

Permit & Development Center

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The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires that buildings be accessible to people with disabilities. When you submit plans to alter an existing building, they are checked for compliance with ADA. At the same time, the International Building Code limits the amount of money you must spend to make your building accessible. You need spend no more than 20 percent of the cost of your remodeling on accessibility improvements. Access-related costs that exceed 20 percent of the total project cost are considered "disproportionate."

We suggest that you complete the Accessibility Analysis Worksheet at milwaukee.gov/infosheets to help describe improvements linked to accessibility. Submit the worksheet along with your plans. It will help a plan examiner determine if your plans meet accessibility requirements. In some cases, you may need to submit more detailed information: a path of travel accessibility analysis.

These are the items the plan examiner will consider when determining if your plans meet the accessibility requirements:

- A primary function is a major activity for which the facility is intended. Does the alteration involve the usability of a "primary function" space? All spaces are considered primary function areas unless they are mechanical rooms, supply storage rooms, employee lounges or locker rooms, janitorial closets, corridors, entrances, or toilet rooms. For a complete definition see 2015 IBC ch 2.
- What is the "path of travel" or "route" to the altered area? When altering a primary function area, the path of travel to that area must also be made accessible (unless the cost to do so is "disproportionate"). A path of travel is an accessible route to the altered area from anywhere inside the property line, and the bathrooms, telephones, and drinking fountains that serve that area.
- What is the cost of each item required to make the path of travel accessible? The accessibility analysis worksheet is used to show these costs.

If the cost of upgrading the path of travel exceeds 20% of the cost of the proposed alteration work, it is considered "disproportionate" to the alteration costs. If your project costs are "disproportionate," fill out Section D of the accessibility analysis worksheet.

Large projects may require a complete graphic or \written analysis of the building and the site to describe the path of travel and the related accessibility improvements. You can obtain a comprehensive checklist to assist you with this task by contacting your regional Disability and Business Technical Assistance Center at 1-800-949-4ADA.

This analysis will vary with each project, so there is no form for this process, only the checklist. The analysis must therefore be done by someone who has a working knowledge of both the IBC and the ADAAG.

Please submit both the completed form and the analysis together with your plans.

The City of Milwaukee Development Center's plan examination staff (414 286-8210) is available to answer your questions about accessibility. In some cases it may be necessary to obtain the services of an expert in building construction and building codes, such as a registered architect or professional engineer, to help you determine how to bring your building into compliance with federal accessibility requirements.