

Accessibility Standards And Universal Design

Accessibility definition:

Accessibility means that a person using a mobility assistive device, an orthotic or a prosthetic, a visually impaired person, a deaf person, or a hard of hearing person is, without assistance, able to approach, enter, and make use of an area, a building, and its facilities, or any of them.

Universal design definition:

Universal design is the design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design.

Principles of Universal Design:

1. **Equitable Use:** The design does not disadvantage or stigmatize any group of users.
2. **Flexibility in Use:** The design accommodates a wide range of individual preferences and abilities.
3. **Simple, Intuitive Use:** 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 and comfortably, and with a minimum of fatigue.
7. **Size and Space for Approach & Use:** Appropriate size and space is provided for approach, reach, manipulation, and use, regardless of the user's body size, posture, or mobility.

There are many resources in the United States and abroad for information on accessibility. The following organizations offer publications and/or technical assistance on accessibility. Some of these organizations base their standards on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). While the Americans with Disabilities Act is a U.S. law, accessibility standards produced under this law are suitable for use by any organization seeking to ensure the accessibility of their facilities.

Resources:

Access Board

1331 F Street NW, Suite 1000

Washington, DC 20004-1111 USA

Tel: (800) USA-ABLE (872-2253) or (202) 272-5434 (for technical assistance)

TTY: (800) 993-2822 or 202-272-0082

Fax: (202) 272-0081

E-mail: info@access-board.gov (general information) or ta@access-board.gov (technical assistance questions)

Web: www.access-board.gov

Access Board is a federal agency that develops minimum guidelines and requirements for standards issued under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Architectural Barriers Act (ABA). It provides technical assistance on those guidelines and standards, including the accessibility of buildings,

transportation vehicles and telecommunications. It also provides enforcement of the Architectural Barriers Act, investigating complaints under the ABA. Access Board does not enforce the ADA, which is generally the responsibility of the Department of Justice. Access Board produces a number of publications, including *Access Currents*, a newsletter, and *ADA Accessibility Guidelines*, which provides detailed information on accessibility standards (This publication is also on its website at: www.access-board.gov/adaag/html/adaag.htm).

NOTE: Technical assistance questions sent by fax or e-mail should include a telephone number, and a good time to call if possible in order that the agency can provide interactive technical assistance.

Adaptive Environments Center

374 Congress Street, Suite 301

Boston, MA 02210 USA

Tel/TTY: (617) 695-1225

Fax: (617) 482-8099

E-mail: adaptive@adaptiveenvironments.org

Web: <http://www.adaptenv.org/>

Adaptive Environments Center provides information and technical assistance regarding architectural accessibility and universal design standards. Their website includes links to other resources related to universal design.

American National Standards Institute (ANSI)

25 West 43rd Street (between 5th and 6th Avenues), 4th floor

New York, NY 10036 USA

Tel: (212) 642-4900

Fax: (212) 389-0023

E-mail: info@ansi.org

Web: www.ansi.org

American National Standards Institute (ANSI) provides information on accessibility standards related to architecture.

Centre for Accessible Environments (CAE)

Nutmeg House

60 Gainsford Street

London SE1 2NY UNITED KINGDOM

Tel: (44-020) 7357-8182

Fax: (44-020) 7357-8183

E-mail: info@cae.org.uk

Web: www.cae.org.uk

Centre for Accessible Environments (CAE) is a technical information, training and consultancy resource committed to the provision of buildings and spaces that are accessible to all users, and to the enhancement of quality in design.

Center for Inclusive Design and Environmental Access

School of Architecture and Planning - University at Buffalo

Buffalo, NY 14214-3087 USA

Tel: (716) 829-3485 ext. 329

Fax: (716) 829-3861

TTY: (877) 237-4219 ext. 336

E-mail: idea@ap.buffalo.edu

Web: www.ap.buffalo.edu/idea/

Center for Inclusive Design and Environmental Access (IDEA) provides resources and technical expertise in architecture, product design, facilities management and the social and behavioral sciences to a broad range of people, including people with disabilities.

Center for Universal Design

College of Design

North Carolina State University

50 Pullen Road, Brooks Hall, Room 104

Campus Box 8613

Raleigh, NC 27695-8613 USA

InfoLine: (800) 647-6777

Tel/TTY: (919) 515-3082

Fax: (919) 515-7330

E-mail: cud@ncsu.edu

Web: www.design.ncsu.edu/cud

Center for Universal Design's mission is to improve the built environment and related products for all users by impacting change in policies and procedures through research, information, training and design assistance.

Disability and Business Technical Assistance Centers (DBTACs)

Tel: (800) 949-4232

Web: www.adata.org

Disability and Business Technical Assistance Centers (DBTACs) provide information and technical assistance on the Americans with Disabilities Act. There are 10 regional offices. Regional DBTACs can be reached automatically by dialing the national toll free number, or you may visit the website.

Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund (DREDF)

2212 Sixth Street

Berkeley, CA 94710 USA

Tel/TTY: (510) 644-2555

Fax: (510) 841-8645

E-mail: dredf@dredf.org

Web: www.dredf.org

Contact: Susan Henderson (shenderson@dredf.org)

Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund (DREDF) is another resource to learn more about standards for accessible buildings. DREDF is a national, nonprofit law and policy center, dedicated to furthering the civil rights of people with disabilities. DREDF provides technical assistance, information and referral, and training to individuals and organizations on disability-rights laws and policies; provides legal representation directly and as co-counsel and amicus in cases of disability-based discrimination; educates people with disabilities; and trains law students through the Disability Clinical Legal Education Program. DREDF was key to the effort to pass the Americans with Disabilities Act and continues to provide expert training to individuals, businesses, etc. on that law.

Equal Access to Software Information (EASI)

EASI Corp
PO Box 818
Lake Forest CA 92609
Tel: (949) 916-2837
E-mail: info@easi.cc Web: <http://www.rit.edu/~easi/>

EASI's mission is to serve as a resource by providing information and guidance in the area of access-to-information technologies by individuals with disabilities.

Planning for All

Ministry of the Environment

PO Box 8013

Dep. 0030 Oslo NORWAY
Tel: (47-22) 24-90-90 Fax: (47-22) 24-95-60
E-mail: postmottak@md.dep.no Web: www.miljo.no/pfa

Planning for All is a program run by the Ministry of the Environment of Norway. Its goal is to use planning as a tool to improve accessibility in the environment for people with disabilities.

Easter Seals

Project Action

700 13th Street NW, Suite 200
Washington, DC 20005 USA
Tel: (202) 347-3066 or (800) 659-6428 Fax: (202) 737-7914
TTY: (202) 347-7385
E-mail: nsmithproject_action@opa.easter-seals.org Web: www.projectaction.org

Project Action is administered by Easter Seals and funded by the Federal Transit Administration. Project Action provides technical assistance and disseminates information regarding accessible transportation in the United States. Through the National Institute for Accessible Transportation (NIAT), a resource center and publications clearinghouse, they offer materials to the public free of charge. An online database of accessible transport in the United States is available on their website.

Trace Research & Development Center

University of Wisconsin-Madison
2107 Engineering Centers Bldg.
1550 Engineering Dr.
Madison, WI 53706
Tel: (608) 262-6966 Fax: (608) 262-8848
TTY: (608) 263-5408
Email: info@trace.wisc.edu Web: <http://trace.wisc.edu/>

The Trace Research & Development Center is a part of the College of Engineering, University of Wisconsin-Madison. Trace's mission is to prevent barriers and capitalize on the opportunities presented by current and emerging information and telecommunication technologies, in order to create a world that is as accessible and usable as possible for as many people as possible.

World Wide Web Consortium

Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI)

E-mail: wai@w3.org

Web: www.w3.org/WAI

World Wide Web Consortium's Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI), in coordination with organizations around the world, pursues accessibility of the Web through five primary areas of work: technology, guidelines, tools, education and outreach, and research and development.

PUBLICATIONS:

Inclusive Design: Designing and Developing Accessible Environments

by Rob Imrie and Peter Hall

Paperback - 208 pages (October 2001)

E & F N Spon; ISBN: 0419256202

Inclusive Design is a documentation of the attitudes, values and practices of property professionals, including developers, surveyors and architects, in responding to the building needs of disabled people. It looks at the way in which pressure for accessible building design is influencing the policies and practices of property companies and professionals, with a primary focus on commercial developments in the United Kingdom. The book also provides comments on, and references to, other countries, particularly the United States, Sweden and New Zealand.

WEBSITES:

Accessibility for the Disabled—*A Design Manual for a Barrier Free Environment* is an online manual prepared by the Lebanese Company for the Development and Reconstruction of Beirut Central District in cooperation with the United Nations and the Ministry of Social Affairs National Committee for the Disabled. The manual addresses urban and architectural design considerations for Beirut, and it may be useful for similar cities and countries.

www.un.org/esa/socdev/enable/designm

Equal Access to Software and Information (EASI) has a listserv on accessible technology and offers online course on universal design at:

www.rit.edu/~easi

The Independent Living online library lists and links to hundreds of universal design resources at:

www.independentliving.org/htdig/libsrch.html

Recommendations for transportation accessibility are available at the following website:

www.independentliving.org/Mobility/