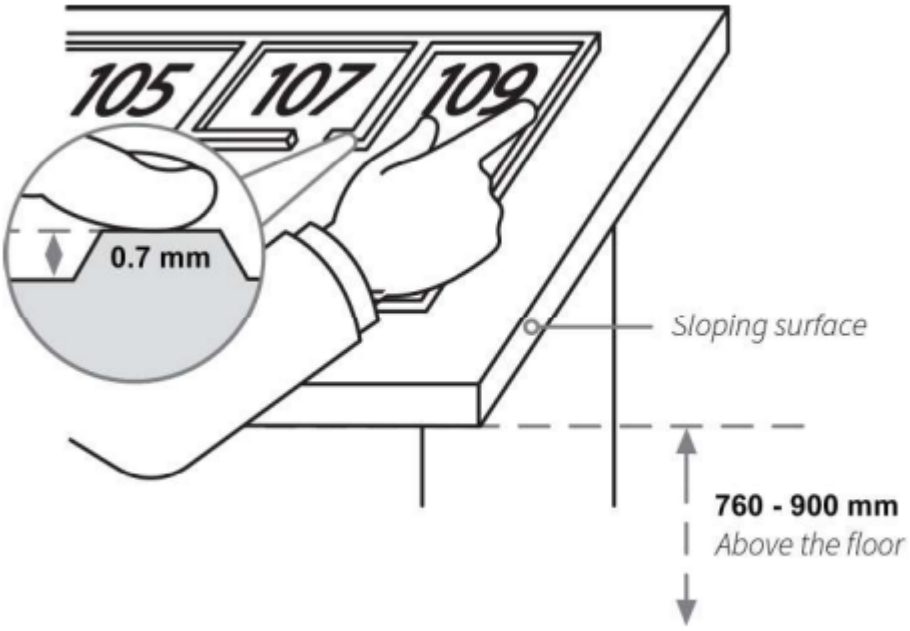
Directories

Building directories should be conveniently located, tactile in nature, and located on a sloping plane 760 mm to 900 mm above the floor. Characters that are raised at least 0.7 mm are needed.

Persons who are blind can be given directions by the use of pre-recorded messages or the use of tactile maps and signs. Guide dogs and canes are also used to aid the blind.

Those with visual disabilities or who are deaf-blind rely on the following cues for orientation:

- colour contrast/brightness
- changes in illumination
- sounds
- textures (dię erent fl ooring materials to indicate change in direction or use)
- standard architectural features
- patterns
- placement of elements



Colour Contrast

The identification of floors and other signs intended to help orient people with a visual disability should offer maximum colour contrast to be effective. For this reason, it is recommended that white on black or black on white is used, as this combination produces the best legibility.

It is also recommended that sign surfaces be processed to prevent glare. Assigned floor numbers should have a glare-free surface and be mounted on a background in a contrasting colour.

Size of signs

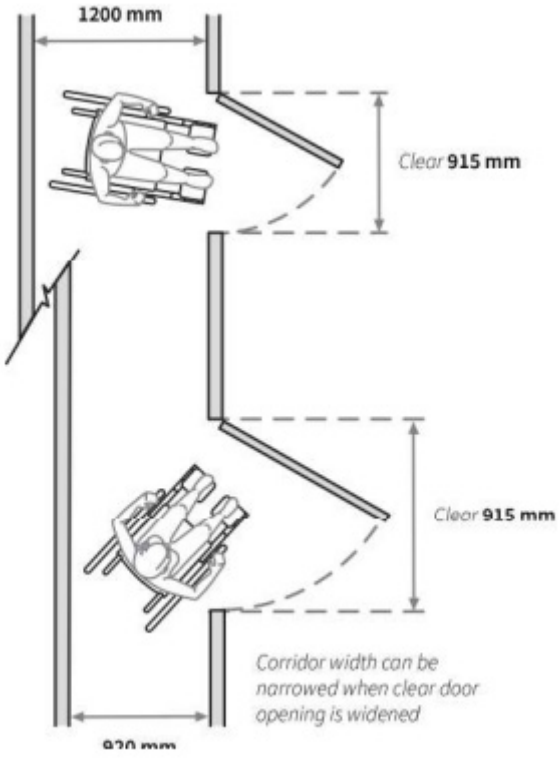
Signs at the main entrance of the buildings shall be not less than 150mm square. Signs on doors and adjacent to lifts shall be not less than 50mm square. These should follow the international symbol of disability.

5. Design Recommendations

Design Standards

Although not mandatory requirements for this Section of the code the following list of recommendations is for information and guidance of the builder, designers and others.





Unisex toilet facilities

Males using wheelchairs are often accompanied by their wives, mothers sisters, or daughter,s and female wheelchair users are sometimes accompanied by their husbands, fathers, brothers, or sons hence toilets and /or washrooms for persons with disabilities should be treated as "unisex" facilities and accessible from passage or lobbies rather than from either male or female toilets areas.

Doors

Doors to wash/toilet areas for persons with disabilities should always open OUT and be equipped with self-closing hinges, rising butts, or door closers. They should have either horizontal or vertical pull/push bars rather than handles and a suitable indicator catch showing "vacant "or "occupied".

In toilets and washrooms used frequently by wheelchair patients (i.e. in institutions, hospitals, homes) the entrance door should have a bell or buzzers outside, operated from a pull cord or push inside for patients to summon aid.

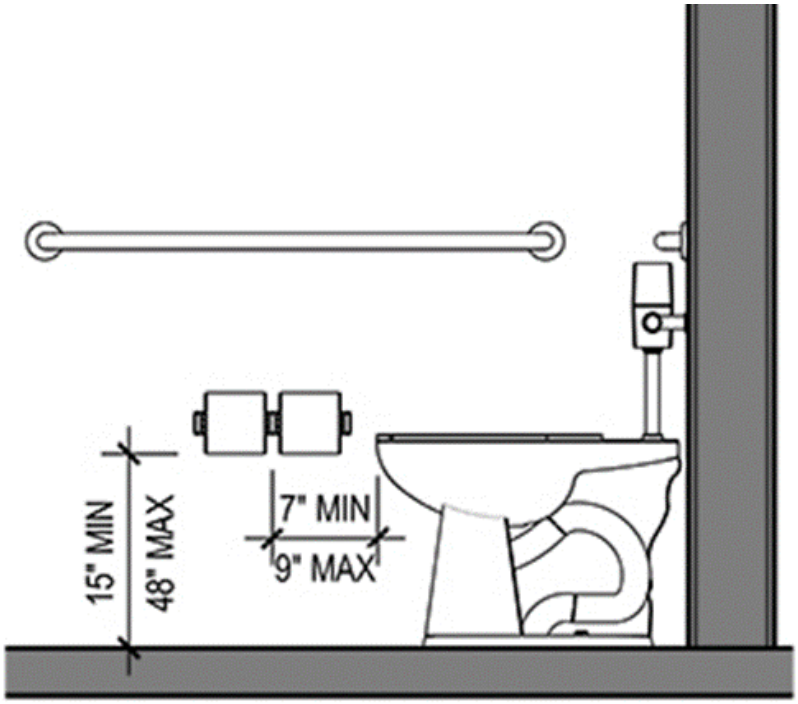


Grip Bars and handrails

Ramps should have hand rail on at least on side, handrail should be easy to grip, if circular, a diameter of not less than 45 mm or more than 51mm is preferred. Vertical grip rails as well as horizontal are recommended.

Position of fittings

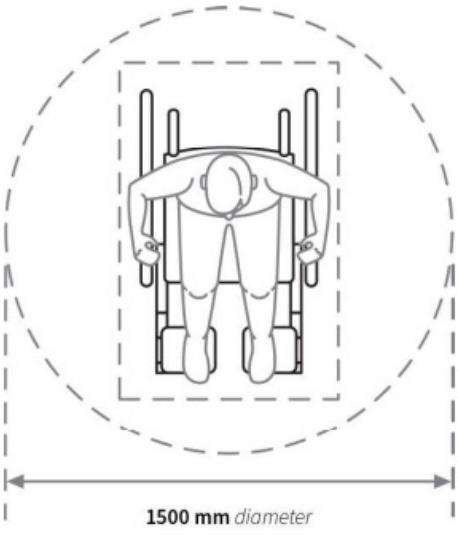
The water closet flushing handle or bottom as well as toilet paper holder should be placed where they can be reached by persons using wheelchairs, drinking fountains should not be fully recessed in walls or alcoves and be set lower for wheelchair users.



Passageway width

Passage and corridors in buildings used by persons with disabilities should never be less than 1.25m wide.





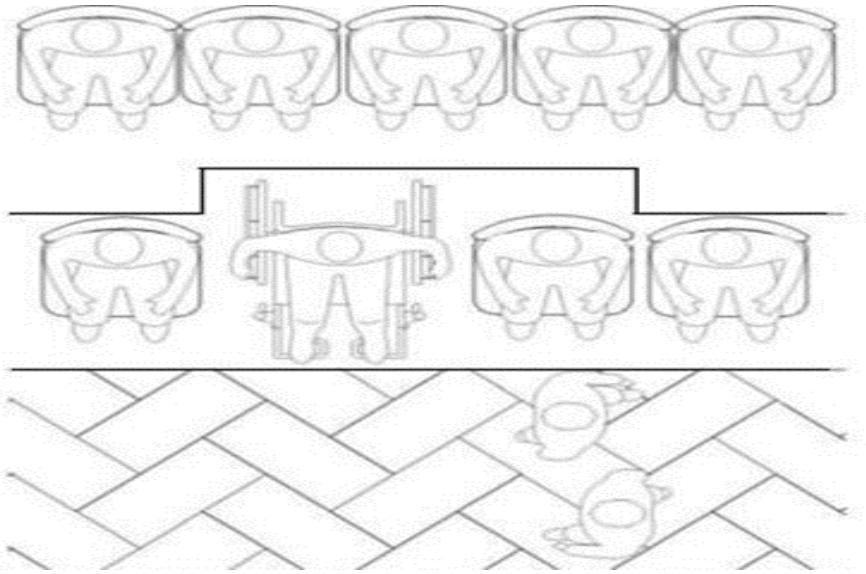
Floor Finish

Floor generally, and especially ramps should have a non-slip surface.



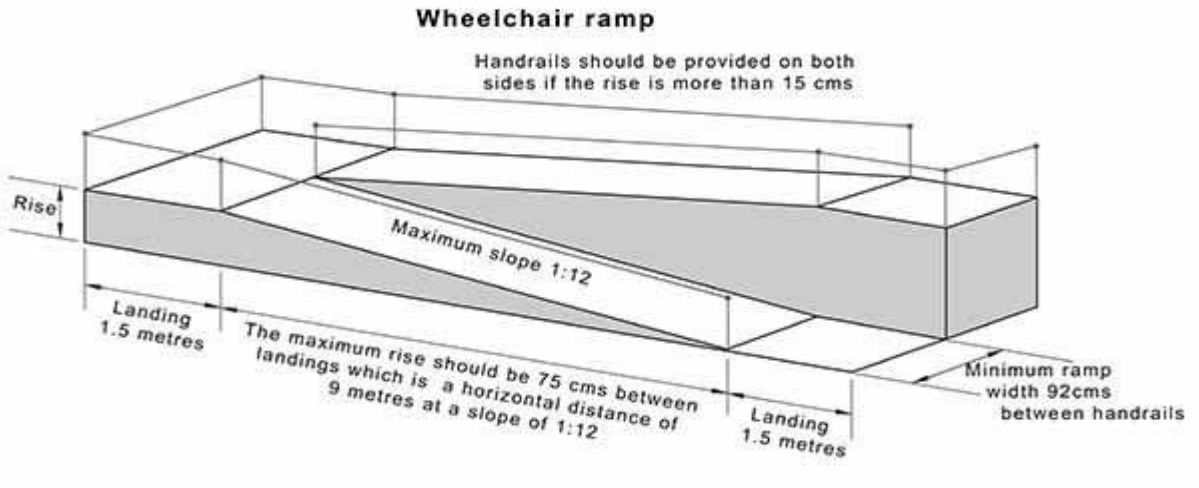
Viewing platforms

Viewing platforms for spectators or seating areas in assembly buildings such as theaters, airport terminals, sporting complexes and the like, should have special areas set aside for wheelchair viewers devoid of any other fixed seating arrangements and the area shall be in such a position as not to interfere with egress ways from seated areas. Access must be by ramps not steeper than 1.14m.



Walks, ramps, entrances and corridors

a) Walks should be a minimum of 2m without abrupt level changes.
b) Ramps should have a maximum slope of 1.20m and should have easy to grip handrails on both sides at a height of 2,400mm to - 300mm measure from ramp surface to rail top.
c) Every 900-2700 mm change of direction of walk or ramp should have a level platform of 1,800 – 2700 by 1800-2700 mm.





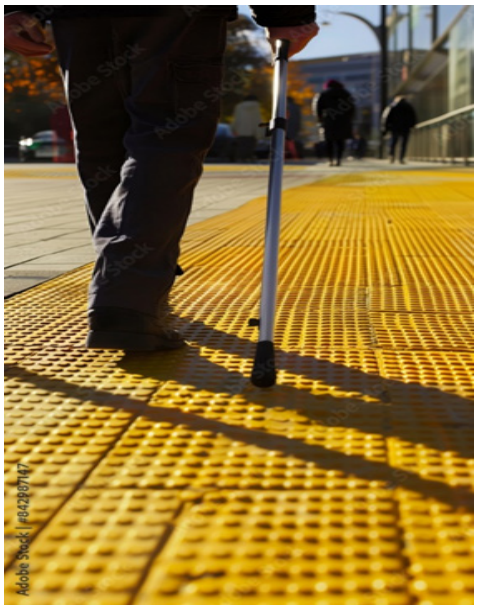
d) Curbs should not be higher than 100 mm and should be cut for wheelchair access.
e) At every entrance there should be a level platform of at least 1950 mm.
f) The circulation space of walk ramps and corridors should be clear of obstructions and projections.
(1) Principal entrances /exits must provide for easy access and egress for wheelchair users.
(2) All other entrances/exits must provide for easy access and egress for persons with disabilities.
(3) All doorways should be at least 900-2700 mm.
(4) All doors must be operable in a single motion with one hand and should have a clear swing.

(5) Door latches, handles and pull bars should be easy to grasp and between 900-2700 mm [in length] and 900 mm high.
(6) Doors with a single means of egress should swing out but should be recessed if on a corridor.

(h) Corridors should be at least 1,200-2,700 mm wide, main corridors should be at least 1,800-2700 mm wide

Surface finish

(a) All floors, stairs and walls and walk surface should be non-slip finish;
(b) Where used, carpet should not be low pile, high density with this firm pads



Steps and stairs

(a) All risers should be slated or leveled. No open riser or risers with nosing should be allowed.
(b) Maximum riser height should be 1.75mm.
(c) The minimum riser height should be 300mm.
(d) Easy-to-grasp handrails with a 38 mm clearance from the wall should be set at both sides of stairs at a height between 600-2400mm and 600-3300mm with a cross section not exceeding 2'.



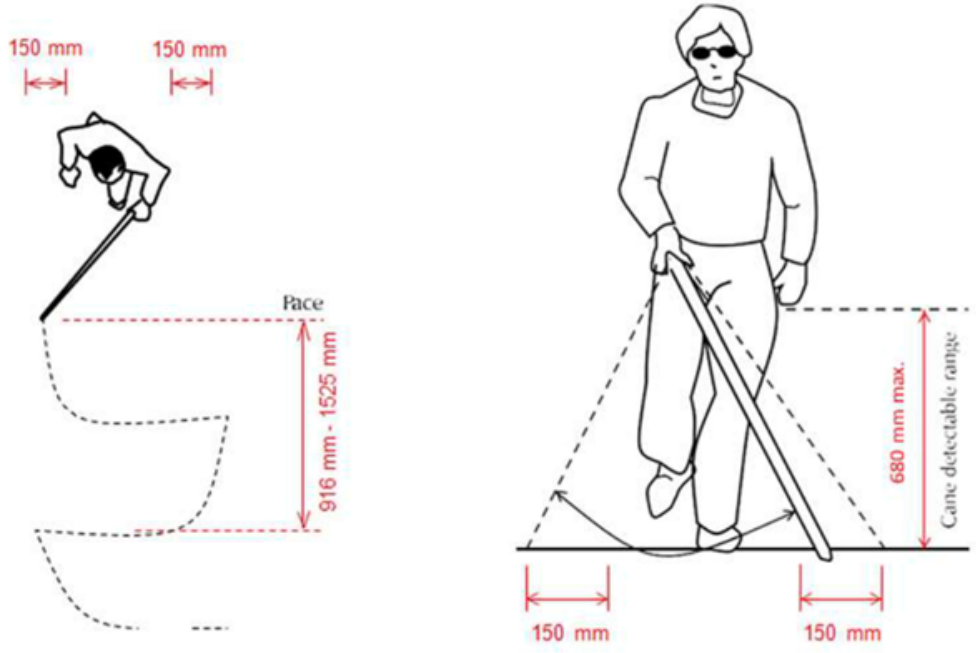
6. Information and Design Basics for Seniors and Persons with Disabilities

Guyanese with visual disabilities are not a homogenous group, as there are many types and levels of eye conditions. For example, a person with an eye condition may require a dimly lit environment, when another person with a different eye condition may require intense lighting for functional living. The guidelines listed, therefore, reflect a well-researched average way of addressing related design issues to best accommodate people with these disabilities.

Effective barrier-free design for built-environment users with visual disabilities relies upon:

- colour/contrast cues, which can be used to define building landmarks, help one identify obstacles in a path of travel, and assist with locating building controls such as light switches, thermostats and fire alarms;

- lighting, planned to enhance the intensity and distribution of artificial lighting sources while minimizing glare and backlit areas;



- auditory cues, which can help a person to map his/her environment through sounds, such as water fountains, music or public address systems;

- tactile and kinaesthetic cues, such as the application of different floor surfaces and approved tactile warning surfaces; and

- ergonomics, which can be applied to room arrangements with logical, effective furniture use, helping a person map his/her path of travel and avoid hazardous building zones.

Note:
The design considerations are not mutually independent. The five areas are all necessary for effective design.

Barrier-Free Design Basics for People who are Deaf

A person who is deaf has little or no functional hearing and depends on visual communication such as sign language, reading, and writing. Since a person who is deaf cannot hear speech, s/he relies on visual cues such as a light to alert him/her of a ringing telephone, a doorbell, or an alarm. Individuals who are deaf require good lighting and open spaces because this allows them to view their surroundings. An open layout designed with as few walls, wall dividers, and columns as possible will increase the ability of these individuals to scan an area.

Those who are deaf-blind have a dual disability. Many of these individuals retain some varying and limited degree of either hearing or sight. They often rely more upon their kinesthetic senses (e.g., touch, heat, pressure) to function within built environments. Building designs that benefit people with visual disabilities as well as those who are hard of hearing or deaf are also often beneficial to deaf-blind populations.

Barrier-Free Design Basics for People who are Hard of Hearing

As with people who have a loss of vision, those with hearing loss are not a homogeneous group. There is a broad spectrum of hearing loss, including those with hearing loss that comes on late in life. A hard-of-hearing person relies on visual cues, such as light signals and captions. Open designs with non-glare surfaces are most suitable.

Barrier-Free Design Basics for People with Communication and Cognitive Disabilities

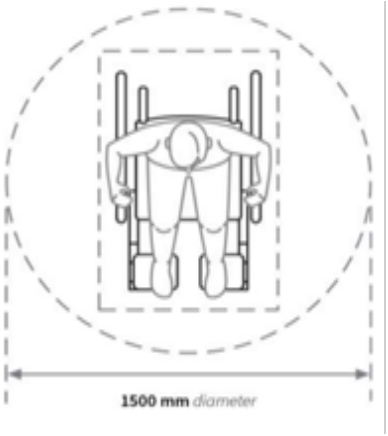
Communication disabilities (such as aphasia, i.e., difficulty talking, understanding, reading and/or writing) can result after injury to the brain (such as a stroke). Signs with simple pictures and with written information limited to short, simple concepts are important for this group. People with communication disabilities may also benefit from the use of design considerations for those with visual disabilities (e.g., colour/contrast, lighting, auditory, tactile/kinaesthetic and ergonomic cues). People with communication disabilities may or may not also have mobility issues.

These listed considerations and solutions are similar for people with cognitive disabilities.

Barrier-Free Design Basics for Seniors

The majority of seniors (those 65 and over) may be subject to some form of age-related change in their abilities, such as loss of vision, loss of hearing, arthritis, stroke, or hip or knee replacement. Some of these factors may create mobility limitations, creating an increase in the number of people who rely on mobility devices such as walkers, wheelchairs or power scooters to get around. In addition to space for these tools, lighting and auditory levels may need to be addressed in order for some seniors to function independently and safely.

Barrier-Free Design Basics for People Using Mobility Devices



People who experience decreased hand and finger dexterity; limited ranges of motion; decreases in strength, balance or coordination; or fatigue may require the use of a mobility device, such as a walker, cane, brace, crutch, wheelchair or scooter. These devices require ease of access to buildings and all facilities and services. This includes a barrier-free safe path of travel, accessible entrances (preferably at zero grade with powered doors), accessible washrooms and stalls, access to paper towels and soap dispensers, lever handles, larger handles on locking devices, and a turning radius to accommodate wheelchairs or scooters. These adaptations also benefit parents with strollers, delivery people and those manoeuvring presentation materials.

Environmental Design Considerations for the Bariatric Population

Considerations must be made for the growing population of severely obese and bariatric individuals in Guyana. In general, bariatric individuals can be described by any of the following: overweight by greater than 100–200 lbs, a body weight greater than 300 lbs, and/or a BMI greater than 40. Individuals who are severely or morbidly obese (bariatric) are at greater risk for many disabling conditions, such as stroke, diabetes, cancer, reduced respiratory function, etc. They also experience decreased mobility and less independence in daily activities due to obesity itself.

Current basic building standards are not adequate to accommodate individuals who are severely and morbidly obese and who rely on mobility aids such as larger, bariatric four-wheeled walkers, wheelchairs, and scooters. Doorways and hallways are too narrow, stairs are very difficult to negotiate, and turning radii are too small.

Bathrooms / Showers

- Avoid use of wall-mounted toilets.
- Use bariatric floor-mounted toilets that are rated to 450 kg. CAUTION: Bariatric toilets are deeper and wider, and may have a higher seat height, making it difficult for the bariatric individual to use, especially if of shorter stature.
- Use a bariatric commode over a standard toilet, if not using a bariatric toilet. The seat height can be adjusted to fit the individual's needs. A floor-mounted toilet with an unattached flush tank has more options for use with various bariatric commodes.
- Have a minimum distance of 530 mm between the toilet and the flanking wall. A greater distance may be indicated if assistance from caregivers and/or larger equipment is required.

- Locate toilets so that they can be accessed by moving sideways rather than twisting and making a 90° or 180° turn.
- Have a clear width of approach of at least 1 140 mm for urinals in order to accommodate individuals using wider wheelchairs.
- Avoid floor sinks, as they interfere with wheelchairs. Instead, provide extra support to wall-mounted sinks/counters.
- Allow a larger turning radius for individuals using wheelchairs. A recommended 1 900 mm turning radius for wheelchairs or commodes and a caregiver is suggested.
- Ensure that wall-mounted grab bars are structurally reinforced and rated to handle 4.5 kN (454 kg). They should also be mounted further forward from the back wall.
- Mount toilet tissue dispensers sufficiently in front of the toilet to allow ease of access and to prevent interference with grab bar use.
- Use texture-tiled open showers with floor drains. Avoid enclosing walls; instead, use shower curtains to allow for ease of access and assistance by caregivers, if needed.
- Include multiple, reinforced grab bars (rated for at least 4.5 kN (454 kg)) for showers. The grab bars must be located so that they can be reached by a user who is obese.
- Ensure that the dimensions of private showers are at least 1 500 mm × 1 500 mm. If assistance is required, the dimensions should be greater to accommodate the caregiver (i.e., 1 830 mm × 1 500 mm or greater).
- Incorporate a removable shower head. A bariatric shower seat/commode may also be necessary.
- Avoid curbs into accessible showers.
- A wet room may be appropriate in lieu of a separate shower in the bathroom.

What are the features of a wet room?

The main way in which wet rooms differ from traditional bathrooms is that rather than having a built-in, enclosed shower cubicle, the room itself effectively acts as the enclosure. This means that wet rooms have to be fully waterproofed to prevent leaks.

In terms of bathroom suites, there is a wide range of options to choose from; the only difference is that you don't necessarily need to worry about choosing a shower screen as you would with other types of bathroom. Many wet rooms are also tiled from floor to ceiling to take care of the issue of waterproofing, and drainage is another important issue to consider.

Why are they popular?

One of the main reasons wet rooms are popular is because they can help you to save space if you only have a small bathroom. They mean that you don't need to have a shower cubicle, which can constrict movement in a small room, and you don't even need to have a bath in there if you don't want to.

Wet rooms are also very practical, particularly for people with mobility issues, as they eliminate the need to step up into a shower cubicle. They are also considered to be very stylish, so if you want to create a "cool," modern look in your bathroom, they could be a good option to consider. With the increasing range of bathroom suites available, there are plenty of designs to choose from, so you should be able to create exactly the look you want.

Another reason many people like wet rooms is that they can be easier to clean, due to the fact there are fewer fiddly surfaces and corners to worry about.

Doorways / Corridors / Elevators

- Ensure that doorways have a minimum clearance of 1 140 mm. This clearance can accommodate an individual in a wheelchair with a total width of 990 mm (approximately 760 mm seat width), with 76 mm clearance on either side.

- Consider that the use of oversized equipment may require a door clearance larger than 1 140 mm. A larger door width can be accomplished by using unequal-leaf swing doors. For example, one leaf might be 1 066 mm and the other 457 mm for an overall width of 1 524 mm, which would accommodate a bariatric hospital bed. Other ways to maximize door clearance include the use of pocket doors, folding doors and o set hinges.

- Increase the width of corridors/hallways to accommodate larger girth and equipment. An 890 mm corridor accommodates a user with a 711 mm bariatric walker. A 1 500 mm-wide corridor allows for one person who is obese and using a walker and one person of regular size and no equipment to pass. If passage of larger equipment is required (e.g., a bariatric wheelchair), hallways wider than

- 1 500 mm (i.e., 1 830 mm or more) should be considered to allow passage and the turning of wheelchairs.

- Make elevator door clearances as large as possible (and a minimum of 1 140 mm). The interior dimensions should be a minimum of 1 828 mm × 2 032 mm to allow for a larger turning radius of the wheelchairs and the transportation of a stretcher with two caregivers (e.g., for emergency services).

Accessible Entrances / Ramps

- Use ramps that have a minimum unobstructed width of 1 140 mm to allow for larger wheelchair widths and clearance for individuals to propel the wheelchair.

- Use a gradient of 1 in 20 because of the increased weight of the individual who is obese, considering that self-propulsion and/or caregiver e ort when pushing the wheelchair will be greater.

- Have a minimum 1 500 mm × 1 500 mm level area where a ramp makes a 90° or 180° turn, and at intermediate levels as required in longer ramps.

- Ensure that curb cutouts and openings are at least 1 140 mm wide to accommodate larger wheelchair widths.

- Ensure that doorways located in a barrier-free path of travel have a minimum clearance of 1 140 mm

- If a door swings open toward the wheelchair user, increase the clear space on the latch side of door to a minimum of 760 mm to allow for the increased turning radius of larger wheelchairs.

- Where a doorway or stairway empties onto a ramp through an end wall, have a level area extending across the full width of the ramp (e.g., 1 140 mm) and along its length for not less than 1 500 mm.

- Increase load values for handrails so that they can withstand the increased weight of individuals who are obese. Recommend construction to withstand a minimum of 4.5 kN (454 kg) applied at any point and in any direction and a uniform load of 3.3 kN (340 kg) applied in any direction to handrails located outside of dwelling units.

Bedrooms / Private Spaces

- Have 1 500 mm of clearance available around the bed of an obese individual to allow room for caregiver assistance, equipment such as wheelchairs and walkers, and space for lifts to be manoeuvred beside the bed.

- Have grab bars rated for at least 454 kg placed strategically from bed to toilet to allow increased independence with toileting.

- Consider space for oversized furniture and storage of oversized equipment (i.e., 1 sq m for a portable lift, 370 sq m for a walker, 1.5 sq m for a wheelchair, 465 sq mm for a commode).

- Consider that individuals who are obese are sensitive to ambient temperatures. Recommend strategies to help them control temperature in personal spaces, e.g., increase air conditioning capacity, allow access to temperature controls, and/or add a ceiling fan or portable fan.

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