



THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT AND PUBLIC ACCOMMODATIONS

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) — which became law in July 1990 — prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability. The ADA provides protection for discrimination against by public accommodations (privately owned, operated, or leased facilities) or commercial facilities on the basis of disability.

- Public accommodations and commercial facilities must meet the minimum standards for accessibility for either alterations or new construction.
- Existing barriers need to be removed in order to be deemed as accessible and this must be done without causing any “undue hardship.”
- “Reasonable accommodations” must be made for people with disabilities without fundamentally altering the public accommodation’s purpose as a facility.
- Public accommodations and commercial facilities must have their means readily available to effectively communicate with people who have visual, hearing, and speech disabilities.

Examples of Physical Accessibility

- Curb ramps on sidewalks
- Handrails in bathrooms
- Disability-reserved parking spaces
- Elevators
- Large doorway entrances
- Disability-reserved aisle seats
- Platform lift on public bus
- Wheelchair accessible telephone
- Electronic door openers
- Accessible entrances to buildings via ramps

Examples of Non-Physical Accessibility

- Teletypewriter devices (TTY’s)
- Braille on direction signs within a building
- Legible signs for people with visual impairments
- Accessibility symbols
- Volume control telephones
- Detectible warnings on sidewalks