

Accessible design for the built environment – Implementation handbook



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Contents

Technical Committee on Accessibility 8

Preface 12

0 Introduction 14

1 Scope 16

1.1 Purpose 16

1.2 Application 16

1.3 Dimensions 16

1.4 Commentary and figures 17

1.5 Annexes 17

1.6 Terminology 17

1.7 Large print 18

2 Reference publications 18

3 Definitions 20

4 General requirements 26

4.1 Area allowances 26

4.2 Operating controls 29

4.2.1 Scope 29

4.2.2 Floor area 30

4.2.3 Height 30

4.2.4 Operation 31

4.2.5 Control devices 32

4.2.6 Visual displays 32

4.2.7 Illumination 32

4.2.8 Colour contrast 33

4.3 Floor or ground surfaces 33

4.3.1 General 33

4.3.2 Changes in level 34

4.3.3 Carpets 36

4.3.4 Gratings 36

4.3.5	Tactile walking indicator surfaces	36
4.4	Headroom and protruding objects	54
4.4.1	Headroom	54
4.4.2	Protruding objects	54
4.5	Signage	58
4.5.1	Location	58
4.5.2	Configuration of signs	59
4.5.3	Characters	59
4.5.4	Pictograms and symbols	61
4.5.5	Illumination	61
4.5.6	Tactile signs	61
4.5.7	Symbol of accessibility	63
4.6	Additional considerations	63
4.6.1	General	63
4.6.2	Functional and cognitive barriers	63
4.6.3	Environmental sensitivities	63
4.6.4	Acoustics	64
5	Interior circulation	68
5.1	Accessible routes	68
5.1.1	Width	68
5.1.2	Slope	68
5.1.3	Lineup guides	72
5.1.4	Safety	73
5.2	Doors and doorways	74
5.2.1	Opening width	74
5.2.2	Manoeuvring area at doors	75
5.2.3	Multiple-leaf doorways	81
5.2.4	Revolving doors	82
5.2.5	Two doors in series	82
5.2.6	Thresholds	83
5.2.7	Door hardware	84
5.2.8	Door-opening force	86
5.2.9	Power-assisted doors	86
5.2.10	Glazed panels	89
5.2.11	Doors in primary horizontal circulation routes	90

5.2.12	Turnstiles and access gates	90
5.3	Handrails	91
5.3.1	Handrail grip	91
5.3.2	Recessed handrail	92
5.4	Stairs	95
5.4.1	Treads and risers	95
5.4.2	Nosing	96
5.4.3	Tactile attention indicator surfaces at stairs	97
5.4.4	Stair handrails	99
5.5	Ramps	103
5.5.1	Running slope and length	103
5.5.2	Cross slope	104
5.5.3	Width	104
5.5.4	Landings	104
5.5.5	Surfaces	108
5.5.6	Edge protection	109
5.5.7	Illumination	111
5.5.8	Ramp handrails	111
5.6	Elevating devices	112
5.6.1	Elevators	112
5.6.2	Platform lifts	113
5.6.3	Escalators	113
5.6.4	Moving walkways	113
5.7	Emergency	115
5.7.1	Visible alarms	115
5.7.2	Areas of refuge	116
5.7.3	Evacuation plans	120
5.7.4	Access to secure areas	120
6	Interior facilities	122
6.1	Drinking fountains	122
6.1.1	Spouts	122
6.1.2	Controls	123
6.1.3	Floor area	123
6.1.4	Colour contrast	123
6.1.5	Cantilevered fountains	123

6.2	Washroom facilities	127
6.2.1	Identification	127
6.2.2	Floor area	127
6.2.3	Lavatories	129
6.2.4	Washroom accessories	131
6.2.5	Grab bars	133
6.2.6	Toilets	134
6.2.7	Toilet stalls	137
6.2.8	Urinals	141
6.3	Universal washrooms	144
6.3.1	General	144
6.3.2	Washroom door	145
6.3.3	Washroom accessories	145
6.3.4	Adult change table	146
6.4	Change benches	149
6.4.1	General	149
6.4.2	Transfer space	150
6.5	Bathing facilities	150
6.5.1	Water temperature	150
6.5.2	Showerheads	151
6.5.3	Enclosures	151
6.5.4	Shower floors	151
6.5.5	Roll-in shower stalls	152
6.5.6	Bathtubs	154
6.6	Communications	157
6.6.1	Assistive listening systems	157
6.6.2	Public telephones	158
6.7	Seating	165
6.7.1	Spaces at tables and counters	165
6.7.2	Rest area seating	167
6.7.3	Viewing spaces in assembly areas	168
6.8	Dressing rooms, fitting rooms, and locker rooms	174
7	Residential accommodation — Permanent and short-term	175
7.1	General	175

7.2	Design requirements	176
7.2.1	Common use spaces	176
7.2.2	Dwelling units	177
7.3	Visitable dwelling units	177
7.3.1	Exterior circulation	177
7.3.2	Entrance door	178
7.3.3	Interior circulation	178
7.3.4	Washroom	178
7.4	Accessible dwelling units	179
7.4.1	Circulation	179
7.4.2	Interior circulation	183
7.4.3	Bathrooms	183
7.4.4	Kitchens	188
7.4.5	Bedrooms	196
7.4.6	General features of dwellings	197
7.4.7	Outdoor living areas	199
8	Exterior circulation, spaces, and amenities	200
8.1	Scope	200
8.2	Accessible routes	200
8.2.1	General	200
8.2.2	Width	201
8.2.3	Slope	202
8.2.4	Drainage	202
8.2.5	Edge protection	202
8.2.6	Shared-use routes	203
8.2.7	Exterior ramps	204
8.2.8	Exterior stairs	205
8.2.9	Illumination for pedestrian routes	206
8.3	Pedestrian crossings	206
8.3.1	General	206
8.3.2	Pedestrian crossing variations	207
8.3.3	Curb ramps and blended transitions	207
8.3.4	Crosswalks	214
8.3.5	Alignment of pedestrian crossing components	215
8.3.6	Medians and pedestrian refuge areas	217

- 8.3.7 Pedestrian crossing signals 219
- 8.3.8 Speed bumps 220
- 8.3.9 Bollards 220
- 8.3.10 Overpasses and underpasses 220
- 8.4 Intersection design 221
 - 8.4.1 General 221
 - 8.4.2 Types of intersections 222
 - 8.4.3 Intersection design features 226
- 8.5 Transit stops 227
 - 8.5.1 General 227
 - 8.5.2 Identification 227
 - 8.5.3 Boarding or alighting areas 228
 - 8.5.4 Transit shelters 229
- 8.6 Urban furniture and equipment 230
 - 8.6.1 General 230
 - 8.6.2 Amenity zone 230
 - 8.6.3 Rest areas 231
 - 8.6.4 Public telephones 233
 - 8.6.5 Drinking fountains 233
 - 8.6.6 Permanent washrooms 233
 - 8.6.7 Information kiosks 233
 - 8.6.8 Exterior signage 234
 - 8.6.9 Bicycle parking 234
 - 8.6.10 Parking meters, newspaper dispensers, or mail or courier boxes 234
 - 8.6.11 Waste receptacles, recycling bins, or ashtrays 235
 - 8.6.12 Reflecting pools 235
 - 8.6.13 Miscellaneous items 235
- 8.7 Landscaping elements 236
 - 8.7.1 Flower or shrub planters 236
 - 8.7.2 Planting bed edges 236
 - 8.7.3 Vegetation 236
 - 8.7.4 Guy wires 237
 - 8.7.5 Grates around trees 237
 - 8.7.6 Tree guards 237
- 8.8 Temporary facilities 238

- 8.8.1 Construction along an accessible route 238
 - 8.8.2 Scaffolding 238
 - 8.8.3 Temporary outdoor toilets 238
 - 9 Vehicular access 239**
 - 9.1 General 239
 - 9.2 Pedestrian routes 239
 - 9.3 Passenger pick-up areas 240**
 - 9.3.1 Access aisle 240
 - 9.3.2 Height clearance 240
 - 9.4 Designated accessible parking 242
 - 9.4.1 Area allowances 242
 - 9.4.2 Height allowances 245
 - 9.4.3 Surface 246
 - 9.4.4 Signage for designated accessible parking 246
 - 9.5 Designated accessible parking spaces for limited mobility users 247
 - 9.6 Ticketing dispensers or payment machines 249
-

- Annex A (informative) — Anthropometrics of mobility aid users 251
- Annex B (informative) — Potential for slip of floor and tread finishes 270
- Annex C (informative) — References for residential accommodation 275
- Annex D (informative) — Trails and beach access routes 276
- Annex E (informative) — References for accessible outdoor recreational environments 283
- Annex F (informative) — Additional national and international resources 286

△ Preface

This is the first edition of CSA B651HB, Accessible design for the built environment — Implementation handbook.

This Handbook was developed as a complementary guide to the fifth edition of CSA B651, Accessible design for the built environment, and contains explanatory, informative commentary on the requirements of the Standard. The Standard sets forth requirements for making buildings and other facilities accessible to persons with a range of physical, sensory, or cognitive disabilities, including but not limited to mobility impairments, reaching or manipulation disabilities, hearing impairments, and visual impairments. CSA B651 was developed by the Technical Committee on Accessible Design and the contents of the Standard have been reformatted into this Handbook.

This Handbook is structured as follows:

- Normative clauses are directly reproduced from the CSA B651 Standard. These are requirements that organizations might need to comply with in order to demonstrate conformance with the CSA B651 Standard.
- The informative guidance material to assist users in meeting the normative requirements is provided below the clauses in the text boxes.

The Technical Committee on Accessibility has also produced two related Standards, CSA B651.1, Accessible design for automated banking machines and CAN/CSA-B651.2, Accessible design for self-service interactive devices.

The Technical Committee has also developed other Standards, including

- CSA B480, Customer service standard for people with disabilities;
- CSA B659, Inclusive design for an aging population; and
- the ISO adoption, CAN/CSA-ISO IWA 18, Framework for integrated community-based life-long health and care services in aged societies.

- Δ This Handbook was prepared by the Technical Committee on Accessibility, under the jurisdiction of the Strategic Steering Committee on Health and Well-Being, and has been approved by the Technical Committee.

How to use this Handbook

This Handbook is intended to be used in its entirety and contains both mandatory and informative requirements. This Handbook was developed to include commentary to help organizations and individuals understand how to apply the principles of universal design to achieve accessible environments that can be accessed, understood, and used to the greatest extent possible by all people regardless of their age, size, ability, or disability.

The Canadian Standard, CSA B651-18, Accessible design for the built environment, is the regulatory Standard and is available in English (and will be available in French) at <https://store.csagroup.org>.

B651HB-18

Accessible design for the built environment — Implementation handbook

0 Introduction

This Standard contains requirements for making buildings and other facilities accessible to persons with a range of physical, sensory, or cognitive disabilities including but not limited to mobility impairments, reaching or manipulation disabilities, hearing impairments, visual impairments, etc. It was developed to fulfill an expressed need for a national technical standard that covers accessibility issues in many different types of buildings and environmental facilities, and can be referenced in whole or in part by a variety of adopting agencies or jurisdictions.

The technical requirements in this Standard cover design aspects of physical spaces and the elements within them to help ensure that they are accessible to people having different abilities and disabilities. The Standard does not specify the extent to which these requirements have to be applied, as this is the responsibility of the authorities having jurisdiction, whether federal, provincial/territorial, or municipal. The 2015 edition of the National Building Code of Canada (NBC) has referenced certain clauses of CSA B651 as providing an acceptable alternative to the accessible design requirements in the NBC. The Standard is also referenced in other regulations and guidelines. The user is advised to contact the local authority having jurisdiction in this field to determine to what extent this edition of the Standard is referenced.

The CSA Technical Committee that developed this Standard recognizes that it operates within a broader context of social and regulatory initiatives. The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2006 and ratified by Canada on March 11, 2010. This ground-breaking, legally binding UN Convention promotes, protects, and ensures that persons with disabilities

have the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights — a major step towards equalizing their opportunities and participation in society.

This Standard also supports the principles of universal design (UD) as it applies to the built environment, i.e., designing environments so that they can be accessed, understood, and used to the greatest extent possible by all people regardless of their age, size, ability, or disability.

Commentary:

At the Center for Universal Design (CUD) a group of architects, product designers, engineers, and environmental design researchers established seven principles of UD to provide guidance in the design of products and environments. The following are the principles of UD:

- 1) Equitable use. The design is useable by people with diverse abilities.
- 2) Flexibility in use — The design accommodates a wide range of individual preferences and abilities.
- 3) Simple and intuitive — Use of the design is easy to understand, regardless of the user's experience, knowledge, language skills, or current concentration level.
- 4) Perceptible information — The design communicates necessary information effectively to the user, regardless of ambient conditions or the user's sensory abilities.
- 5) Tolerance for error — The design minimizes hazards and the adverse consequences of accidental or unintended actions.
- 6) Low physical effort — The design can be used efficiently, comfortably, and with a minimum of fatigue. Doors that open automatically for people with a wide variety of physical characteristics demonstrate the application of this principle.
- 7) Size and space for approach and use — Appropriate size and space is provided for approach, reach, manipulation, and use, regardless of the user's body size, posture, or mobility.

1 Scope

1.1 Purpose

This Standard specifies technical requirements on how to make buildings and the exterior built environment accessible and safely usable by persons with physical, sensory, or cognitive disabilities.

Commentary:

- 1) Temporary buildings and facilities provided for public use should also comply with the technical requirements of this Standard. Such temporary facilities can include teaching spaces, reviewing stands, exhibit areas, bleachers, first-aid facilities, pedestrian passageways around construction sites, as well as temporary accommodations such as shelters.
- 2) Where public access is permitted during construction, renovation, or maintenance of a facility or an exterior environment, the requirements of this Standard should be respected to provide safe and equitable use for everyone.
- 3) Some people with disabilities could have requirements beyond the levels addressed in this Standard.

1.2 Application

This Standard describes technical requirements that can be used in the design and construction of new facilities or exterior environments, or in modifications to existing facilities. This Standard does not address the application of the technical requirements. The extent to which these requirements have to be applied is the responsibility of other authorities having jurisdiction.

1.3 Dimensions

This Standard contains minimum requirements based on adult dimensions. Dimensions are given in SI (metric) units (typically in millimetres) and, where converted from foot/pound (imperial) units, have been rounded off with respect to critical dimensions. All dimensions in figures are given in

millimetres and are measured to the centreline, unless otherwise specified.

Commentary:

- 1) When designing for specific individuals, their particular abilities and preferences should be taken into account. For example, some people prefer to transfer to or from a wheeled mobility device towards their preferred side when using toilet facilities.
- 2) If a facility is primarily to serve children, dimensions and other provisions should be adjusted to make them suitable for children.

1.4 Commentary and figures

Commentary and figures are included for explanatory or illustrative purposes only and are not a mandatory part of the Standard. Figures are not to scale. If there is any difference between the text and figure (where provided), the text shall take precedence.

1.5 Annexes

Annexes [A](#) to [C](#) provide additional information on topics considered in the Standard. Annex [D](#) provides guidance for the design of outdoor trails and beach access routes. Annex [E](#) contains references for accessible outdoor recreational environments, to supplement the information and guidance provided in Annex [D](#).

1.6 Terminology

In this Standard, “shall” is used to express a requirement, i.e., a provision that the user is obliged to satisfy in order to comply with the standard; “should” is used to express a recommendation or that which is advised but not required; and “may” is used to express an option or that which is permissible within the limits of the standard.

Commentary accompanying clauses do not include requirements or alternative requirements; the purpose of a commentary accompanying a clause is to separate from the text explanatory or informative material.