



MAS NOTE

From the University of Delaware Sea Grant Marine Advisory Service

University of Delaware Sea Grant College Program ♦ 700 Pilottown Road ♦ Lewes, DE 19958

IMPROVING THE ACCESSIBILITY OF FISHING AND BOATING FACILITIES

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There are approximately 12,000 marinas and 1.1 million boat slips in the United States. At many of these facilities, accessibility for people with disabilities is limited.

In September 2002, guidelines for improving the accessibility of fishing piers and platforms and boating facilities were issued by the Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board. This independent federal agency, also known as the Access Board, develops guidelines ensuring that facilities are readily accessible and usable by individuals with disabilities.

The Departments of Justice and Transportation will use these guidelines to issue regulations that must be met by facilities covered by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The ADA is a comprehensive civil rights law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability.

WHO MUST COMPLY

The future regulations will apply to newly designed and constructed fishing and boating facilities used by the public — regardless of whether they are owned or operated by a government agency or by a private entity. Existing public facilities that are being altered also must comply.

Although the regulations have not yet been finalized, owners and operators of public facilities are encouraged to become familiar with the new guidelines as set forth by the Access Board since they represent the minimum standards that will be adopted.

In addition, existing facilities may be required to remove architectural barriers if it can be accomplished with minimum difficulty or expense.

FISHING PIERS AND PLATFORMS

Railings, guardrails, and handrails are not required on fishing pier and platforms. If railings are provided, then 25% of those must be 34 inches or lower to enable fishing for people using wheelchairs. Lowered railings must be dispersed throughout a fishing facility. In addition, at least one clear space — 30 inches wide and 48 inches deep — is required at every location where a 34-inch-high rail is mounted. However, if a jurisdiction has a safety code that requires a safety rail above 34 inches, then the railing must comply with International Building Code requirements.

A 2-inch-high edge protection is required if railings, guardrails, or handrails are provided, unless the deck surface extends a minimum of 12 inches beyond the inside

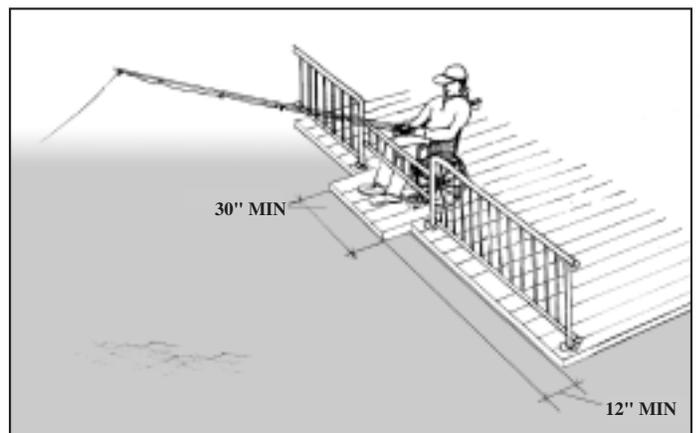


USDA Forest Service

New guidelines recently were issued to improve the accessibility of fishing piers and platforms and boating facilities.

face of the railing. If the deck surface is extended, then there must be a space that is at least 30 inches wide and 9 inches high above the ground or deck surface beyond the railing to ensure adequate toe clearance (see Figure 1).

At least one clear area, generally 60 inches in diameter, must be provided on a fishing pier or platform so people using a wheelchair have room to turn.



U.S. Access Board

Figure 1. A 12-inch deck extension without edge protection.

TABLE 1

**Minimum Number of Accessible Boat Slips
Based on Total Number of Slips in the Facility**

Boat Slips Provided	Minimum Accessible Boat Slips
1 to 15	1
26 to 50	2
51 to 100	3
101 to 150	4
151 to 300	5
301 to 400	6
401 to 500	7
501 to 600	8
601 to 700	9
701 to 800	10
801 to 900	11
901 to 1,000	12
1,001 and over	12 plus 1 for each 100 slips or a fraction thereof over 1,000 slips.

Structures that have been designed and constructed for purposes other than fishing (for example, a breakwater jetty or bridge) are not required to comply with these provisions even though they may be used for fishing.

BOATING FACILITIES

Gangway Slope. A gangway is a pedestrian walkway linking a fixed structure or land with a floating structure. The key challenge in maintaining accessibility is providing for changes in the slope of the gangway as water levels rise and fall.

In general, the slope of the gangway must be no greater than 1 foot for every 12 feet in length (1:12), but provides an exception so that the gangway does not have to be longer than 80 feet. The slope requirement is further modified for marinas with fewer than 25 boat slips. In these facilities, the slope may exceed 1:12 if the gangway is at least 30 feet long.

Boat Launch Ramps. If a facility includes boat launch ramps that require boarding piers, at least one of the boarding piers must be accessible.

Accessible Slips. The number of boat slips required to be accessible is based on the total number of boat slips in the facility (see Table 1). If the number of slips is not identified, then each 40 feet of mooring space along the perimeter of a pier counts as one boat slip.

If a boating facility has different types of boat slips, such as shallow and deep water slips or covered and uncovered slips, then the accessible boat slips must be dispersed

throughout the various types of slips. This does not require that the number of accessible slips be increased.

Boat slips are not “reserved” for people with disabilities in the same manner as vehicle parking spaces. Accessible slips are held for people with disabilities until all other boat slips are filled. At that point, accessible slips are available for general use on a first-come, first-served basis.

Pier Clearances. Piers that service accessible boat slips must be at least 60 inches wide. In addition, every 10 feet (120 inches) of linear pier edge must contain at least one opening that is a minimum of 60 inches wide (see Figure 2). These clearances provide boaters with disabilities with space for maneuvering as well as space for using transfer devices to embark and disembark from their vessels.

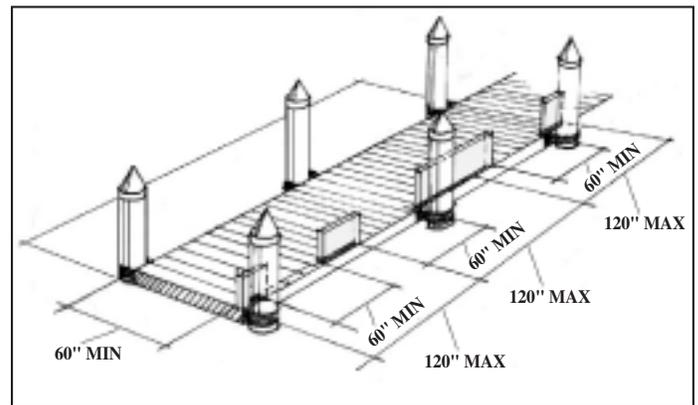


Figure 2. Clear spaces are needed along the length of a pier to provide access to a boat slip for people with disabilities.

The width of the pier may be reduced to a minimum of 36 inches for a maximum length of 24 inches. Multiple 36-inch-wide segments must be separated by pier segments that are 60 inches in both width and length.

Accessible slips do not require edge protection. If an edge protection is provided, it can be no more than 4 inches high and 2 inches wide.

Alterations to Existing Facilities. Clear pier space may be located perpendicular to the boat slip and extend the width of the boat slip if the facility has at least one boat slip complying with the standard provisions of the guidelines and if further compliance would result in either a reduction of the number of boat slips available or the widths of the existing slips.

For further information, please contact the Office of Technical and Information Services at the Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board, 1331 F Street, NW, Suite 1000, Washington, DC 20004-1111. Phone: (800) 872-2253 (Voice); (800) 993-2822 (TTY). E-Mail: info@access-board.gov.



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