



Scope

This bulletin is intended to provide basic guidance relating to accessibility for existing buildings. It is intended as a guideline only and must be used in conjunction with the complete text of the International Building Code, ICC/ANSI A117.1-1998 and RCW 70.92 to prepare a complete design.

Enabling Legislation

- **RCW 70.92.100** It is the intent of the legislature that, notwithstanding any law to the contrary, plans and specifications for the erection of buildings through the use of public or private funds shall make special provisions for elderly or physically disabled persons. RCW 70.92 requires that the barrier free of the 2003 International Building Code (IBC) be applied to buildings throughout Washington.

Exceptions:

- i. Buildings, structures, or portions thereof built prior to July 1, 1976;
 - ii. Any building, structure, or portion thereof in respect to which the administrative authority deems, after considering all circumstances applying thereto, that full compliance is impracticable. This determination must be made prior to issuance of a building permit;
 - iii. Any building or structure used solely for dwelling purposes and which contains not more than two dwelling units or apartment houses with ten or fewer units.
- **RCW 19.27 and WAC 51-50** Adopt the 2003 International Building Code as the Washington State Building Code. IBC provides specific construction standards for buildings. Chapter 11 for new construction and chapter 34 for existing buildings.

Requirements for buildings constructed prior to July 1, 1976

- **Change of occupancy (example: home to a business)** Based on IBC section 3409, the following features are to be provided when occupancy changes are made to existing buildings:
 - i. At least one accessible building entrance.
 - ii. At least one accessible route from an accessible building entrance to primary function area.
 - iii. Accessible parking where parking is provided.
 - iv. Signage conforming with IBC section 1106 at accessible parking.
 - v. An accessible loading zone where loading zones are provided.
 - vi. An accessible route between accessible parking and accessible loading zones to an accessible building entrance.
- **Additions** Are required to comply with all provisions for new construction. An accessible route is not required to the addition if the cost of such route exceeds 20% of the cost of the addition.

- **Alterations** Must comply with requirements for new construction to the maximum extent that is technically feasible.

Exceptions:

- i. Altered spaces that are not an area of primary function or that contain toilet facilities, telephones or drinking fountains.
- ii. The costs of providing an accessible route are not required to exceed 20 percent of the costs of the alteration affecting the area of primary function.
- iii. Accessible means of egress required by IBC chapter 10 are not required to be provided.

Requirements for buildings constructed on or after July 1, 1976

- **Change of occupancy** When occupancy changes are made the effected areas must accessibility requirements that were in effect when the original building was built.
- **Alterations** Are required to comply with all provisions for new construction to the maximum extent feasible.
- **Additions** Are required to comply with all provisions for new construction. An accessible route in compliance with the code in effect when the original building was built must be provided.