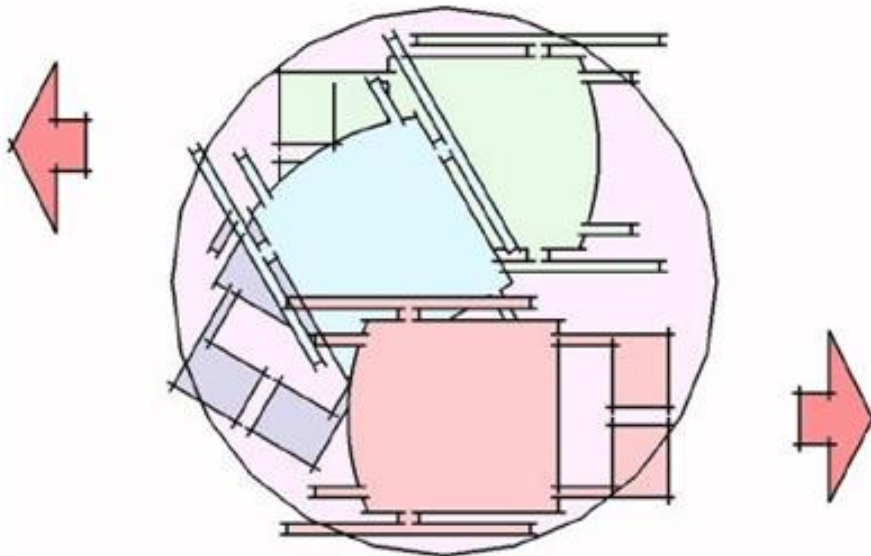




Access Policy and Standards



1 - INTRODUCTION

Fife Council's Access Policy and Standards are intended to promote good practice with regard to accessibility in the design, construction and management of the built environment in Fife .

The Policy will promote the Council's stated aims of inclusiveness and accessibility in Fife .

The Policy and Standards will apply to all properties owned, occupied or managed by Fife Council and also all those which are developed or run in partnership between the Council and outside agencies . In addition Fife Council expects the principles of the Policy and Standards to be taken into account in developments by others in Fife .

The Standards supplement rather than replace statutory requirements . To promote best practice, the Council expect that, where their Standards exceed the statutory requirements, these Standards will be applied .

Given the wide ranging scope of accessibility issues, it is recognised that situations will occur where no one solution will meet all needs . In such cases Fife Council expects building designers, developers and managers to use these Standards and other sources of advice to actively demonstrate a positive approach to improving accessibility and removing barriers.

2 - DISABILITY

Disability is the disadvantage or restriction of movement or activity imposed by contemporary attitudes, social organisation and the built environment which take little or no account of people with impairments and therefore exclude them from mainstream activities in society to which they, and everyone else, have a right of access .

A person's physical or medical condition is not the disabling factor . Disability is imposed on them and results in discrimination and inequality .

3 - ACCESS

Access to services, resources and activities in society is a major part of equal opportunities . Barriers to this are discriminatory .

For facilities to be accessible they must enable disabled people to gain independent access which is mainstream and integrated, not segregated or special .

The requirements of the following people should be taken into account in designing buildings, providing services and organising activities :

- people with mobility impairment, including those who use wheelchairs
- ambulant disabled people, including those with walking aids
- people with hearing impairments
- people with vision impairments
- people with speech impairments
- people with learning difficulties .

This list is not exhaustive and the needs of all people with an impairment should be taken into account .

People who might not readily be seen as disabled, such as older people, those with temporary injuries or illnesses and people with very young children will also benefit from improved access .

The needs of one specific group should not override those of others and all should have equality of access .

4 - OUTSIDE

4/A Location

The following points should be considered when identifying a site for a development .

It cannot be assumed that everyone will arrive at a building by car . Where possible there should be nearby bus stops .

The need to cross roads with heavy traffic should be kept to a minimum . If necessary a controlled crossing should be provided .

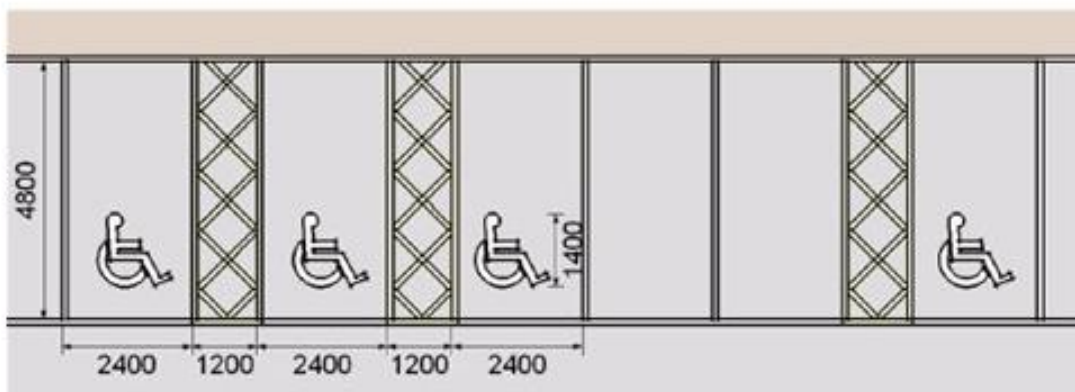
If there is a long distance between the building and nearby facilities, installation of rest benches along the route should be considered . These should be positioned so as not to obstruct people in wheelchairs or pushing double buggies .

Travel distance for disabled people should not exceed 50 metres from transport to entrance . A lay-by / dropping off point should be provided near the building entrance .

The entrance to the building should be clearly sign posted to ensure people know where to go.

Lighting should be good enough to ensure people are and feel safe at night .

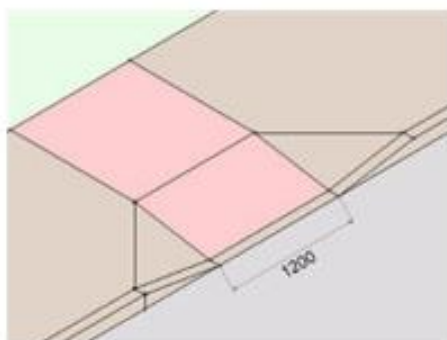
4/B Parking



Larger car parking spaces are required to allow people with reduced mobility to get in and out of their cars with the minimum of difficulty .

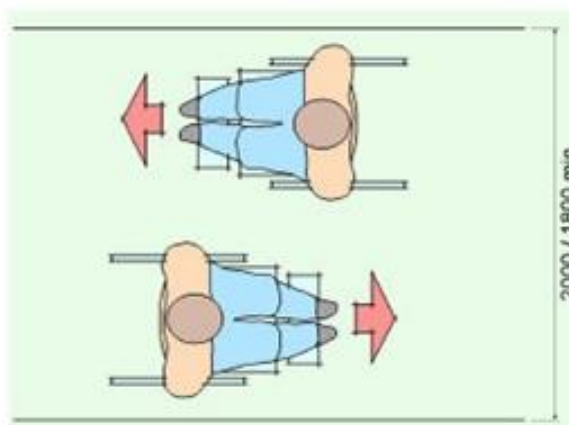
Access Policy and Standards

- Designated parking bays for disabled use should be clearly sign posted and easy to find .
- Bays should be identified as for use by disabled drivers or passengers only
- Parking for disabled people should be as close as possible to the facility the car park serves - within 50 metres uncovered or 100 metres covered way .
- Bays should be large enough to allow car doors to open fully for transfer to a wheelchair from the car . The bay must allow for disabled driver and passengers at the same time .
- The car park must have a smooth and level surface and be well lit .
- Kerbs adjacent disabled bays and at crossings and exit / entry routes should be dropped .
- Car park management arrangements must include adequate supervision of disabled parking bays to prevent abuse .



4/C Approach to a Building

The approach to a building should be wide enough and sufficiently unobstructed to allow people in wheelchairs to pass each other .

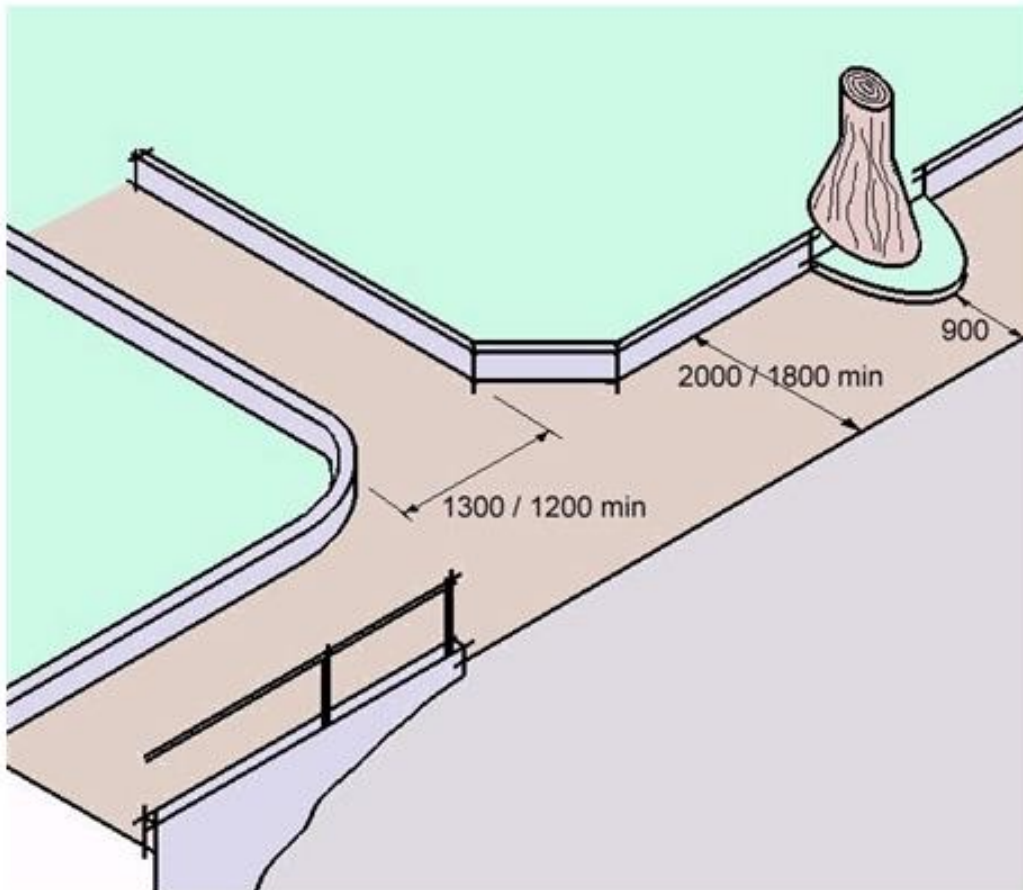


The approach should be should lead logically to the main entrance to avoid confusion .

The approach should be well sign posted.

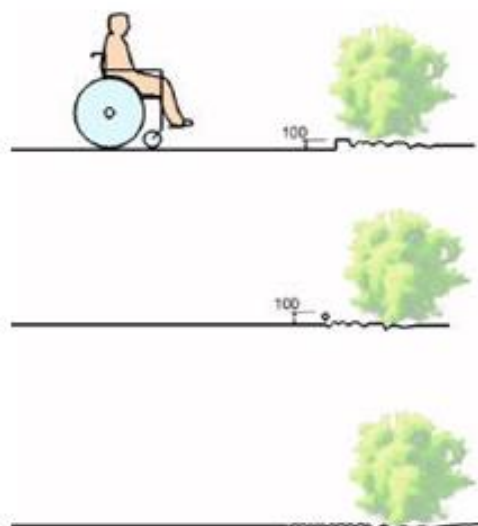
4/D Routes

Routes should provide clear visual, aural and tactile signals to assist people in finding their way while at the same time being safe and unobstructed .

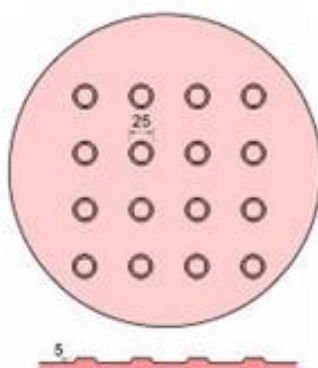


Access Policy and Standards

- Surfaces are to be firm, slip resistant in all weather, well laid and well maintained .
- Gradients and changes of level should not create hazards for people with impaired mobility .
- Edges to paths should be well defined and avoid risk of tripping or straying off the path .



- Tactile surfaces are used to denote crossings or changes of level and to provide for tactile guidance .

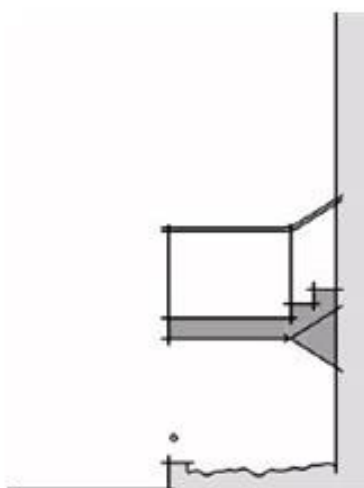


- Signs should be carefully located, clear, non-reflective and logical .
- Lighting should be adequate and not create pools of light and shade .

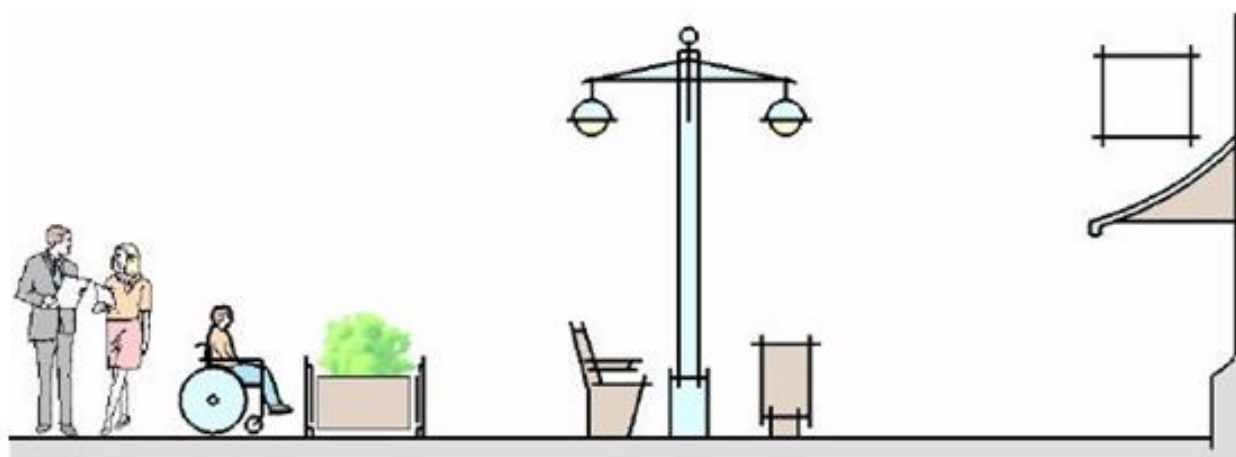
4/E Street Furniture

Street furniture can, if poorly sited or inadequately designed, create unnecessary problems and hazards .

Routes to and along the frontage of buildings should be kept unobstructed . Projections from buildings should be avoided and a clear height of 2100mm maintained above paths or routes .

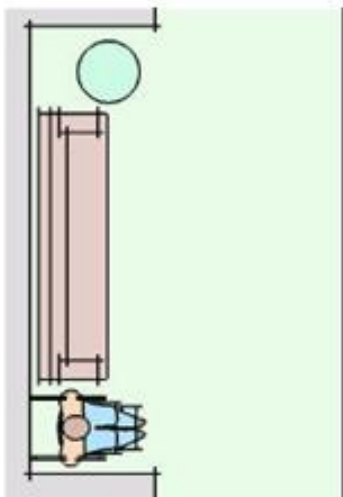


Furniture should, where practical, be grouped together and should always be indicated by changes in surface textures and contrasting colours of the furniture itself . Sharp corners and overhangs should be avoided .



Access Policy and Standards

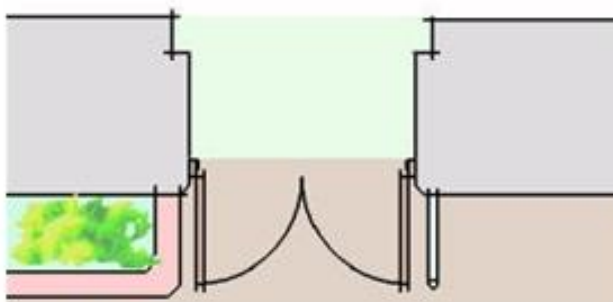
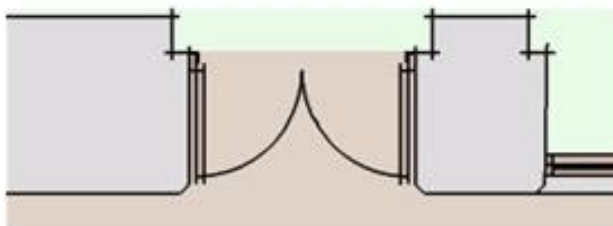
Seating should be provided at intervals along pedestrian routes and near car parking and pick-up points . Seats should be appropriately designed for ease of use and have space adjacent for a wheelchair .



Tables and chairs of pavement cafés should be kept within defined areas to avoid obstructing routes .

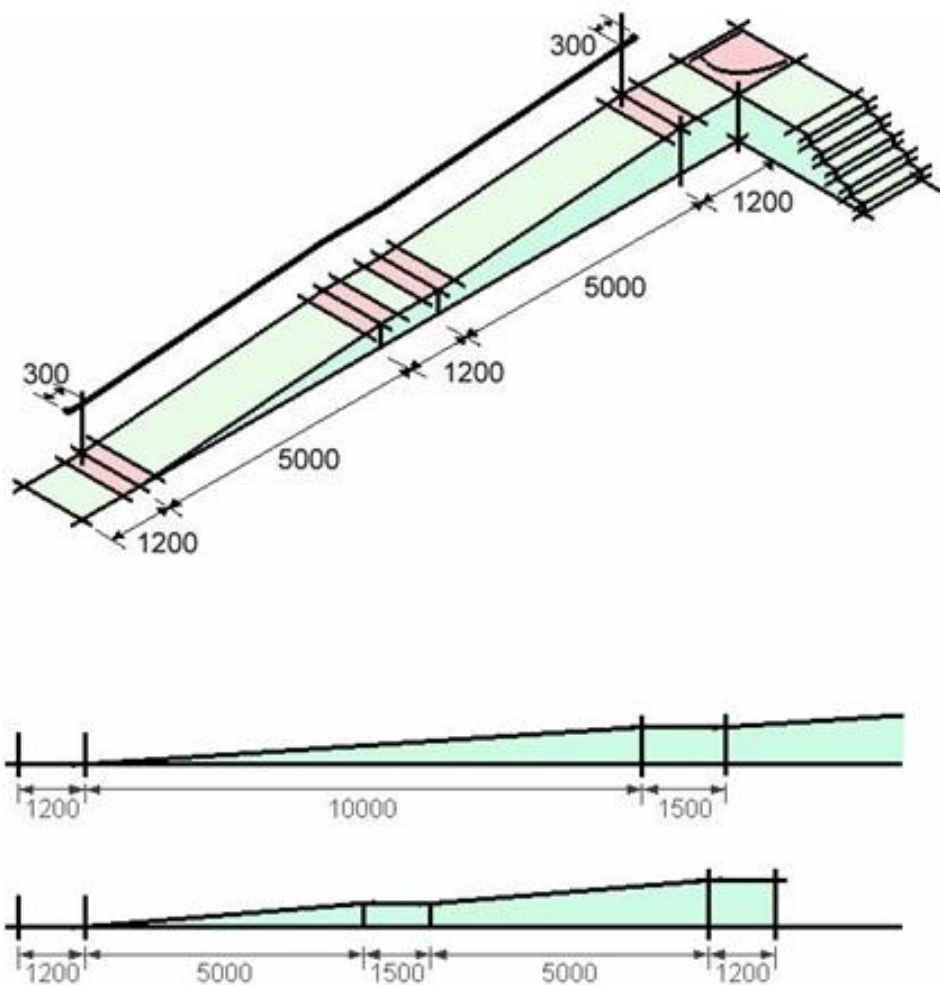
“A” frame notice boards and other moveable street furniture cause obstructions and, because they can be moved about, cause confusion .

Doors swinging outward from buildings should be recessed or have planters or guard-rails to avoid causing sudden obstructions .



4/F RAMPS

Ramps provide a means of negotiating changes in level for people, whether they be wheelchair users, pushing a pram or have difficulty climbing stairs . Ramps should be accompanied by steps for people who prefer to use them . In any case consideration should be given at design stage to avoiding or minimising the need for changes in level .

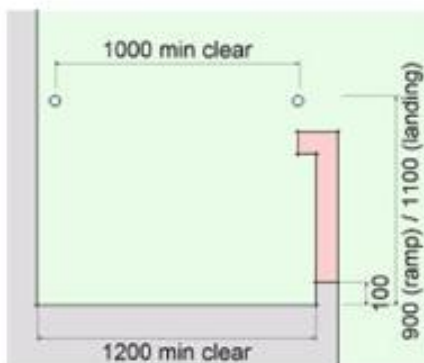


The ideal gradient of a ramp is 1 : 20 . A ramp of 1 : 12 , while complying with building regulations , may prove inaccessible for some people . In principle the gradient of a ramp should not be steeper than 1 : 15 .

The permitted length of a ramp is restricted by the gradient . A ramp of 1 : 12 must not exceed 5 metres length while a 1 : 15 ramp can be 10 metres .

Level landings are required at top and bottom of a ramp, at intervals along it's length determined by the gradient and at changes of direction . Landings must be unobstructed, of at least the same width as the ramp and at least 1500mm length for intermediate landings and 1200mm, although 1800mm is preferred, at the ends .

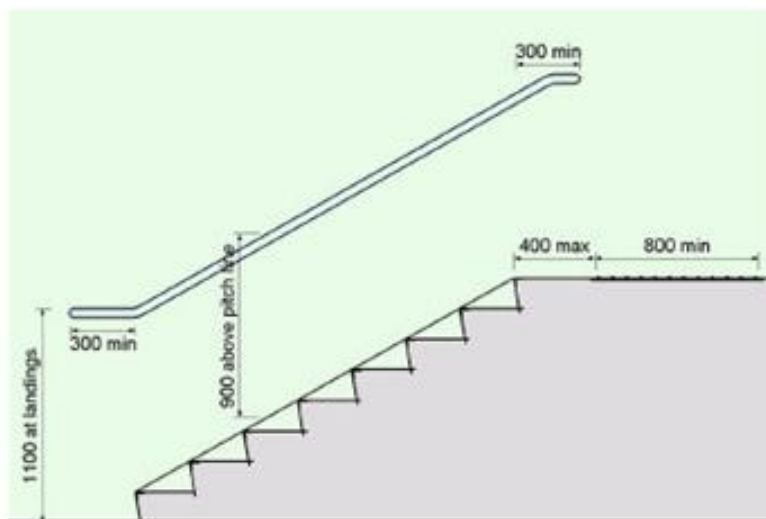
Ramps must have handrails at each side which are easy to use and visually distinctive. There should also be a kerb upstand or edge rail of at least 100mm at the exposed edge to prevent wheels going over it . Handrails are to be 900mm above the level of the ramp and 1100mm above the level of the landings.



The surface of the ramp should be all-weather non-slip and changes in gradient should be signified by changes in surface texture.

4/G STEPS AND STAIRS

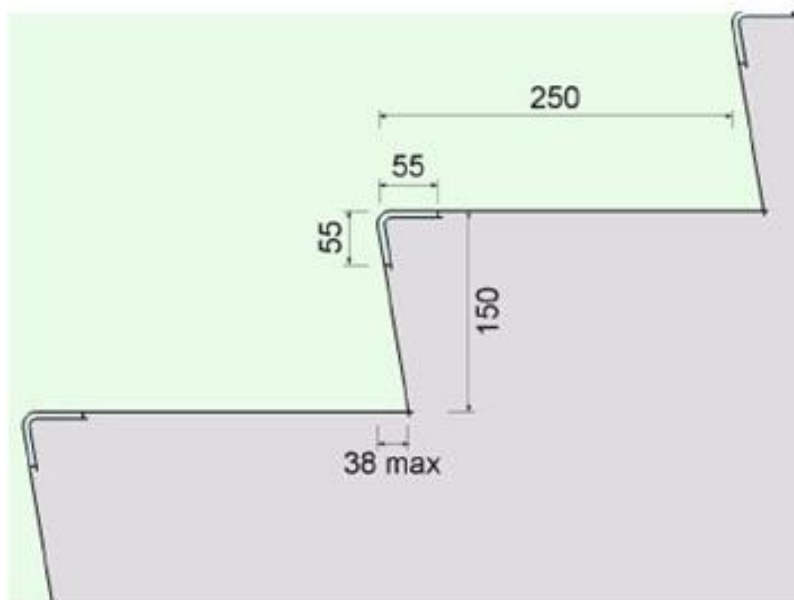
Stairs should be in straight flights preferably rising no more than 1.8metres between landings . Landings should be provided at any change of direction . Spiral stairs or tapering treads are not acceptable for general access .



Steps other than private stairs must have a minimum going of 250mm and a maximum rise of 170mm with a maximum pitch of 34 degrees . Ideally a shallower pitch would make the stair easier to negotiate .

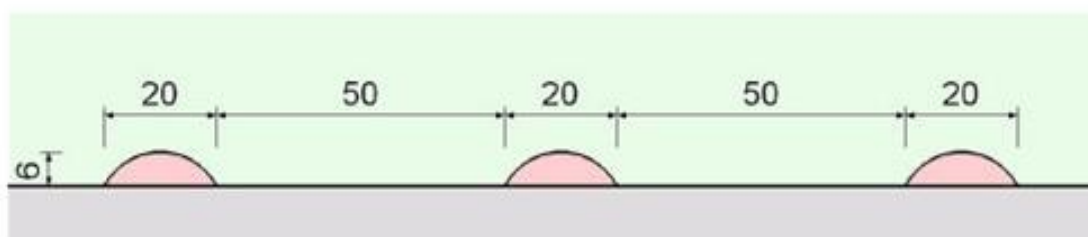
Access Policy and Standards

Steps should be fitted with a contrasting nosing which is recommended to extend 55mm from the edge on both the tread and riser and finishes on the steps are to be non-reflective . Open risers are to be avoided .



Handrails should be provided to each side of the stairs at a height of 900mm above the pitchline of the stair and at 1100mm above the landing . Handrails should extend at least 300mm beyond the top and bottom risers . Additional handrails are required for wide stairs to ensure the maximum width between them does not exceed 1800mm .

Surface tactile warning should be fitted to indicate the approach to the top of a stair . This should be 400mm from the first step , 800mm wide and extend 150mm wider than the width of the stairs .



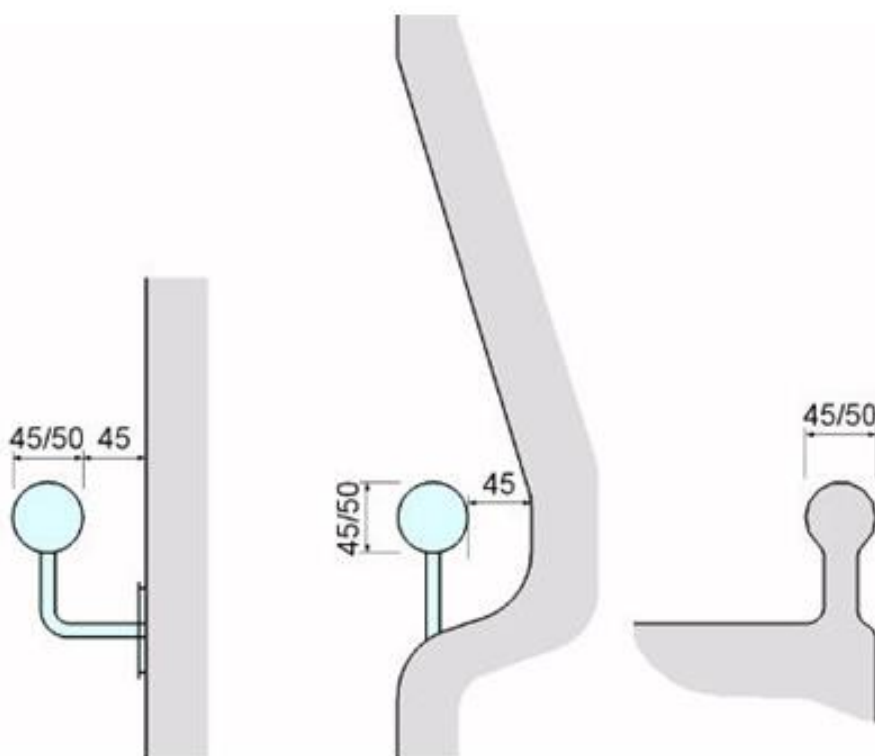
Stairs should be well lit and the lighting located to avoid either glare or people negotiating the stairs in their own shadow .

4/H HANDRAILS

Handrails provide support to people climbing or descending a change of level . As people may be left or right handed , handrails should be provided to both sides of a stair or ramp .

Rails should be at a height of 900mm above stairs or ramps and 1100mm above landings . They should extend horizontally 300mm beyond the top and bottom nosings of stairs or top and bottom of ramps . Rail ends should return into the adjacent wall, return to join the next flight handrail or turn down so as to avoid a projecting end causing a hazard .

Rails should be easy to grasp, ideally round or rounded 45 to 50mm diameter, with at least 45mm clearance from adjacent walls or obstructions . Brackets to rails should not obstruct grip .



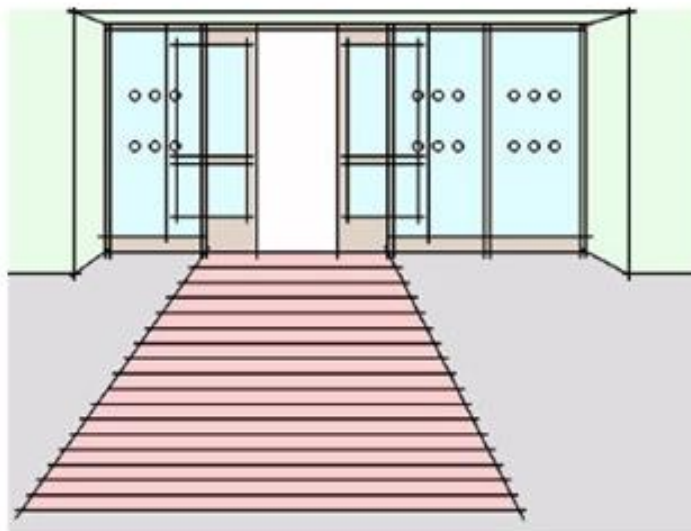
Rails should be coloured to provide a visual contrast with their background . They should be of material which is not cold to the touch and is not slippery to grasp .

Consideration should be given to using bumps or changes of surface texture of a rail to warn of approaching the end.

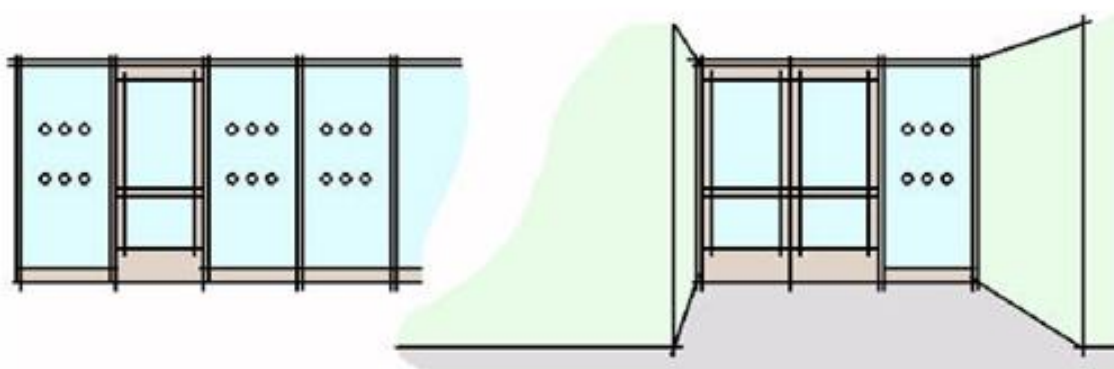
5 - BUILDINGS

5/A ENTRANCES

The entrance to a building should be located in a logical relationship to the routes approaching it . It should be easily distinguishable from the façade of the building by colour or detailing .



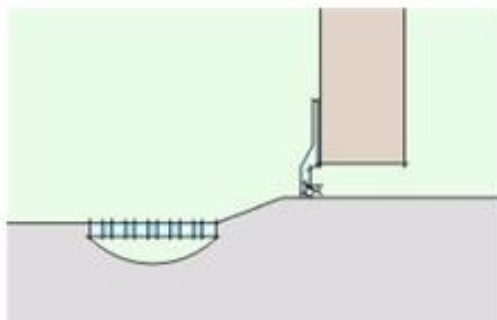
Where the entrance doors are glass they should have contrasting markings at appropriate eye levels for wheelchair users and walking adults . Where the doors are of solid material they should have vision panels from 900mm to 1500mm height .



Ironmongery should be colour contrasted with the door and easy to grip such as large diameter round section D handles . On doors that are not automatic , kick plates 400mm high are recommended . Where doors are not automatic , any door closers fitted should allow opening with minimum pressure and have a hold open time to allow access by slower moving people .

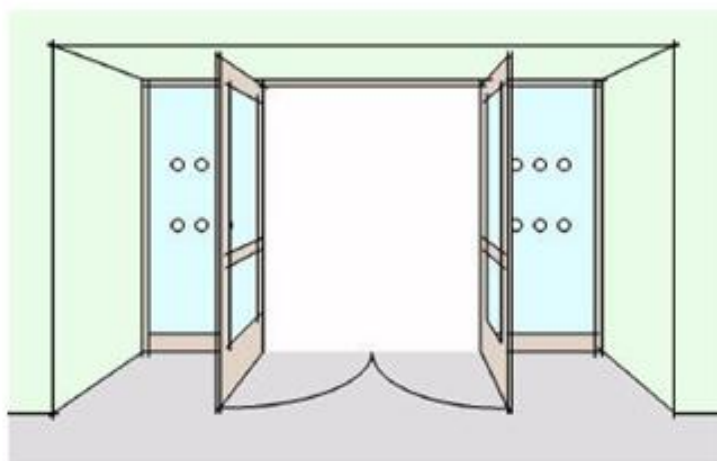
The entrance width should be 900mm clear to allow access by a wheelchair .

Thresholds should be flush .



Automatic sliding doors enable easy access . They should have a timed hold open to allow slow moving people to enter .

Automatic doors which swing can be hazardous to people with impaired sight or who cannot move quickly . Ideally they should be avoided or at least have guarding to minimise the risk of injury .



Revolving doors generally present difficulties to people with restricted movement, impaired sight, those in wheelchairs or using walking aids and those with small children or bulky loads. Even large automatic ones designed to accommodate supermarket trolleys, push chairs and wheelchairs can be intimidating . An adjacent entrance door should therefore be provided

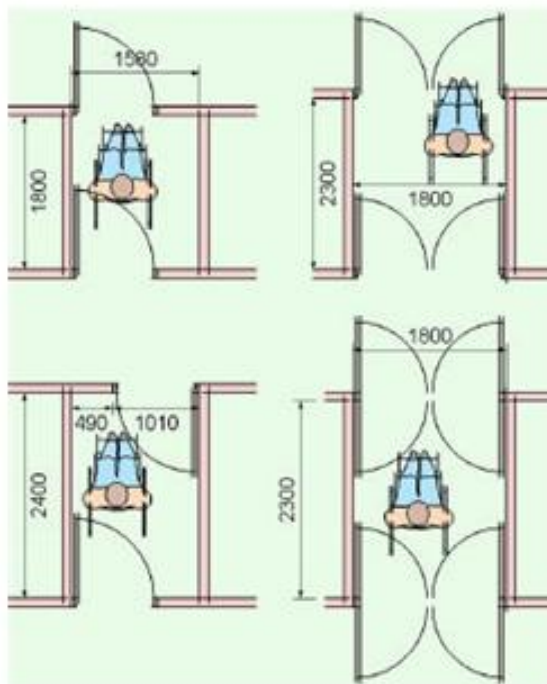


Immediately inside the entrance there should be a lighting transition zone to allow people with sight impairments to adjust to the interior .

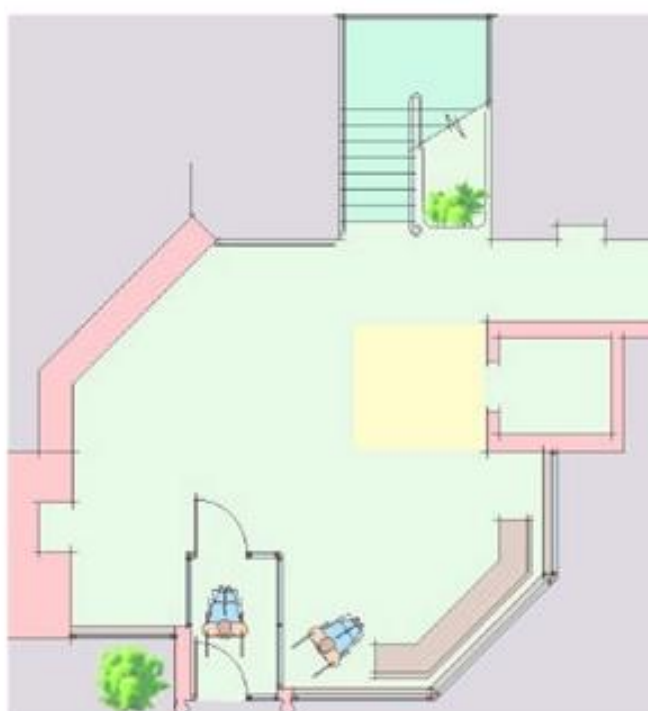
Signage should be obvious and clear to enable people to quickly find where they want to go .

5/B LOBBIES

Lobbies must be of adequate size to allow a wheelchair user to clear the first door before negotiating the second . Entrance lobbies must also allow for traffic in two directions at the same time .

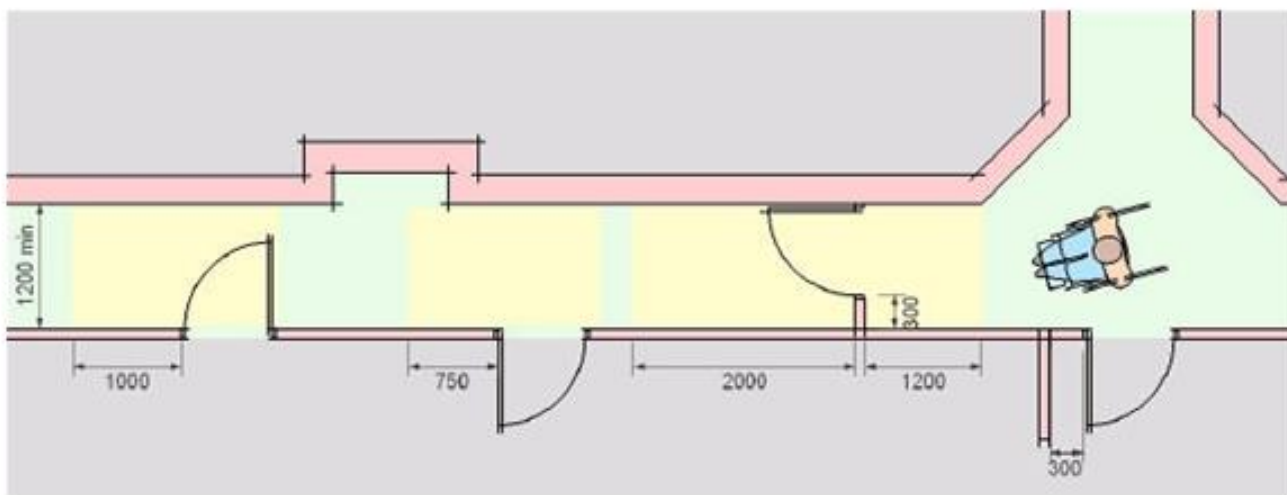


Design of entrance halls or lobbies should make them easy to understand and to use .

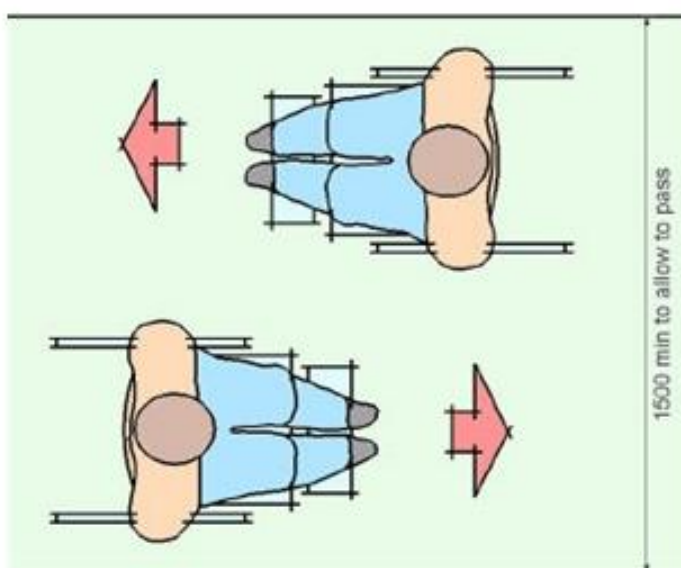


5/C HORIZONTAL CIRCULATION

Corridors are routes connecting spaces within a building . They should be simple, safe and easily understood .

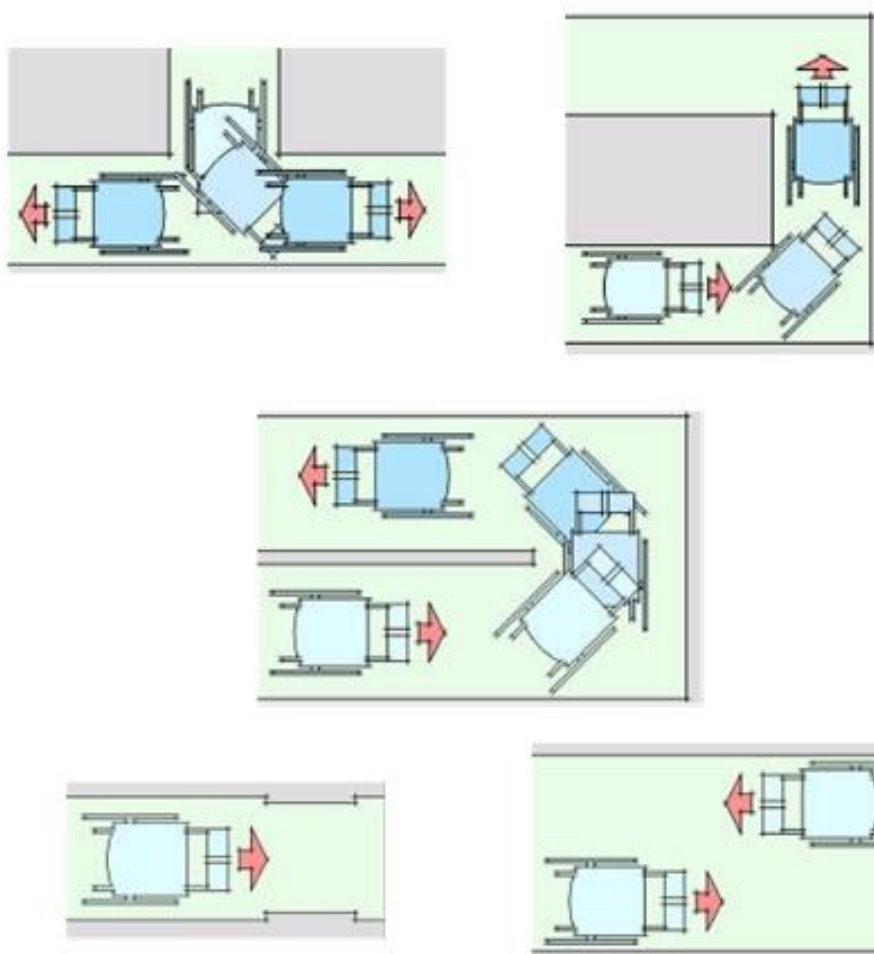


Corridor widths should be unobstructed . Installations such as seating, radiators and fire fighting equipment should be recessed . Projecting door openings should be avoided or, if unavoidable should have guarding and the corridor width adjusted accordingly . A clear minimum width of 1200mm is necessary but at least 1500mm is preferred . Ideally a corridor should 1800mm wide to allow two wheelchairs to pass each other . Corners should be played or rounded .



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Internal lobbies should be adequately sized to allow ease of use by persons in wheelchairs .



Corridors should be as short as possible to assist with orientation and minimise fatigue . Where corridors must be long they should have some landmarking to show where people are and possibly wider areas to allow people to rest .

Longer corridors may require to be divided by fire doors . In this case electro-magnetic hold open devices ensure that people can have free unimpeded access along the corridor . In the event of an alarm closing these doors they must be capable of being easily opened by a wheelchair user requiring egress .

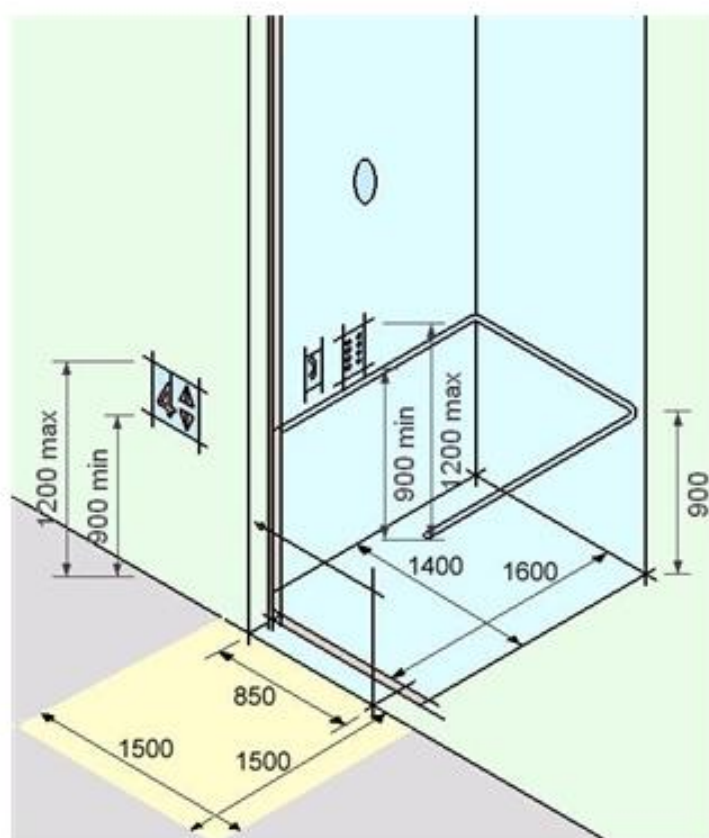
Colour should be used to avoid excessively monochrome environments which can be disorientating . Colour coding can also be used to identify routes or features . Lighting should be designed to avoid glare or silhouetting . Surfaces should be non-reflective and should minimise sound reverberation.

5/D VERTICAL CIRCULATION

People have a right to access all levels of a building . The easiest method of travelling from one level to another is usually by a lift . Stairs may be an impediment to some people . Stair climbers and platform lifts fall somewhere between these options .

- Lifts -

A 13 person lift with a car of 1600 x 1400mm is the preferred minimum size . Building regulations may permit an 8 person lift but the 13 person car will allow two wheelchair users to use it at the same time .



A lift requires a 1500 x 1500mm clear area in front of the entrance which should be delineated by contrasting colours and a tactile surface .

The entrance to the lift should be at least 850mm wide and the doors themselves should be of contrasting colour to the surrounding walls . The doors should remain open for an adequate length of time to allow slow moving people to pass through .

A handrail round three sides of the car , 900mm above the floor , will assist people to steady themselves during the lift operation and people who may find turning in enclosed spaces difficult .

- Controls -

The lift call control should be between 900 and 1200mm above the floor and easily distinguishable from its background. There should be clear signs indicating the floor level adjacent the call button and also on the wall opposite the lift doors. All buttons should be large enough for ease of use by people with restricted movement.

Within the lift car the controls should be on a side wall, at least 400mm in from the front wall of the car and between 900 and 1200mm above the floor. Buttons should be large and should include braille notices. There should be an audible notification of which floor has been reached and when the doors are about to open or close.

Where an emergency telephone is included it should have an inductive coupler to assist hearing aid users. Where an alarm button is fitted it should have a visual confirmation that it has been set off.

- Stairclimbers -

A stairclimber will give access up a flight of stairs but its use is limited and not recommended for general purpose. It may not be suitable for people who have difficulty transferring from a wheelchair and those people would need another chair at the top or assistance getting their own chair up the stairs.

The effect of a stairclimber on the use of the stair by others must be considered. For example the rails or the stationary climber could create a trip hazard or obstruction. In addition a person with restricted mobility or impaired sight might experience difficulty meeting a travelling stairclimber.

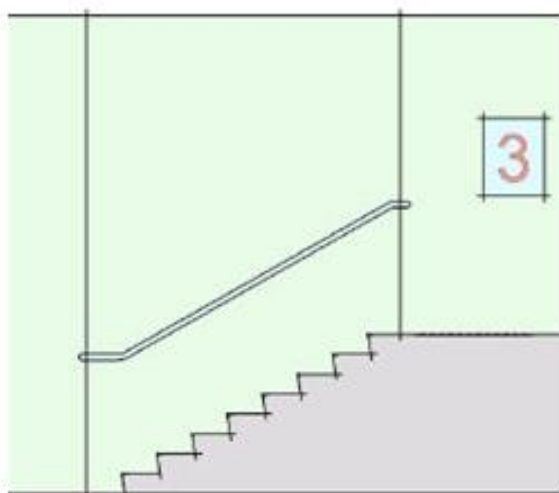
- Platform Lifts -

A wheelchair platform stair lift or a short rise platform lift will allow wheelchair users easier access.

In these cases a clear area at each level for wheelchair turning and access to the installation is needed. The principals regarding ease of use of the controls in a lift also apply to these.

- Stairs -

The principals applying to stairs described in 4/G above apply also to internal stairs .
In addition clear signs indicating floor levels should be placed at each end of flights .



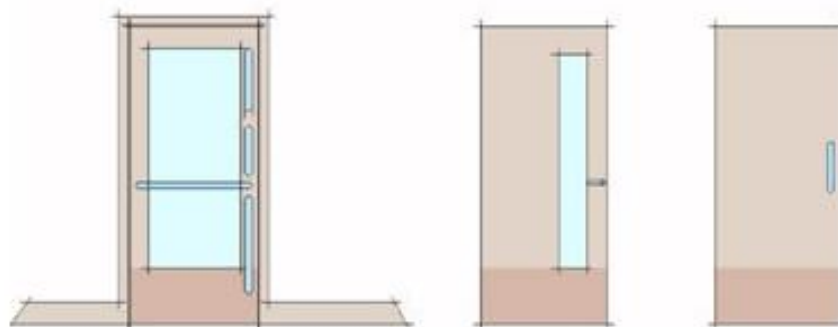
5/E DOORS

Doors are the means of gaining access to or leaving a space . Poorly designed doors create barriers .

Doors should be in contrasting colours to stand out from their surroundings . The edge of the door should be of a colour contrasting with the faces .

Doors should have clearly understandable signs to indicate what room they serve and to assist people finding their way round a building .

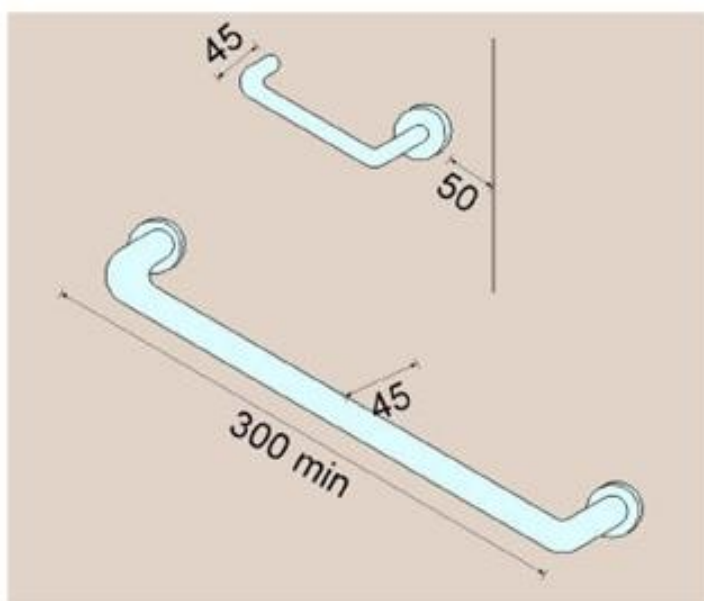
Where practicable doors should have vision panels to allow people at different heights to see someone approaching from the other side . Glass doors should have visual devices at eye level to make them stand out to people with impaired sight .



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Door handles should be easy to grip and use . Lever handles are preferred to knobs and 20mm diameter round sections with returns to assist gripping are recommended.

Handles and latches should not be heavily sprung requiring effort to use . Pull handles should be 35mm diameter round section 45mm clear of the door . Door closers should have spring settings requiring the minimum pressure to open the door and should close the door slowly .

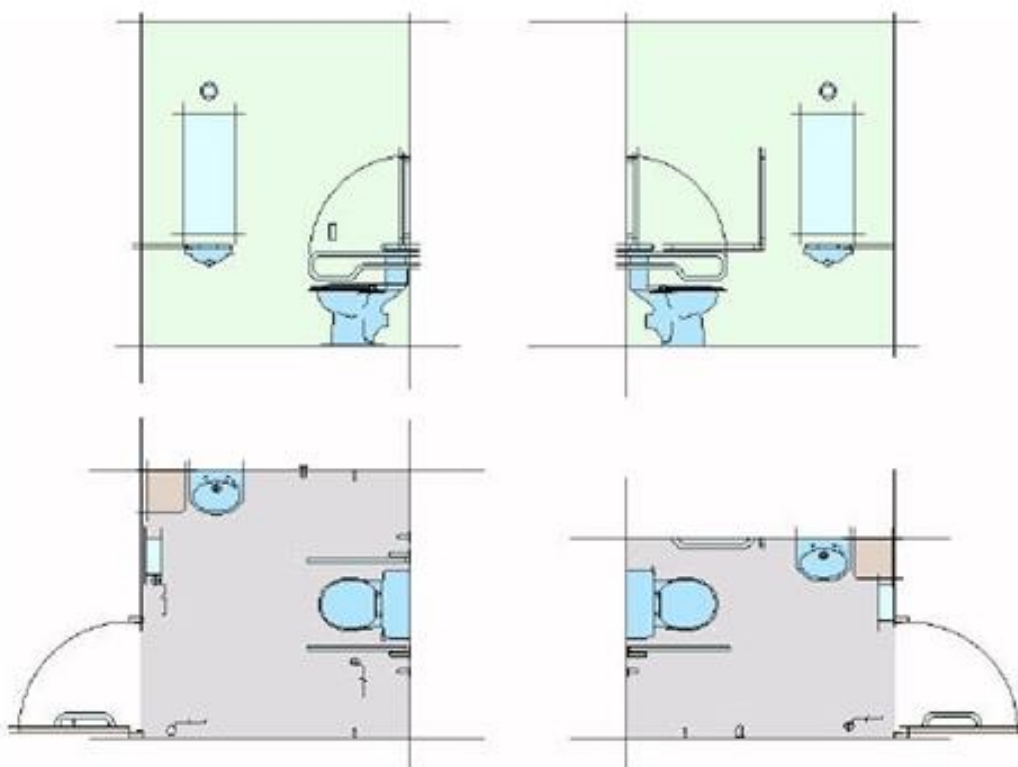


Door handles and push plates should be in contrasting colours to the door.

5/F TOILETS

Toilets suitable for use by people with disabilities must be provided on any floor of a building where other toilets are provided . The disabled toilets should be unisex to allow a spouse or partner to assist a person using them .

Toilets for disabled use must conform to the relevant building standards but the preferred size is a minimum 2000 x 2000mm with a peninsular arrangement of w.c. in the middle of one wall . This does not allow handwashing from the w.c. but has the advantage of allowing a person to transfer from a wheelchair to the w.c. from either side . If the toilet is to include additional facilities such as baby changing it will need to be larger to ensure adequate manoeuvring space is maintained .



The entrance door to the w.c. must have a clear opening of 1000mm and should open outwards . A horizontal handrail should be fitted inside to assist a wheel chair user in closing the door . Sliding doors should be avoided as they can be difficult to operate .

The disabled toilet must be clearly signed, both at the door and if necessary with direction signs from elsewhere in the building .

The ironmongery , handrails , handles , taps etc. and the sanitaryware should contrast in colour from their surroundings .

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Wall tiles should be matt finish to avoid excessive glare and visually confusing patterns of tile should be avoided .

The basin should be at a height of 750mm and project no more than 250mm from the wall . Taps may be either hot and cold but a mixer tap is preferable . In any case there should be either a thermostatic control to prevent any risk of scalding .

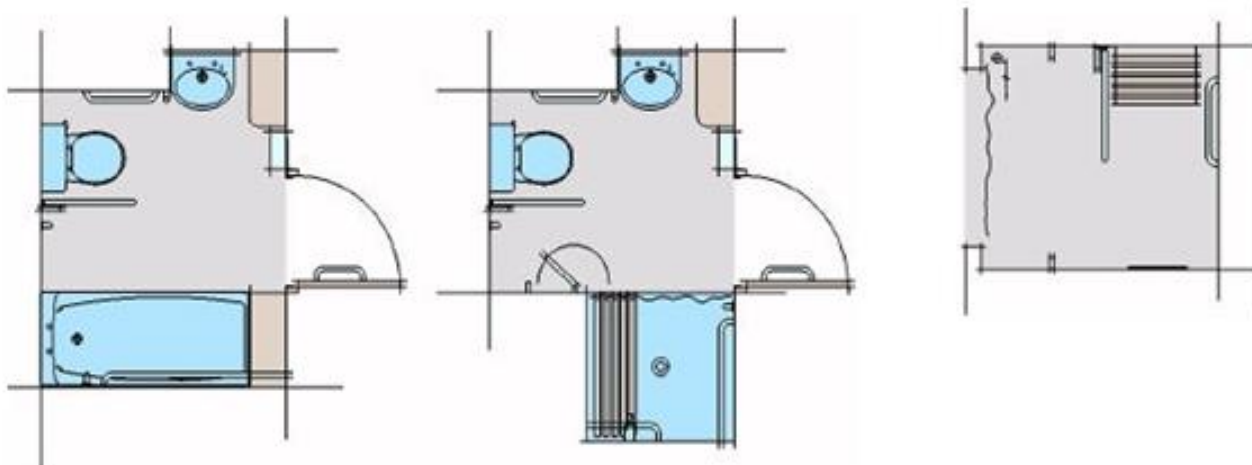
There should be a paper towel dispenser or electric hand drier reachable from the basin at a height of 1200mm above the floor .

The w. c. should be at a height of 450mm above the floor . If a peninsular arrangement it should have hinged handrails to both sides . The transfer space each side of the w.c. should be clear of obstructions including waste pipes , bins etc .

The toilet should include coat hooks and hooks suitable for a folded wheelchair .

There must be an alarm system operated by a pull cord which hangs to within 150mm of the floor . The light switch may also be a pull cord in which case it should be located separately . If the light is operated by a switch this should be at a height of 1000mm .

The design principles of toilets also apply to bathrooms and showers .

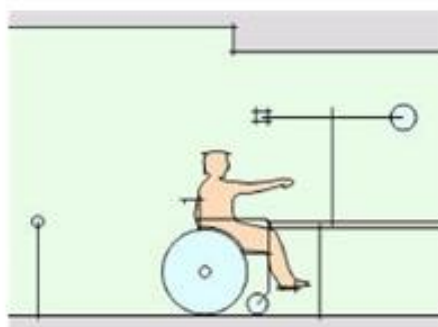


5/G FIXTURES AND FITTINGS

Fixtures and fittings should be located so as to avoid creating obstructions or hazards . They should be recessed while being accessible and should be clearly signed or indicated . Head height obstacles are to be avoided .

Seating should be designed to be stable, to assist people getting up from it, and provided in a range of heights . Where seating is provided in a recess they should have clear space to allow a wheelchair user to sit next to it .

Counters and serveries should include at least part of their length at a suitable height for wheelchair users . This would be 750 to 800mm high with a clear area below the counter , 400mm deep , to allow a wheelchair to approach . Induction loops should be fitted at counters and appropriately signed .



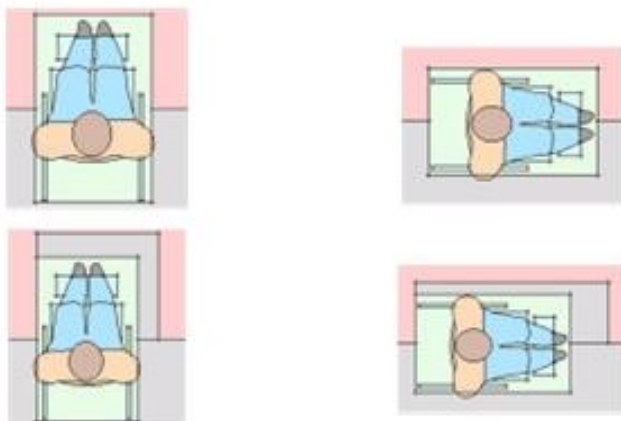
Telephones should be fitted at a suitable height for use from a wheelchair , 1400mm for top button and 1200mm for card slot . The visual display panel should be easily read .

Where a number of telephones are installed they should be at varying heights .

Induction loops should be fitted to all telephones .

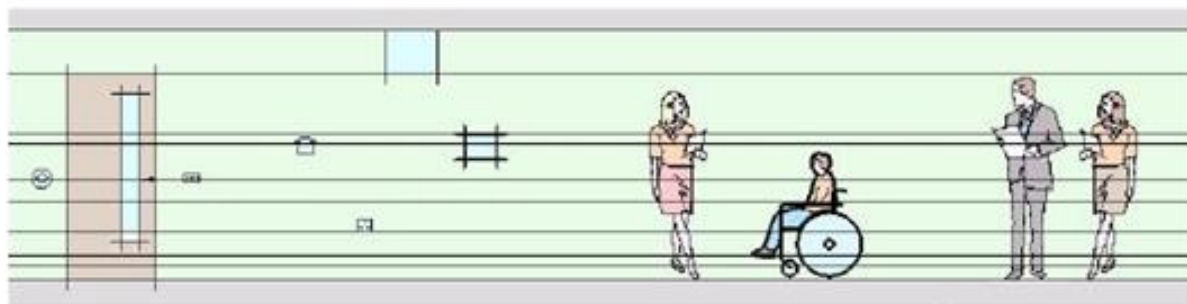
A fold down seat at 650 to 700mm height , shelves for baggage and change and support handrails each side of a telephone are all desirable features .

The telephone should be readily approachable for wheelchair users .



Cash dispensers are particularly useful to people who may find some banks inaccessible . The machines should have a clear approach area of 1500 x 1500mm and should be sited at a maximum height of 1250mm to the card slot . Buttons, display screen messages and instructions should all be clear and easy to understand.

In principle all signs, alarms, doorbells, phones, switches, handles or other fixtures should be located so that they are easily understood, accessible and easy to use while not causing obstruction or confusion .



5/H FIRE PRECAUTIONS

How to leave a building in the event of an emergency can be of particular concern to people with restricted mobility or impairments . This is not purely an issue for the management of the building as assistance can be designed in and obstacles designed out .

Audible fire alarms should be supplemented by visual alarms . These flashing lights must be located where they will readily be seen which is not always the same place as a sounder would be located . As some people can be adversely affected by flashing lights consideration should be given to the issue of vibrating alarm pagers where necessary .

The plan of a building should have clear escape routes but people with special needs may require more and clearer signs .

5/I LIGHTING

Good levels of lighting are necessary to allow people to find their way around and make the safest and best use of their environment .

Particular attention should be paid to lighting potentially difficult or hazardous areas internally and externally such as stairs, ramps, road crossings, entrances and fire escapes .

Lighting should be controllable to allow for varying levels of natural light . It should be designed to avoid glare, silhouetting, pools of light and dark, or creating unexpected effects which can be disorientating .

Fluorescent tube lighting can create an electro-magnetic disturbance which causes a hum in hearing aids .

Lighting can be used to accentuate features and textures in a building and highlight colours so it can assist in forming landmarks to help people find their way around .

More detailed advice on appropriate lighting levels and also on colour contrasts and schemes can be obtained from Fife Society For The Blind, Fife Sensory Impairment Centre , Wilson Avenue , Kirkcaldy , tel. 01592 412666 .

5/K HEARING

To assist people with impaired hearing, induction loops should be fitted at any location where information or services are provided verbally . Amongst others, this will include reception counters, ticket offices, meeting and interview rooms, auditoria etc.

It should be noted that in some cases induction loop signals can be picked up by hearing aids in adjacent rooms or areas . In such cases it may be appropriate to install infra-red systems These require special headsets so are more suitable for locations such as cinemas where they can be borrowed from a central source for the occasion .

Consideration should be given to supplementing audible announcements of information over public address systems by visual means . In addition entry phone systems should have an led or similar readable display .

Audible alarms or hazard warnings should be supplemented by flashing lights as noted in 5/H above .

Sources of background noise should be isolated or insulated to prevent their affecting areas where people need to hear what is going on .

5/L MANAGEMENT

The management of a building or facility will affect how accessible it is .

A good maintenance and housekeeping regime will ensure that features of the property like doors, lifts, alarms etc. function as they are intended .

Circulation areas should be kept tidy and free from obstructions like deliveries or storage . In winter external circulation areas may also need to be kept ice free .

Lighting levels should be maintained by prompt replacement of bulbs or lamps where required.

Access Policy and Standards

Signage systems and colour coding direction indicators can be obscured or confused by indiscriminate addition of other signs or by redecoration .

The presence of installations or features that are intended to be of particular assistance, such as induction loops, should be advertised .

Dedicated parking bays should be monitored to prevent abuse .

The management and staff of a building or facility should have an awareness of the possible varying needs of users or visitors and understand how the way the building is run can make it more accessible .

