



Curatorial Safety

Museum Accessibility

Museum accessibility is a multi-faceted issue that affects everyone visiting and working within your park. It's more than just simply being "wheelchair accessible." The following suggestions are applicable to accessibility issues involving life safety. Consider your museum. How accessible is it from a safety viewpoint?

- Is lighting sufficient for visitors and staff to see all exits, especially individuals with impaired vision?
- Is exit signage prominently and appropriately located?
- Are areas served by stairs also serviced by ramps or elevators?
- Are all public and staff area walkways clear of obstructions? Can someone in a wheelchair easily navigate through the area?
- Are all exits free from obstructions?
- Are there at least two exits from each room or exhibit gallery?
- Are exit doors easy to open in an emergency? Even by a child, elderly person, or someone otherwise impaired?
- Are service animals allowed in your facility? If not, they should be. It's the law.

Hopefully you answered yes to all of these questions, and your park is compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act, Director's Order #42: Accessibility for Visitors with Disabilities in National Park Service Programs and Services, and Director's Order #16A: Reasonable Accommodation for Applicants and Employees with Disabilities.

If you answered no to any of these questions, then you should assess your museum (and probably your park's other public and staff areas) for accessibility. Pay particular attention to accessibility issues related to life safety first. You may want to develop a checklist to help in your assessment. Involve your park's Safety Officer, Chief of Maintenance, Chief Ranger, and in the case of historic structures, your park's Cultural Resource Management Specialist, Section 106 compliance staff, and Regional Historical Architect. Your Regional Curator and Regional Accessibility Coordinator can also help. Find your Regional Accessibility Coordinator at: <http://inside.nps.gov/programs/programcontact.cfm?div=41&prog=151&Page=contact>.

Resources:

1. NPS Accessibility Management Program

http://pfmd.nps.gov/access/nps_accessibility_management_program.htm

2. NPS Servicewide Accessibility Coordinating Committee

<http://pfmd.nps.gov/access/list/index.htm>

3. **The Access Board** is a federal agency devoted to accessibility for people with disabilities. Its responsibilities include:

- developing and maintaining accessibility requirements for the built environment, transit vehicles, telecommunications equipment, and for electronic and information technology
- providing technical assistance and training on these guidelines and standards
- enforcing accessibility standards for federally funded facilities

Contact The Access Board at this address:

The Access Board
1331 F Street, NW, Suite 1000
Washington, DC 20004-1111
Voice: (800) 872-2253
TTY: (800) 993-2822
Fax: (202) 272-0081
www.access-board.gov

Download a copy of ADA Accessibility Guidelines for Buildings and Facilities (ADAAG) from The Access Board website at <http://www.access-board.gov/adaag/html/adaag.htm>.

4. **The National Center on Accessibility** (NCA) works for the full participation in parks, recreation and tourism by people with disabilities, through education, technical assistance, and research solutions. Contact NCA at:

National Center on Accessibility
2805 East 10th Street - Suite 190
Bloomington, IN 47408-2698
Voice: (812) 856-4422
TTY: (812) 856-4421
Fax: (812) 856-4480
www.ncaonline.org

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