

History of Access in America

Compiled by Tom Thornburgh
on 2/26/16 with information
from www.access-board.gov

History of Access in America

- 1965-68: Accessibility Becomes a Major Concern in America due to increasing awareness of barriers.
- September 1965: Congress created the National Commission on Architectural Barriers to Rehabilitation of the Handicapped.

History of Access in America

- The Commission's charge was to: determine to the extent to which architectural barriers prevented access to public facilities, report on what was being done to eliminate barriers, and propose measures to eliminate and prevent barriers.
- The Commission's report, issued in June 1968, laid the groundwork for succeeding legislation.

History of Access in America

- 1968 The Architectural Barriers Act Becomes Law
- Congress began implementing the Commission's recommendations by enacting the Architectural Barriers Act (ABA) on August 12, 1968.
- In passing this law, Congress aimed to make Federal facilities fully accessible to people with disabilities.
- Congress also expected the Federal government's activity in eliminating barriers to set an example for state and local governments and private industry.

Senator E.L. Bartlett of Alaska

- Introduced the ABA in January 1967.
- The ABA requires access to facilities designed, built, altered, or leased with Federal funds.
- One of Senator Bartlett's aides was Hugh Gallagher, a wheelchair user who had experienced firsthand the problem of barriers to accessibility when he was unable to enter the National Gallery of Art without assistance.

History of Access in America

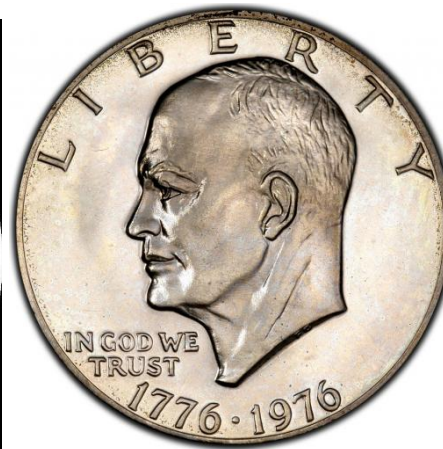
- This law has achieved, at least where federal funds are involved, and it has since been joined by model building codes, state codes and other laws like the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA).
- Several years after the ABA had become law, Congress observed that compliance had been uneven and that no initiatives to create Federal design standards for accessibility were underway.

History of Access in America

- Clearly, one central agency needed to take charge of enforcing the ABA and ensuring development of design standards.
- **1973 The Access Board is Created!**
- The concept of such an agency began to take shape as Congress considered the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 502 of Rehabilitation Act)

History of Access in America

- In 1976 the Board helped the National Park Service design renovations to make major national monuments accessible during the Bicentennial celebration.



History of Access in America

- In 1978 the Board's technical assistance role was expanded to include providing help on the removal of barriers including for the first time, communication barriers in federally-funded buildings and facilities.
- 1982 Board publishes Minimum Guidelines for Accessible Design

History of Access in America

- 1984 the Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards or UFAS Adopted by Standard-Setting Agencies
- The Departments of Defense and Housing and Urban Development, the General Services Administration and the Postal Service in August 1984.
- 1990 The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Expands the Board's Mission

History of Access in America

- The ADA extends to people with disabilities civil rights similar to those available on the basis of race, color, sex, national origin and religion and prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in the private sector and in state and local governments, public accommodations and services, including transportation, provided by public and private entities.

History of Access in America

- The act also provides for telecommunication services for people with hearing or speech impairments. (Hawaii Relay Station-CNMI)



History of Access in America

- The ADA expanded the Board's mandate to include:
 - developing the accessibility guidelines for facilities and transit vehicles covered by the law;
 - providing technical assistance and training on these guidelines; and
 - conducting research to support and maintain the guidelines.
- In anticipation of this legislation, the Access Board installed a toll-free technical assistance phone line to be operational on the day the ADA became law. (July 26th, 1990: White House Lawn)

History of Access in America

- 1991 Board Publishes the ADA Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG)
- The Board began immediately to develop accessibility guidelines under the ADA and published its final guidelines on the first anniversary of the ADA's signing, July 26, 1991.

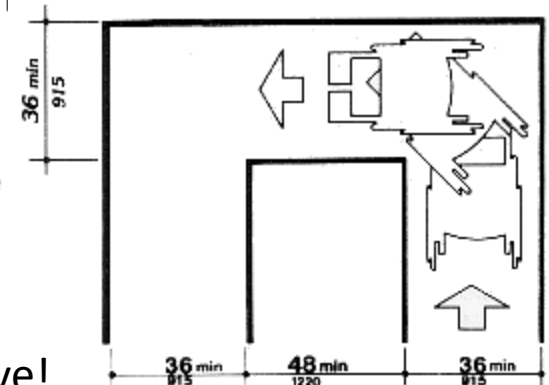
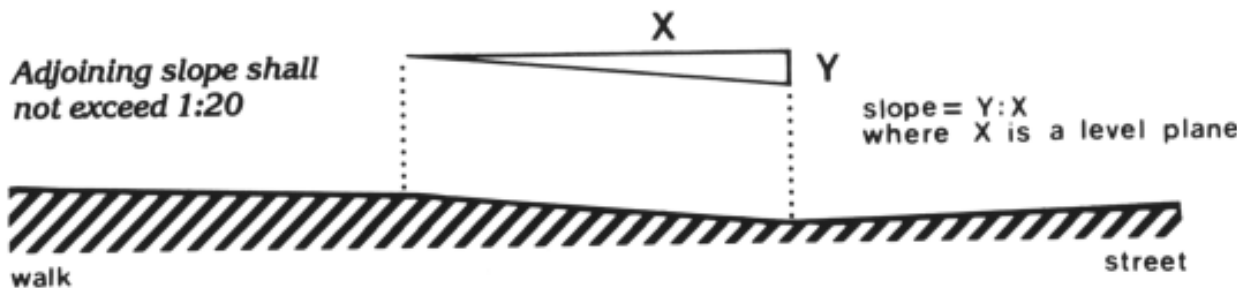
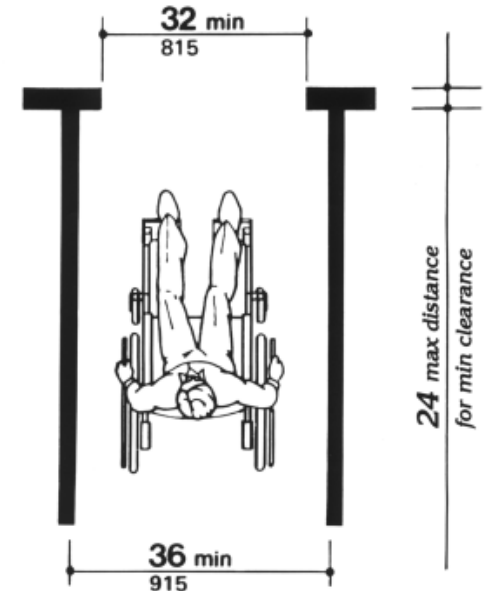
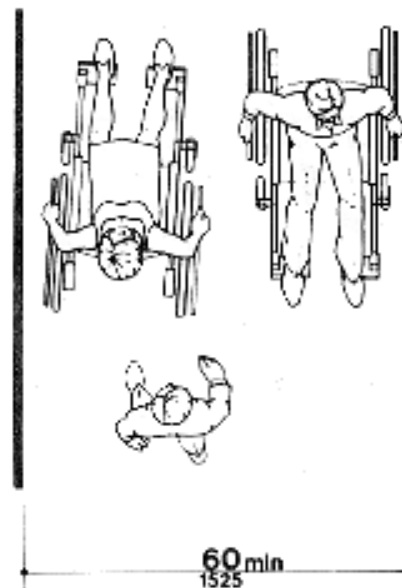
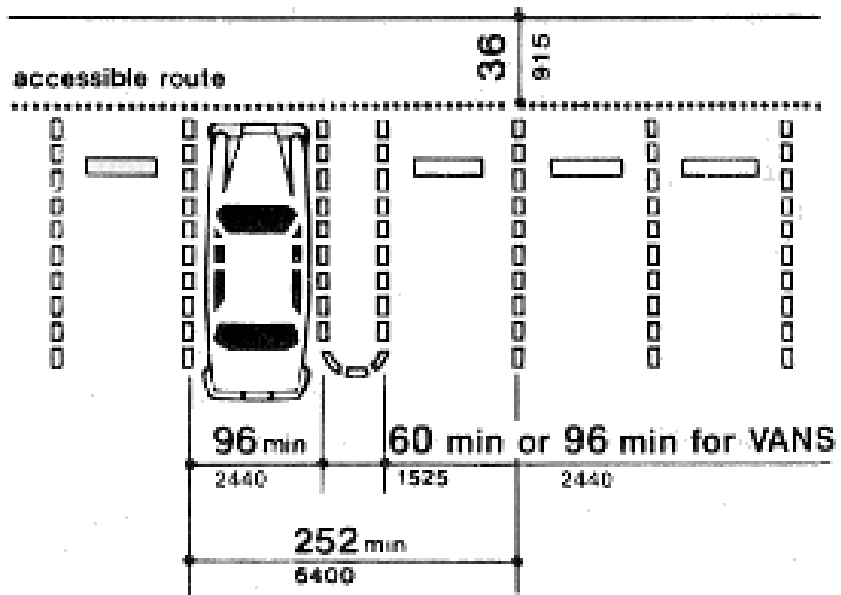
History of Access in America

- On the same day, the Department of Justice adopted ADAAG as the standard for the construction and alteration of places of public accommodation and commercial facilities.

March 2012 – The big switch from using ADAAG 1991 to ADAAG 2010 standards occurred!!!

History of Access in America

- <http://access-board.gov/ADAAG>



*NMPASI can do ADAAG Assessments, but are not exhaustive!

Questions & Answers

NMPASI Contact Information:

Telephone: (670) 235-7273/4

TTY & Fax: (670) 235-7275

Online: www.nmpasi.org