

Ensuring Accessibility for People with Disabilities

Early Voting,
Same Day Registration Locations
and
Polling Places!



ROVAC Conference – Spring 2024



I have a disability

“If people with disabilities voted at the same rate as people without disabilities, there would be about **2.35 million more voters**”

— Lisa Schur and Douglas Kruse, Rutgers University



How Do You Determine if Your Voting Sites are Accessible?

- ❖ Pick a Site and Hope that Everyone Can Get In?
- ❖ Ask the People Who Use it Everyday?
- ❖ Use a Survey and the Right Tools to Determine the Accessibility.



Polling Place, Early Voting Locations and Same Day Registration Accessibility Survey

This survey form enables a Registrar of Voters to evaluate the basic accessibility of a polling place. ('Polling place' refers to Early Voting Location, Same Day Registration Locations and Polling Places.) It provides a working knowledge of accessible features and problems in need of remediation, but it will not provide a complete or exhaustive picture; for that, a professional evaluation is required.

The hope of the REV UP Coalition is that, in the process of conducting the survey, Registrars will gain an enhanced appreciation of how access is achieved and the importance of maintaining it. Upon request, technical assistance and personal site visits to your municipality are available from advocates in the REV UP Coalition in Connecticut.

This survey form was designed to be easy to understand and use. It includes requirements taken from both the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG) and the Connecticut State Building Code. Sometimes requirements are the same; sometimes they differ. In the interest of providing a simplified document, REV UP used its judgment in deciding what to include and how to arrange the criteria.

Within each section, there are drawings and diagrams taken from the Institute for Human Centered Design's 2010 Readily Achievable Checklist that will provide the person completing this form with pictorial guidance. An asterisk in the survey indicates that an illustrative drawing is located within the section.

For more detailed information about the ADAAG, Registrars are welcome to contact the REV UP Coalition or go to www.adachecklist.org; for information about the accessibility requirements of the Connecticut State Building Code, they should call the Office of the State Building Inspector at 860-685-8310.

The following four sections of the survey are arranged chronologically so that they represent the approach of a voter with a disability to a polling place:

- Parking
- Exterior path of travel (including ramp and door)
- Interior path of travel (including doors, ramp, and elevator)
- The voting area

Three tools are necessary to complete the survey:

- A level
- A metal tape measure of at least 20 feet
- A door pressure gauge.
 - These handy instruments (both single and double action) are available from:
 - Inclusion Solutions - <https://inclusionsolutions.com/product/door-pressure-gauge-with-hook-2/>
 - Retailers such as Amazon and Walmart
 - Gordon Glass Company - <https://www.gordonglassusa.com/group/5198/Door-Pressure-Gauge.htm>

Introductory Page

- Lays out the set up of the survey
 - Parking
 - Path of travel
 - Voting Area
- Tools needed to Survey
 - Tape Measure
 - Level
 - Door Pressure Gauge
- Resources - Where to Find Tools





Brief Glossary of Terms

- **Access aisle.** The access aisle is the hatched area adjacent to an accessible parking space. The access aisle accommodates removal of mobility equipment or the lowering of a ramp.
- **Curb cut.** A curb cut is a sloped area cut into a curb. The purpose of a curb cut is to create a safe and direct accessible path of travel.
- **Door pressure weight.** The pressure weight of the door is the weight required to open it; it is not the weight of the door itself.
- **Latch side clearance.** The latch side clearance is the area from the handle of a door to the nearest wall on the same side as the handle. Insufficient latch side clearance prevents a person using mobility equipment from pulling a door open and entering the building. (Why? The person who uses a mobility device must be positioned on the latch side area to both open the door and gain entry.) Note: Latch side clearance is most relevant when a door opens out, rather than in.
- **Protruding objects.** A protruding object is an object that protrudes from either the wall or the ceiling at a distance that creates risk for a person with a visual disability. If protruding from a wall, the bottom of the object must be no more than twenty-seven (27) inches from the floor; if not, it will miss the sweep of a white cane. If protruding from the ceiling, the bottom of the object must be at least eighty inches from the floor; if not, a person could walk into it. A quick fix for a wall-protruding object is placement of an item (for example, a decorative brick) under the object. In such a case, the cane would sweep against the brick. Note: An object that protrudes four inches or less from a wall, at whatever height, is not considered a protruding object.
- **Ramp:** A ramp is *any* surface, outside, or inside, that has a slope more than 1 inch of rise per twenty inches of surface (1:20) and no more than 1 inch of rise per twelve inches of surface (1:12). That such a slope may lack handrails does not mean it is not a ramp. The slope and length of the ramp will trigger ramp requirements, such as handrails. (Any slope steeper than 1:12 is a non-compliant surface.)
- **Vestibule:** A vestibule is an area of passage typically located between an exterior door and an interior door.

What Does it all Mean?

Access Aisle

Curb cut

Door Pressure Weight

Latch Side Clearance

Protruding Objects

Ramp

Vestibule

Question?

Your polling location has 6 accessible parking spaces.

Do you have enough?

How many of them need to be accessible?

What are the requirements for those spaces?

Reserved Parking

(Handicapped Parking)



Reserved Parking

(Handicapped Parking)

Proper Signage



- ✓ “Reserved Parking”
- ✓ Dynamic Symbol of Accessibility
- ✓ “Permit Required”
- ✓ “Violators Will Be Fined”
- ✓ Min Fine - \$250.00

Name of the Early Voting Site, Same Day Registration Location, or Polling Place: _____

Address: _____

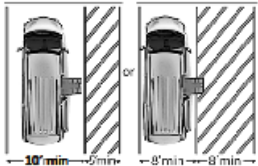
Name of Evaluator(s): _____ Date of the Evaluation: _____

Survey Form

Note: An asterisk * indicates that there is an illustration in the section

I. PARKING:	YES	NO
If the accessible entrance is different from the main entrance, is appropriate signage placed so that it is easily viewed and followed as soon as a voter enters the voting location?		
If there is a lot, are there at least two accessible parking spaces (for a standard accessible space, 10 feet for the space /5 feet for the access aisle)? *		
Is one of the spaces van accessible (8 feet for the space; 8 feet for the access aisle)? *		
Does each space have its own access aisle?		
Does each space have signage that is raised above-ground and includes the wheelchair symbol, notice of permit requirement and notice of fine?		
Does the van accessible space also have an additional sign indicating that the space is van accessible?		
Is the surface in the parking area made of hard-packed material like pavement, concrete or asphalt? (Loose gravel is not a compliant surface.)		
Is the surface level and smooth?		
If there is a slope, what are the dimensions? (The slope in a parking area cannot be steeper than 1 inch of rise per 48 inches of slope, i.e., 1:48) _____		
If there are grates, are the openings no more than 1/2 inch wide?		

Dimensions for Accessible Parking spaces.



Parking

- Accessible Spaces
 - Van
 - Standard
- Surface Material
- Grates

Reserved Parking

(Handicapped Parking)



Question?

You found a great location with a freshly paved parking lot. The reserved spaces are well done.

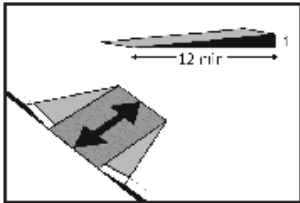
The path of travel to the door is 36" wide and level.

The door threshold has only a 1" rise and the door has a thumb latch handle.

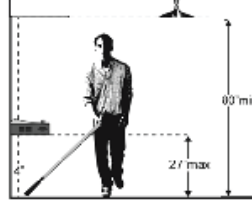
Are you all set?

NOTES:

II. EXTERIOR PATH OF TRAVEL (including ramp and door):	YES	NO
Is the surface of the walkway from the parking spaces to the entrance made of a hard-packed material like pavement, concrete or asphalt? (Loose gravel is not considered a compliant surface.)		
If there are curb cuts, do they have a maximum slope of 1:12?*		
Is the walkway at least 36 inches wide?		
Is the surface level and smooth, without cracks or broken pavement?		
If there is a slope, what are the dimensions? _____		
If there are grates, are the openings no more than ½ inch wide?		
Is the walkway free of protruding objects, including greenery? *		



Curb Cut – 1:12 Slope



Protruding Objects

Ramp: *	YES	NO
Does the ramp have a slope no greater than 1:12?		
Is the ramp at least 36" wide?		
If the ramp is longer than 6 feet, does it have smooth handrails on both sides?		
Is the measurement from the ramp surface to the top of the handrails from 34" to 38"?		
Do the railings have a circumference from 1 and ¼" to 2"?		
Do the handrails extend 12" from the top and the bottom of the ramp?		
Is there a level resting platform at every 30 feet of ramp that measures 60" by at least the width of the ramp?		
Is there a 60" by 60" platform at every point where the ramp changes direction?		
If the ramp leads to a door or entrance, is there a landing at the top that measures at least 60" by 60"?		

Exterior Path of Travel

- Surface
- Curb Cuts
- Grates
- Protruding Objects

Early Voting Parking issue

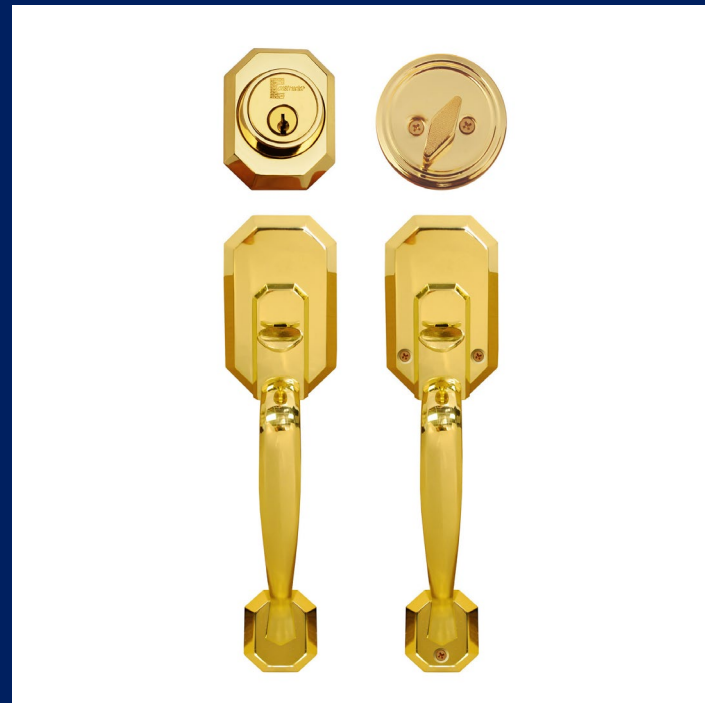


Be sure that there are no events that will interfere with the accessibility at the Early Voting Site, Same Day Registration or Polling Place

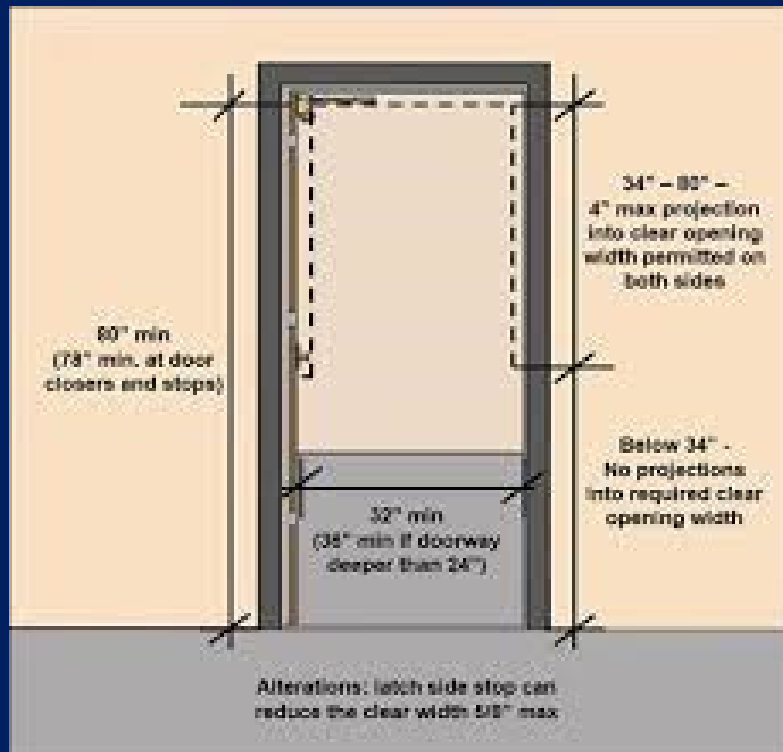
Not the Best Threshold



Doors



Doors



32 Inches Clear Width

Door Force

- **Exterior Doors**
- **Interior Doors**

Threshold

Doors

Is the Door
Unlocked?



What is Wrong?

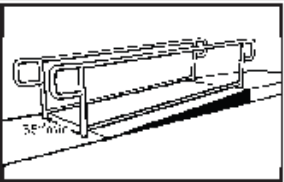
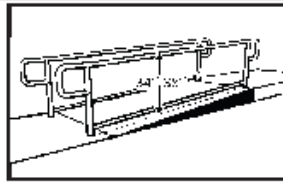
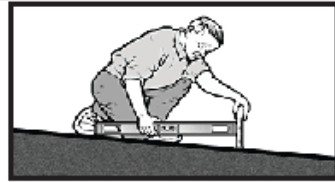
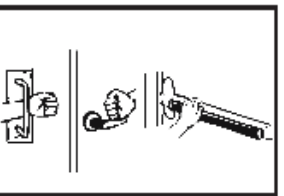
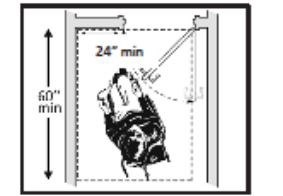

The location you chose has a new beautiful ramp.

It is 7' long and has 1 ¾ diameter round handrails on both sides.

The slope is 1:12

It is 36" wide.

RAMPS

Ramp Width	Handrail Height	Measuring Slope		
				
Exterior Door			YES	NO
If the accessible entrance is different from the main entrance, is there appropriate signage leading to the accessible entrance?				
Does the door have an opening of at least 32 inches, not counting an interior push bar?*				
Is the door threshold ½" or less in height?				
Is the door equipped with a lever or arch handle that does not require grasping or twisting? *				
Is the pressure force of the door greater than 8 ½ pounds? (Note: There is no standard maximum pressure weight for an exterior door, but the recommended maximum is 8 ½ pounds.)				
From a 90 degree open position, does the door close at a slow, even 3-Mississippi count?				
Is there latch side clearance of at least 24 inches when the door opens out? *				
If there is an automatic door, is it in working condition?				
Does it remain open for at least 10 long seconds?				
				
Door Handles	Latchside Clearance	Door Measuring		
III. INTERIOR PATH OF TRAVEL (including doors, ramp and elevator):			YES	NO
If there is a vestibule, is the distance between doors at least 48 inches, plus the width of the doors when swinging into space? *				
Do all doors have a clearance of at least 32 inches, not including a push bar?				
Are door thresholds ½ inch or less in height?				

- Slope – 1:12
- Handrails required if ramp is more than 6' long
- Level landing every 30'
- Handrails – smooth and on both sides
- Level landing at the top



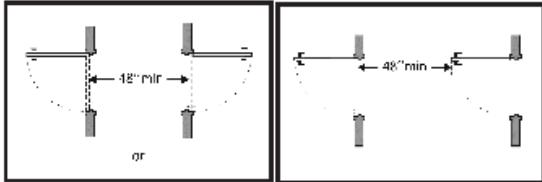
How About these Ramps?



Better!



Are all doors equipped with level or arch handles that do not require grasping or twisting?		
Are the pressure weights of all interior doors not more than the maximum allowable 5 pounds?		
From a 90 degree open position, does the door close at a slow, even 3-Mississippi count?		
Is there latch side clearance of at least 24 inches when doors open out?		
Is the width of all corridors on the path of travel at least 36" wide?		
Is the corridor free of protruding objects and obstacles?		
Is the corridor surface flat, with all rugs or mats securely fastened?		



Vestibule Configurations

Ramp:		
Does the ramp have a slope no greater than 1:12?		
Is the ramp at least 36" wide?		
If the ramp is longer than 6 feet, does it have smooth handrails on both sides?		
Is the measurement from the ramp surface to the top of the handrails from 34" to 38"?		
Do the railings have a circumference from 1 and 1/4" to 2"?		
Do the handrails extend 12" from the top and the bottom of the ramp? (Note: Because interior ramps are generally simpler in construction than exterior ones, questions sometimes applicable to exterior ramps are not included here.)		
Elevator:		
Is the elevator intended for passengers, not freight?		
Is the center of the call button a maximum of 54" from the floor?		
Are door jambs marked with raised numbers and Braille?		
Do the elevator doors provide at least 36" of clear width?		
Is the elevator cab at least 51" deep by 51" wide?		
Is the center of the highest elevator control a maximum of 48" high?		
Are control buttons marked with raised lettering and Braille?		
Are there audible signals when the car stops at and passes a floor?		
Does the door reopen when obstructed?		



Interior Path of Travel

- Doors
- Ramp
- Elevators – good idea?

Thirsty Anyone?

Your polling place has a hallway leading to the voting area. You find that there is a water fountain that protrudes 10" from the wall. The bottom of the fountain is 30" from the ground.

All good?

Notes:

IV. VOTING AREA:	YES	NO
Is there proper lighting in the voting area?		
Are the walls and ceilings free of protruding objects?		
Is the floor surface flat, with all rugs and mats securely fastened?		
Is there at least a 36" clear path of travel to all elements of the polling place?		

See more information on enhancing voter accessibility in the companion document
"Voting Area Recommended Practices."

Voting Area

- **Lighting**
- **Protruding Objects**
- **Floor Surface**





Voting Area Recommended Practices A Checklist

With the proper training and awareness, poll workers can create a polling place that is welcoming to people with disabilities. And, like the ramp that accommodates both a wheelchair and a stroller, implementation of many of the following recommendations will enhance the voting experience for everyone, with and without disabilities.

- Is the accessible parking located no farther than 100 feet from the accessible entrance into the building?
- Have election/primary workers received training in both basic disability etiquette and the disability-related requirements of the law?
- Is the early voting or polling place equipped with extra pens and paper for communicating with people who are deaf or hearing impaired? A white board can also be used.
- Are magnifying devices and signature templates available for those who need them?
- Are provisions made to ensure that paths of travel (inside and outside) are free of debris, trash, snow, leaves, etc.?
- Is there proper lighting along all points (inside and outside) along the route to the voting area?
- Is there intermittent seating where lines are likely to form?
- Is there sufficient space for the unobstructed movement of voters in wheelchairs along the path of travel and in the voting area?
- Are instructions for voting printed in 18 point or larger type in an unembellished font?
- Are the voting instructions written in simple language and prominently displayed?
- Is there a lowered booth available for voters with disabilities?
- Is the IVS machine located in an unobstructed area away from check-in tables and other high-trafficked areas?
- Is the IVS machine fully tested and ready to be used?
- Is the IVS staffed by election workers who know how to program it and deal with problems?
- Are headphones visible and available for use on the IVS machine?
- Do poll workers welcome people to use the IVS machine, rather than discourage them?

Considerations in the polling place!

Voting Area Recommendations

- ✓ Is the IVS ballot marking system fully tested and ready to be used?
- ✓ Is the IVS ballot marking system staffed by poll workers who know how to program it and deal with problems?
- ✓ Are headphones visible and available for use on the IVS?

Accessible Marking Device



**Problem Path
of Travel**

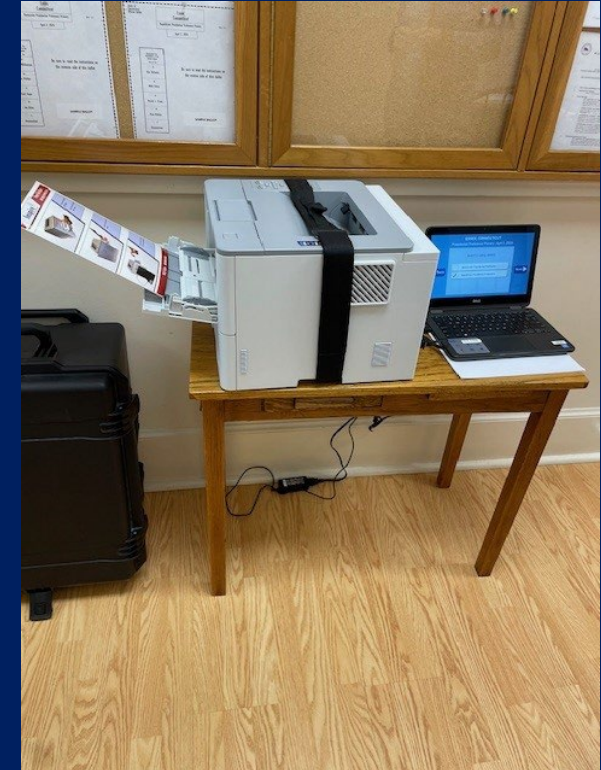


Table Height

Accessible Marking Device



Voting Area Recommendations

- ✓ Have poll workers received training in both basic disability etiquette and the disability-related requirements of the law?
- ✓ Is the polling place equipped with a white board or extra pens and paper for communicating with people who are deaf or hearing impaired?
- ✓ Are magnifying devices and signature templates available for those who need them?

Voting Area Recommendations

- ✓ Are provisions made to ensure that paths of travel (inside and outside) are free of debris, trash, snow, leaves, etc.?
- ✓ Is there proper lighting along all points (inside and outside) along the route to the voting area?
- ✓ Is there intermittent seating where lines are likely to form?
- ✓ Is there sufficient space for the unobstructed movement of voters in wheelchairs along the path of travel and in the voting area?

Voting Area Recommendations

- ✓ Are instructions for voting printed in 22 point or larger type in an unembellished font?
- ✓ Are the voting instructions written in simple language and prominently displayed?
- ✓ Is one lowered booth available both at the IVS ballot marking system and for people who are completing the ballot by hand?
- ✓ Is the IVS ballot marking system located away from check-in tables and other high-trafficked areas?

Signage

