

COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS FOR ACCESS RAMPING

Americans with Disability Act (ADA) compliance requirements only apply to buildings that are in use by the general public, such as restaurants, stores, office buildings, apartment buildings and governmental offices (including polling places).

The ADA provides handicapped individuals with the right to sue for damages in court when compliance has not been achieved.

Private residences are not required by federal law to comply with the ADA. However, if a permanent ramp is to be installed at a private residence the local building code will provide guidelines by which the ramp is to be constructed. Portable or moveable ramps are usually not governed by local building codes.

Here are some of the key clauses contained in the ADA as it relates to Access Ramping

SLOPE: Ramps should not exceed a 1:12 Ratio. This means that for every one inch of rise there needs to be 12 inches of ramp length.

HANDRAILS: If a ramp is addressing more than 6" of rise it must have handrails.

LENGTH: If a ramp exceeds 30 feet in length, it must have an intermediate resting platform.

CURBS: Ramps must have side curbs of 2 inches or more to prevent the wheels of a wheel chair from accidentally slipping over the edge of a ramp.

SURFACE: Ramps and platforms must have a non-slip surface and be of a design preventing the accumulation of water on the ramp surface.

There are two possible exceptions in the ADA regulations

1. Reasonable Accommodation

If for some reason the above clauses can not be met, ADA allows building owners to be in compliance with the ADA if a reasonable accommodation is made for creating accessibility. While this clause is open to interpretation we have found it to mean that if space does not allow for a ramp that complies with the 1" of rise to 12" of ramp length, a steeper ramp slope is acceptable. Generally, portable ramp products can be used to achieve a reasonable accommodation when a permanent ramp would constrict main entrances.

2. Undue Hardship

Modification should not cause undue financial hardship because of a non-achievable situation. This exception keeps the cost of complying with ADA manageable. For example: a small business owner would not have to install an elevator at the entrance of his building if the cost would place an undue hardship on that owner or if reasonable accommodations could be made in other ways (such as using a portable ramp).

Consult an ADA attorney or your local building code compliance officials for local requirements. If you have questions on the ADA, please call us at 800-876-RAMP