

Wheelchair Access to Meetings

(Note: This checklist is drawn from a variety of materials on the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA). It is advisory in nature and is not a list of all the requirements of the ADA; it is a list of considerations for groups who want to make their meetings wheelchair-accessible.)

I. Parking and Drop-Off Areas:

1. Are there accessible parking spaces available (8 feet wide for car plus 5-foot access aisle)?
2. Are accessible spaces marked with the wheelchair symbol?
3. Are there procedures to ensure that accessible parking is used only by those who need it?

II. Accessible Approach/Entrance: People using wheelchairs should be able to approach the building and enter unassisted.

1. Is there a route of travel that does not require the use of stairs?
2. Do curbs on the route have curb cuts at drives, parking, and drop-offs?
3. If there is a ramp, is the angle of its slope not more than about 30 degrees?
(Ninety degrees is a right angle, so a third of that is 30 degrees.)
4. Is the doorway to the building (and to meeting room and rest rooms) wide enough to accommodate a wheelchair? (Over 32" is best, though some wheelchairs can fit through less space.)
5. Once a wheelchair user is through the entrance door, is the meeting on the same level or, if not, is there an elevator to the meeting level that a person with a disability can use unassisted? (Note: Stair-lifts and things that need keys and another person to operate them are not considered accessible.)
6. Is there space in the meeting room for a wheelchair user to get to tables, seating areas, etc.?

III. Accessible Restrooms: At least one accessible toilet (M, F, or unisex) should be available near the meeting room.

1. Is the toilet area large enough for a wheelchair to fit and close the door?
2. Are there grab bars in the toilet area?
3. Are mirrors low enough for a wheelchair user to see him/herself?
4. Are fixtures (soap dispensers, paper towel dispensers, etc.) low enough to be reachable?

These are some things to look at when you think about listing your meeting as "accessible" in the meeting guide. You may wish to have a group member give your space a "trial run" in a wheelchair. Please feel free to contact Kathy at kathyleonard@cox.net with any questions. (Or call 401-351-7455, 10am-4pm)