

California State Parks Accessibility Guidelines 2009

Natural settings are different than urban settings. The urban environment is mostly built and can be “controlled” by design, while parks are both built and nature based. In fact, people come to State Parks primarily to experience nature; consequently the built settings in the parks must be designed to fit into a natural environment without destroying the experience people come to enjoy.

The challenge for park designers, managers, rangers and maintenance staff is to understand what people of all abilities need to use the park without compromising the qualities of the natural or cultural resource. The concept of individual choice based on the desired degree of challenge must also be addressed. For example, a trail through a redwood grove may be the desired experience. Some people want a very challenging hike through the redwoods while others just want to stroll through a beautiful natural setting. Therefore, unlike an urban pathway the trail is not merely a means of access to a place or activity; it is the place and type of experience visitors have that creates the “program” of that place.

Accessibility, as used throughout these guidelines, is defined as “the combination of various elements in a building or outdoor area, which allows access, circulation and full use of the building, facilities and programs by person with disabilities.” (CBC-202.A) While accessibility is a defined, prescriptive set of standards and measurements that do not change in content from setting to setting, the design challenge in park settings remains – basic services and experiences need to be accessible to all people with disabilities, while maintaining the intrinsic qualities of the place.

The California State Parks Accessibility Section recognizes that deviations from standards may be necessary from time to time due to the environmental conditions and unique constraints of a particular site. In these cases, the Accessibility Section should be contacted for guidance and direction at (916) 445-8949, or e-mail: access@parks.ca.gov.

Section 5: Beaches and Shores

- Designated beaches and day use areas shall be accessible. CBC-1132B.2.2
- major barrier to shore and beach use by persons with mobility impairments is the difficulty traversing sandy or loose soil.
 - Access to the edge of the beach or shore from accessible parking spaces, common use areas and support facilities.
 - Access across the beach to the water's edge.
- For an existing "designated" beach, when a pedestrian access route is constructed to or along the edge of the beach, a beach access route shall be provided. 99AG-16.4.1.2
- The beach access route shall be located in the same area as the general circulation path, when feasible, and shall extend to the high tide level. 99AG-16.4.1
 - Clear width preferred is 48", 36" acceptable. 99AG-16.4.3
 - Openings in the route surface, such as on a boardwalk, ½" or less if perpendicular or diagonal, ¼" or less if parallel to the route 99AG-16.4.4
 - Slopes from 0% to 5% for any length, 5.1% to 8.33% for up to 50', 8.34% to 10% for a maximum of 30'. 99AG-16.4.8.2.1-3
 - Resting spaces shall be 60" in length 99AG-16.4.8.2.2-3
 - The cross slope shall be 3% 99AG-16.4.8.1
 - If the route is less than 60" wide, passing spaces a minimum of 60" x 60" shall be provided at least every 200'. 99AG-16.4.6

Section 18: Exhibits

- Accessible exhibit design elements include font style and size, color contrast, tactile exhibits, interactive exhibits, controls, exhibit mounting heights and positioning of exhibits on path of travel.

Section 25: Parking

- Where parking is provided, appropriate accessible spaces shall be provided including proper number, van spaces, with appropriate signage and location.

- located as near as possible to a primary entrance or on the shortest accessible route from parking to the facility, activity, etc. CBC-1129B.1
- minimum of one in every 25 spaces should be accessible and one in every eight accessible spaces, but no less than one, should be served by a minimum 8' wide access aisle on the passenger side.
- If passenger drop-off and loading zones are provided, one zone shall have the following: CBC-1131B.2.1
 - accessible aisle 5' x 20' provided adjacent and parallel to the vehicle pull-up space
 - Walk surfaces crossing or joining the vehicular way not separated by curbs, railings or other elements shall be identified with continuous, detectable warnings.

Section 31: Ramps

- Whenever the slope on an Exterior Routes of Travel or Accessible Paths of Travel exceeds 5%, a ramp must be provided. ADAAG-4.8.1, CBC-1133B.5.1
 - ramps shall have a minimum width of 48"
 - maximum linear slope on the ramp shall not exceed 8.3%. ADAAG-4.8.2, CBC-1133B.5.3
 - maximum cross slope on the ramp shall not exceed 2%. ADAAG-4.8.6, CBC-1133B.5.3.1
 - Ramps shall have level landings at top, bottom and each change of direction. Intermediate landings shall be provided at intervals not exceeding 30" of vertical rise. ADAAG-4.8.4, CBC-1133B.5.4.1
 - Top landings minimum of 60"x60"
 - Intermediate landings at change of direction minimum 60"x72"
 - Bottom landings minimum ramp width x72"

Section 33: Routes of Travel

- The most usable route for people with mobility impairments is the Exterior Route of Travel (ERT) and should incorporate the guidelines of curb ramps, ramps, etc. when necessary. CBC-1127B.1

- Slope in the direction of travel shall be a maximum of 5%. Where conditions dictate a slope greater than 5%, a ramp shall be provided. ADAAG-4.3.7, CBC-1133B.7.3
 - If an accessible route is less than 60" wide, passing spaces at least 60" x 60" shall be located at maximum intervals of 200'. ADAAG-4.3-4, CBC-1133B.7.1
 - Grate openings shall have spaces no greater than ½" wide and may be elongated, provided that long direction runs perpendicular to the primary direction of travel. ADAAG-4.5.4, CBC-1124B.4
 - Where wheelchair traffic is expected to U-turn around an obstacle, the route width must be a minimum of 42" on the approach and 48" around the obstacle. ADAAG-4.3.3
 - Openings in the surface, such as on a boardwalk, cannot be greater than ½" wide. Elongated openings shall be placed so long dimension is perpendicular or diagonal to the direction of travel. Exception: openings are permitted to run parallel to the direction of travel if the opening is no wider than ¼". 99AG-16.3.3

Section 38: Stairs

- Where stairs are provided, in addition to required elevators, lifts or ramps, they shall be on route of travel and meet the following guidelines:
 - heights and widths of the treads and risers shall be uniform, treads shall be no less than 11" from riser to riser CBC-1133B.4.5.3
 - Open risers are not allowed. CBC-1133B.4.5.3
 - When stairs occur outside a building, the upper approach and all treads shall be marked by a strip of clearly contrasting color at least 2" wide placed parallel to the nose of the step or landing. Interior stairs shall have contrasting color on the upper approach and the lower tread of each stair. CBC-1133B.4.4
- Handrails shall be provided on both sides of stairs and extend parallel to the floor 12" beyond the upper riser and 12", plus one tread width, beyond the lower riser. ADAAG-4.9.4(2), CBC-1133B.4.2.2

- Handrails shall be 34" to 38" above the nosing of the treads.
CBC-1133B.4.2.1

Section 41: Trails

- Unlike Exterior Routes of Travel (ERT) and Outdoor Recreation Access Routes (ORAR), trails provide the means for the activity of hiking. Trails provide access to remote locations and unique park features. They offer visitors the opportunity to experience various park settings.
- Whenever hiking is considered one of the primary activities offered, or where there is a large concentration of trails, every effort should be made to install and maintain accessible trails.

Section 43: Vista Points and Overlooks

- Vista points, roadside pullouts and/or overlooks, their features, views and the experiences they provide, must be accessible. 99AG-16.10.1
 - Where multiple viewing areas are provided, a minimum of one viewing opportunity for each distinct point of interest shall be accessible.
99AG-16.10.1
 - Vista points and overlooks shall be located on an accessible route of travel, including an outdoor recreation access route (ORAR) or accessible trail. 99AG-16.10.1
- The viewing area shall have at least one maneuvering space of 60" x 60" or a T-shaped space at least 36" wide and 60" long on each leg (Figures 43-1 & 43-2). 99AG-16.10.2, ADAAG-4.2.3
 - Each distinct viewing opportunity shall allow unrestricted viewing to accommodate eye levels between 32" and 51". 99AG-16.10.3
 - Where telescopes or periscopes are provided in an area, at least 20%, but never less than one, shall be accessible. 99AG-16.11.1