

Building Audit

Approach & Entrance

Barriers to access can exist before people even enter a business. It is important to consider how customers and guests access a business whether by foot, transit, or vehicle.

Approach & Entrance	Yes / No	Condition
<p>Is there a designated accessible parking spot? The spot should be close to the building’s entrance, clearly marked by vertical signage and painted markings using the internationally-recognized handicap symbol. A stall width of 2,600 mm minimum is desired alongside a side access aisle that is at least 2,000 mm wide. A parking block or wheel stop should also be present.</p>		
<p>Is there an appropriate number of accessible parking spaces? Between 1-3 spots per 50 spaces is desired. More spaces may be desirable depending on the building’s intended use (e.g., hospital, healthcare services, senior’s housing, place of worship, etc.).</p>		

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<p>Is there a transition feature between the parking lot and pathway to the building entrance? Curb ramps (curb cuts) can be used to reduce challenges produced by any level change. These features should also be present adjacent to accessible parking spots. Curb ramps should be designed with tactile attention indicators at the base of the ramp, a turning space of 1,390 mm X 1,390 mm at the top of the ramp, and a running slope between 1:15 and 1:10 (6.6% - 10%). The curb ramp should be a minimum of 1,500 mm wide and match the width of the crosswalk / access aisle where possible.</p>		
<p>Is there a clear path of travel through the parking lot? For routes where pedestrians regularly cross parking lots to access the building's entrance, paths should be clearly marked with high-contrast paint, tactile pavers, and vertical signage.</p>		
<p>Is there a defined path from the street, closest transit stop, and parking area to the business entrance? The path should be made of a firm, slip-resistant surface, and be level, without cracks. A path with a width of 1,600 mm allows multiple users to pass each other.</p>		
<p>Are there low points in the path of travel that could fill with rain or ice? Level paths and drainage features (e.g., storm sewer grates, rain gardens) can help reduce pooling. Drainage features should be located off the path of travel and any grates should have a maximum opening of 13 mm.</p>		

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<p>Is the path of travel kept clear in the winter through the use of plows / shovels and sand? Salt can be sensitive on service animals' paws, and where possible, sand is preferred.</p>		
<p>Does landscaping or street furnishing (e.g., sandwich signs, benches) create obstacles in the path of travel to the business? Obstacles can occur at a range of heights (overhead as well as tripping hazards) and should be placed outside the path of travel, or if not-possible, be high-contrast. Any headroom clearance should be provided up to 2,050 mm free from overhanging objects.</p>		
<p>Is the exterior access route level with the door entrance? There should be no gap, or step up, required to enter the building. A threshold higher than 6 mm should be beveled and be a maximum of 13 mm.</p>		
<p>Do entrance stairs have major accessibility features like handrails, high-contrast slip-resistant nosing, and tactile warning strips? Handrails should be rounded, easy to grasp, and not stick out at the end (where they can catch purses and clothing). Risers should be closed to prevent feet from being caught in the open space. Tactile attention indicators should be placed at the top of stairs in a high-contrast colour as well as on any landings present.</p>		

Approach & Entrance	Yes / No	Condition
<p>If stairs are present to access the building entrance, is a ramp or lift option provided?</p> <p>Desired slopes for ramps are 1:20 ratio or 5% (ideal) and not steeper than 1:12 ratio or 8.3%. Ramps should be made from a slip-resistant material, offer rounded hand-rails and have colour contrast strips at the top and bottom. Long ramps should be interspersed with landings for rest and all ramps should offer edge protection. Ramps should provide access to the same entrance as the stairs (e.g., not a rear, or back entrance).</p>		
<p>Is there a level landing at the door entrance?</p> <p>Doorways that open onto ramps or slopes create challenging conditions for people with mobility aids when entering and exiting a building. Level landings with clear maneuvering space on both sides of a door are also required to help users enter and exit buildings.</p>		
<p>Are the entrance doors clearly marked?</p> <p>From a distance, the building entrance should be easy to locate (e.g., the entrance contrasts with the surrounding building - this can be done through material choice, colour contrast, and landscaping).</p>		

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<p>Is the building's signage easy to find and interpret? Signs should accurately identify the name of the facility, address, indicate the entrance location, and be legible at a distance (e.g., simple fonts, high-contrast colours). Section 4.6 of CSA B651:23 provides more information on signage design.</p>		
<p>Is the building entrance power-operated? Door-opening controls should be easy to locate beside the door, should not require much force to push, and are at an accessible height for a range of users (e.g., children, people who are seated).</p>		
<p>For entrances that are not power-operated, is the door easy to open? The door should not be so heavy that it is difficult to open or could bump someone while closing. Different styles of doorknob can affect someone's ability to easily open a door. Push panels, D-style openers, and lever handles are all preferable to standard rounded doorknobs which are difficult for some people to grip.</p>		
<p>Is the clear width of the entrance at least 850 mm? This width permits comfortable access by users with mobility devices and / or service animals.</p>		
<p>Is the entrance and path of travel to the business well lit? Automatic lighting that is activated at dusk creates a safer environment.</p>		

Washrooms

Providing an accessible washroom is critical to ensuring the dignity and independence of building users. People may decide not to go to certain buildings or stay very long if they know there is no accessible washroom.

Washrooms	Yes / No	Condition
<p>Does the building have directional signage indicating to users where they can find the washroom? Directional signage should be written in clear font with high-contrast colours, and easy to spot from areas of high-traffic.</p>		
<p>Does the washroom have appropriately mounted signage? Signs should be mounted beside the door frame at a height suitable for a range of users (1,500 mm from the floor to the centre of the sign) and contain both Braille and tactile characters. Signs placed on doors create hazards for users trying to read them.</p>		
<p>Is the clear width of the entrance to the washroom at least 850 mm? This width permits comfortable access by users with mobility devices and / or service animals.</p>		

Washrooms	Yes / No	Condition
<p>Can the entrance door to the washroom be opened and closed easily?</p> <p>Accessible washrooms can be power-operated. For those that are not, the door should not be too heavy to open, and the handle hardware should be of a style easy for people with limited mobility in their hands (e.g., lever-style).</p>		
<p>If the washroom contains urinals, is one available at a lower height?</p> <p>Stall-type urinals that provide coverage all the way to the floor serve a range of users. For urinals that are hung on the wall, the bottom portion of the well should be no higher than 430 mm.</p>		
<p>Is there an accessible stall with a door that opens outwards?</p> <p>If the washroom contains multiple stalls, at least one should be large enough to accommodate a wheelchair.</p>		
<p>Is the toilet properly installed and the right style choice?</p> <p>Toilets in accessible stalls or washrooms should have the lever on the 'transfer' side of the toilet (the area where someone moves from their chair to the seat). The toilet should also have a solid back to provide the user with added support (e.g., a toilet tank or lid).</p>		

Washrooms	Yes / No	Condition
<p>Is the toilet paper within easy reach from the toilet and not covered by the dispenser? Open-roll style toilet paper dispensers are best for people with limited mobility in their hands.</p>		
<p>Is a grab bar properly installed beside the toilet? 'L' style grab bars offer users support as they move from a standing to a seated position. The installation of the grab bar should not interfere with access to the toilet paper. Check that the grab bar has not been installed the wrong way around (the low point of the grab bar should be the portion closest to the toilet).</p>		
<p>Is the lock on the stall door an appropriate style for easy opening? Test opening the lock with a closed fist. Turn-style locks are more difficult to open for people with limited mobility in their hands than push-pull style latches.</p>		
<p>Does the accessible stall have any additional amenities? Coat hooks at an accessible height (maximum 1,200 mm) and outlets (commonly used to charge medical devices) offer users additional support.</p>		

Washrooms	Yes / No	Condition
<p>Is the accessible washroom (or stall) equipped with an emergency alarm? Emergency call systems that offer both audible and visual signals are important inside washrooms to alert people in case of emergency. Additionally, an alarm call button should be located within the accessible stall so users can alert others if they need assistance (e.g., in case of a fall). Call button placement should be beside the toilet at 300 mm.</p>		
<p>Does the design of the washroom offer colour contrast between the floor and wall? Floor and wall coverings that are too similar in colour / pattern / texture may obscure a sense of depth for some users. Patterns should be simple.</p>		
<p>Is knee clearance provided at sinks and plumbing enclosed or otherwise protected? Wheelchair users should be able to place their knees under counter-tops as they wash their hands. Ensuring plumbing is not exposed prevents users without feeling in their extremities from possible burns. See figure 43a) in the CSA B651:23 standard for additional direction on knee clearance in a washroom.</p>		

Washrooms	Yes / No	Condition
<p>Is there a change station available? Stations should be present in all washrooms regardless of gender and be placed at an accessible height. Baby change stations should be present in all washrooms regardless of gender. Adult change tables are desirable in universal washrooms and should have a horizontal grab bar. All change tables should be mounted at between 500-900 mm and should be installed so they do not interfere with access to the toilet.</p>		
<p>Are washroom accessories easy to use and placed near the sink? Soap, paper towel dispensers, and trash cans should be automated or usable with a closed fist. Angled, or floor to ceiling mirrors provide use for all users regardless of height or seated position.</p>		

Building Interior

It is important that building users can access all parts of a building intended for their use. Often, design features of a building’s interior can be disorienting or create obstacles for building users.

Building Interior	Yes / No	Condition
<p>Does the building’s accessible entrance provide access to all public spaces? The primary access entrance should provide users access to all areas they are expected to use or enable access to elevators for other areas of the building.</p>		
<p>Is the floor material firm, slip-resistant, and anti-glare? Lighting can sometimes create glare on polished, shiny, or reflective flooring that can be disorienting for people with depth-perception challenges or vision differences.</p>		
<p>Are carpets flat (especially along the edges) and do they have a short pile? Area rugs and carpets can curl at the corners and create tripping hazards. Long pile carpets (anything taller than 13 mm) can also cause difficulty for people with mobility accommodation needs. Special attention should be paid in winter to ensure that entrance carpets are not stacked to an inaccessible height, and are placed immediately near doorways to prevent slipping.</p>		

Building Interior	Yes / No	Condition
<p>Does the design of the interior offer colour contrast between the floor and wall?</p> <p>Floor and wall coverings that are too similar in colour / pattern / texture may obscure a sense of depth for some users. Patterns should be simple.</p>		
<p>Is building lighting sufficient to illuminate interior circulation routes and signage?</p> <p>It is important to strike a balance between lighting that is not too bright or harsh (that it creates glare) and lighting that is not too dim that it makes it difficult to identify possible obstacles. Lighting that casts strange shadows can also be disorienting for some building users.</p>		
<p>Is the interior circulation route intuitive and does it offer a clear path to the desired destinations (e.g., reception desk, check-out counters)?</p> <p>Paths through aisles / service areas should be at least 1,000 mm wide (850 mm is okay for short distances, and 1,700 mm is preferred), easy to navigate and have areas for wheelchairs to turn around (1,700 mm diameter or T-shaped turning space).</p>		

Building Interior	Yes / No	Condition
<p>Are there any objects protruding into the path of travel? Common objects include signs, fire extinguishers, and drinking fountains. If the object projects more than 100 mm into the path of travel, and can't be moved, add colour contrast to highlight it.</p>		
<p>Are there tripping hazards in the path of travel? Features that could offer unstable footing are considered tripping hazards (e.g., transition spaces between different flooring types if gaps are left, step-ups). Hazards that cannot be removed should be highlighted through the use of colour contrast.</p>		
<p>Is directional information signage posted near the entrance? For large spaces, signage should support user navigation and also identify key egress routes in case of emergency. Signage should follow universal design conventions like having a combination of raised text, symbols, and high-contrast sans serif font. Any modular furniture should have locking features so they can be stabilized when in use.</p>		

Building Interior	Yes / No	Condition
<p>Are all interior doorways a minimum clear width of 850 mm with appropriate hardware? The door should not be so heavy that it is difficult to open or could bump someone while closing. Push panels, 'D' style openers, and lever handles are all preferable to standard doorknobs which are difficult for some people to grip.</p>		
<p>Do interior doorway thresholds offer minimal level change? Door thresholds should be no greater than 13 mm (and be beveled if over 6 mm high) to enable easy navigation by people with limited mobility. Where level changes exist and can't be changed, consider adding ramps or, at minimum, colour contrast nosing.</p>		
<p>Are the frames of the internal doorways colour contrasted with the walls? High colour contrast helps people better identify the location of internal doors.</p>		
<p>Is there an assortment of furniture types? Different design features on seating types (e.g., back support, arm rests, heel clearance, padded seats) can make them more accessible for a range of users.</p>		

Building Interior	Yes / No	Condition
<p>Is seating available where people are expected to wait or need rest breaks?</p> <p>Lobbies, entryways, service lines, and long hallways are areas where people could benefit from having seating.</p>		
<p>Are seating areas designed to accommodate someone with a wheelchair?</p> <p>Tables should have enough knee clearance to enable a person in a wheelchair to sit at them, while chairs and tables should be movable to provide more flexibility to meet different user needs. Tables that provide knee clearance to a depth of 480 mm and a height of 685 mm minimum enable users with wheelchairs to comfortably sit. See figure 56a) in the CSA B651:23 standard for additional dimensions on knee clearance.</p>		
<p>Do internal building stairs have major accessibility features like handrails, high-contrast slip-resistant nosing, and tactile warning strips?</p> <p>Handrails should be rounded, easy to grasp, and not stick out at the end (where they can catch purses and clothing). Risers should be closed to prevent feet from being caught in the open space. Tactile attention indicators should be placed at the top of stairs in a high-contrast colour as well as on any landings present.</p>		

Building Interior	Yes / No	Condition
<p>If stairs exist within the building, is a ramp, lift, or elevator option provided? Desired slopes for ramps are 1:20 ratio or 5% (ideal) and not steeper than 1:12 ratio or 8.3%. Ramps should be made from a slip-resistant material, offer rounded hand-rails and have colour contrast strips at the top and bottom. Long ramps should be interspersed with landings for rest.</p>		
<p>If the building has an elevator, is the location easy to find from the main entrance? Signage at the entrance can be provided to help users navigate to an elevator if it is not clearly visible in the lobby / entry area.</p>		
<p>If the building has an elevator, does it incorporate accessibility features? Key features include elevator buttons mounted at an accessible height (max 1,200 mm), the presence of Braille and raised tactile numbers on elevator buttons, colour contrast between the floor and elevator walls, audible announcements identifying the floor (if more than one), and the presence of visual and auditory alarm system in case of emergency.</p>		

Building Interior	Yes / No	Condition
<p>If people are expected to access products / information from shelves, are the most popular items placed at an accessible height? Installing shelves or moving items to an accessible height (between 400 and 1,200 mm) can provide users with greater independence if they do not have to ask for help retrieving items.</p>		
<p>Are all accessories (coat hooks, light switches, electric plugs, fire alarm pulls etc.) at an accessible height? Users should be able to use these features without straining to reach. A maximum height of 1,200 mm is standard for most operating controls, while electric outlets should be around 400 mm to the centre of the panel.</p>		
<p>Do service counters or reception areas have a counter that offers a lower height option with knee clearance? Offering service at a range of heights helps ensure anyone can have access to face-to-face communication. For users who don't fit at a taller counter, it can be difficult to hear and properly receive information. Counters that provide knee clearance to a depth of 480 mm and a height of 685 mm minimum enable users with wheelchairs to comfortably sit. See figure 56a) in the CSA B651:23 standard for additional dimensions on knee clearance.</p>		

Building Interior	Yes / No	Condition
<p>Do emergency exit routes consider access for a range of user types? In multi-storey buildings where users with mobility aids cannot use an elevator, there should be a plan for their evacuation.</p>		
<p>Does the alarm system include both auditory and visual components? Alert systems that combine flashing lights with alarm sounds bring awareness to a range of users in case of emergency.</p>		

Additional

Depending on the building's use, the following elements should also be examined.

Additional	Yes / No	Condition
<p>Does the building include a quiet space that is clearly marked on building wayfinding? Low stimuli environments are useful for a range of people, from people looking to nurse babies, to people with neurodiversities, and people of different faith backgrounds.</p>		
<p>Are there alternative communication systems in place? Induction loops, for example, support people with hearing aids in challenging acoustic environments or places where it is important to hear what is going on. Other types of assistive listening systems include infrared systems, and radio frequency systems. The presence of these systems should be advertised with signage depicting standard accessibility pictograms.</p>		
<p>Is the building's navigation signage accessible for different users? Directory boards should be viewable from a seated position and include a combination of raised characters and symbols in addition to visual information. Any tactile information should be located within 1,200-1,500 mm. Signs can be placed higher than this if they are to be viewed from a distance (e.g., blade signage indicating the presence of a washroom).</p>		

Additional	Yes / No	Condition
<p>If the building has an intercom system is it accessible for different users? Styles that combine raised buttons (with Braille markings), a screen, and auditory read-outs, support a range of users.</p>		
<p>Is the Point of Sale (POS) system usable by people with visual impairments? Often, point of sale systems that are screen-based and do not have buttons, can be difficult for users with visual impairments who cannot read the screen prompts. POS systems with buttons help users navigate payment options easily. Sometimes screen-based options are sold with an accompanying tactile cover that can be used to modify the system for users with visual impairments.</p>		
<p>Does the cash register display information visually and auditorily? The amount-owing should be readable from a range of heights and offer audible.</p>		
<p>If there is a menu, is it easy to read? Menu boards should be at an accessible height for reading, while individual menus should have accessible font (large text, sans-serif, high contrast colours). Offering the menu online as a PDF (not as a photo) can help people with screen readers learn the menu items in advance.</p>		

Additional	Yes / No	Condition
<p>Are there strong scents or fragrances present in the building? Common sources of scented items include scented products, air fresheners, soaps, detergents, and perfumes. Replacing items with unscented versions and creating a fragrance free environment can improve air quality for building users and employees.</p>		
<p>If there is background music, is it low enough that people can clearly have conversations? People should not have to raise their voices or strain to hear over the music.</p>		
<p>Does the building / business state accessibility features on the website? People with accessibility accommodation needs often conduct research on a building before going to it for the first time to determine if it has an accessible entrance / washroom / menu. Advertising this information clearly on a website can provide more user confidence and promote awareness of the building's features.</p>		
<p>Are service animals considered? Accommodations could include seating in low-stimuli environments, and designated water dishes.</p>		