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# ADA Requirements for the Design of Parking Spaces

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# **Study Guide for Course on ADA Parking Requirements**

This Study Guide is a compilation of two ADA documents:

1. “Accessible Parking,” [fact sheet] developed by the Mid-Atlantic ADA Center, 2014.
2. Excerpts from “A Planning Guide for Making Temporary Events Accessible to People with Disabilities,” [booklet] ADA National Network, 2015.



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## Accessible Parking

The U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) issued new regulations under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in 2010. The new rules affect state and local governments (Title II of the ADA), as well as public accommodations and commercial facilities (Title III). The regulations include the new 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design, outlining minimum accessibility requirements for buildings and facilities.

### Existing Facilities

New construction projects must meet minimum standards with very few exceptions; alterations are also subject to strict requirements, although they may be more affected by existing structural conditions. Existing buildings and facilities which are not undergoing planned alterations are viewed a little differently.

#### *Title II: Program Access*

State and local government agencies that offer programs, services, or activities in existing facilities need to make sure that people with disabilities can gain access and participate in these activities. There are a variety of ways that agencies can ensure access to programs, but making structural improvements is often necessary.

#### *Title III: Barrier Removal*

Both commercial facilities and public accommodations must follow standards for new construction and alterations. Additionally, public accommodations (private businesses that are open to the general public, like retail stores, restaurants, banks, parking garages, and many others) must remove barriers when it is “readily achievable” to do so; readily achievable means

“easily accomplishable and able to be carried out without much difficulty or expense.” Designating accessible parking is often readily achievable, and is considered a top priority because it enables many people with disabilities to “get in the door.”

### Safe Harbor

The 2010 regulations include a “safe harbor” for features that already comply with the 1991 standards, but may not meet the new 2010 standards. *For example:* A retail store’s parking lot has a total of 250 parking spaces; in compliance with 1991 standards, the lot includes seven accessible spaces, one of which is van-accessible. The 2010 standards would require two van-accessible spaces, but the store does not have to modify its parking lot to provide the additional space until the lot undergoes a planned alteration (re-stripping, re-surfacing, etc.) after March 15, 2012. If the lot is altered after that time, it will then be brought into compliance with the 2010 standards, to the maximum extent feasible.

### How many accessible parking spaces are needed?

**One of every six accessible parking spaces, or fraction thereof, must be “van-accessible.”** For example: A parking lot with 400 total spaces needs eight accessible spaces, and two of those eight spaces must be van-accessible.

Accessible spaces must connect to the shortest possible accessible route to the accessible building entrance or facility they serve.



Total Number of Parking Spaces in Parking Facility (Lot or Garage)	Minimum Number of Accessible Parking Spaces Required
1 - 25	1
26 - 50	2
51 - 75	3
76 - 100	4
101 - 150	5
151 - 200	6
201 - 300	7
301 - 400	8
401 - 500	9
501 - 1000	2% of total
1001 and over	20, plus 1 for each 100, or fraction there-of, over 1000

Where a parking facility serves multiple buildings or accessible entrances, accessible parking spaces should be dispersed to enable people to park near as many accessible entrances as possible. *For example:* A shopping center has fifteen stores, each with a separate entrance. There is one large parking lot with 1000 spaces. The twenty accessible parking spaces should be dispersed to provide some options for people to park close to the different stores.

Where separate parking facilities serve the same building or entrance, accessible spaces may be grouped together, as long as the number of spaces provided is determined according to each of the separate parking facilities. *For example:* A sports stadium has an adjacent parking lot with 1000 spaces and a separate parking lot several blocks away with an additional 1500 spaces. The

adjacent lot needs 20 accessible spaces (four of which need to be van-accessible), and the remote lot needs 25 accessible spaces (five of which need to be van-accessible). Since accessible spaces need to be as near as possible to the facilities they serve, the 45 accessible spaces (including nine van-accessible) can be located in the lot adjacent to the stadium.

### Medical Facilities

Certain types of medical facilities need more accessible parking.

- Hospital outpatient facilities need **10%** of patient/visitor spaces to be accessible.
- Rehabilitation facilities that specialize in treating mobility-related conditions and outpatient physical therapy facilities need **20%** of patient/visitor spaces to be accessible.

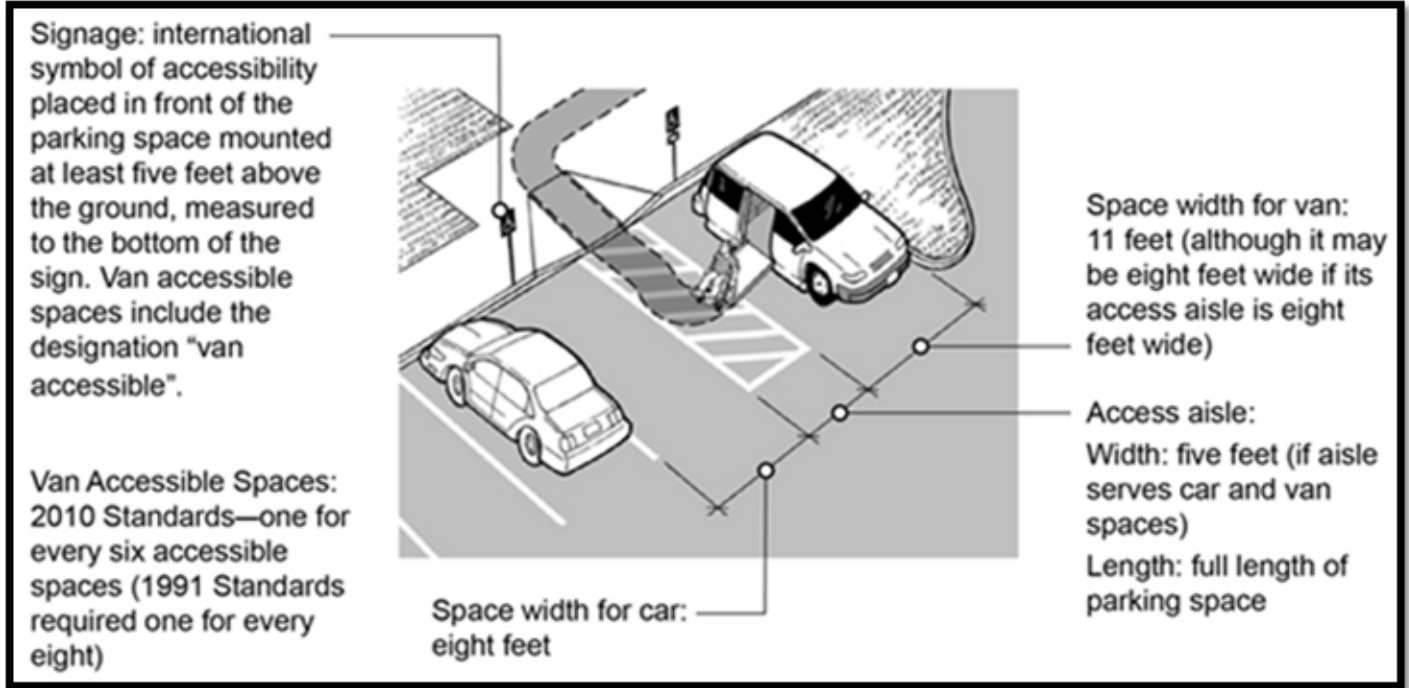
The number of van-accessible spaces is still one of every six accessible parking spaces, or fraction thereof.

*For example:* An outpatient physical therapy facility has a parking lot with 50 total spaces for employees only. Following basic requirements, that lot will need two accessible spaces, one of which will be van-accessible. A separate lot with 200 total spaces is provided for patients and visitors; this lot will need 40 accessible spaces, seven of which will be van-accessible.

### Exceptions

- Parking facilities that are used exclusively for buses, trucks, delivery vehicles, law enforcement vehicles, and vehicular impound are not required to include accessible spaces, but if such lots are accessed by the public (e.g. impounded vehicle retrieval) then an accessible passenger loading zone must be provided.

## What do accessible parking spaces look like?



Dimensions (all dimensions are minimums): Accessible parking spaces are eight (8) feet wide; van-accessible spaces are eleven (11) feet wide. Access aisles for either type of space are five (5) feet wide. These adjacent aisles, which can be shared between two spaces, provide room for individuals to deploy vehicle-mounted wheelchair lifts and/or unload and use mobility devices such as wheelchairs, walkers, etc. An alternate design allows a van-accessible space to be eight (8) feet wide if the adjacent access aisle is also eight (8) feet wide.

Access aisles must be marked (e.g., painted with hatch marks) to discourage parking in them. This is especially important where the alternate design is used and an access aisle at a van-accessible space is the same size as the space.

The surface of accessible spaces and access aisles must be smooth, stable, and virtually level in all directions to ensure safe use for people with disabilities, including those who must load, unload, and use wheeled mobility devices.

Additionally, van-accessible spaces, their associated access aisles, and the vehicular routes serving them must provide vertical clearance of at least 98 inches to allow for the height of typical wheelchair lift-equipped vehicles.

### Signs

Accessible parking spaces must be identified by signs that include the International Symbol of Accessibility. Signs at van-accessible spaces must include the additional phrase "van-accessible."

Signs should be mounted so that the lower edge of the sign is at least five (5) feet above the ground. This helps ensure visibility both for motorists and local enforcement officials.

### Exceptions

- Parking lots that have four or fewer total spaces do not need to designate the accessible space with a sign. This means that for the purposes of local enforcement (at least in most jurisdictions), anyone, with or without a disability, can park in the accessible space. This is intended to excuse very small entities from having to reserve 25% to 100%

of their available parking for individuals with disabilities.

- Residential facilities where parking spaces are assigned to specific dwelling units are also exempt from the requirement to post signs at accessible spaces.

Note that these two exemptions are only related to signs; accessible parking spaces must still be provided in appropriate numbers and with other required features (minimum width, etc.).

## Maintenance

It is important that accessible features be maintained, and outdoor spaces can be especially challenging because of weather and other conditions. Accessible parking spaces, aisles, and routes should be maintained in good repair and kept clear of snow, ice, or fallen leaf build-up.

## Other Laws, Other Requirements

The ADA establishes these requirements to ensure that when parking facilities are provided by entities covered by Title II or Title III, accessible spaces with certain features are available. Many state and local governments

have their own requirements, which may be more specific or more stringent in some ways.

Each state also establishes criteria and procedures to issue accessible parking permits (often in the form of distinctive license plates or placards) to individuals with disabilities. Enforcement activities related to these issues (fraudulent use of permits, illegal parking in accessible spaces, etc.) are typically carried out by state and local authorities, such as city police departments.

Other requirements may be relevant in different situations or under different laws. For example, the Fair Housing Act requires covered housing providers to make “reasonable accommodations” for residents with disabilities, which could mean reserving a parking space for a specific individual.

Content was developed by the Mid-Atlantic ADA Center, and is based on professional consensus of ADA experts and the ADA National Network.



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# A Planning Guide for Making Temporary Events Accessible to People with Disabilities



2015

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# Introduction

Street festivals, craft fairs, music events, sporting events and home shows are but a few of the many temporary events that take place every day in communities both large and small throughout the nation. Temporary events celebrate and support a "sense of community" and must encourage participation by all people.

This guide provides information to assist planners, managers, operators and building owners in making temporary events accessible to people with disabilities.

This guide acquaints the reader with:

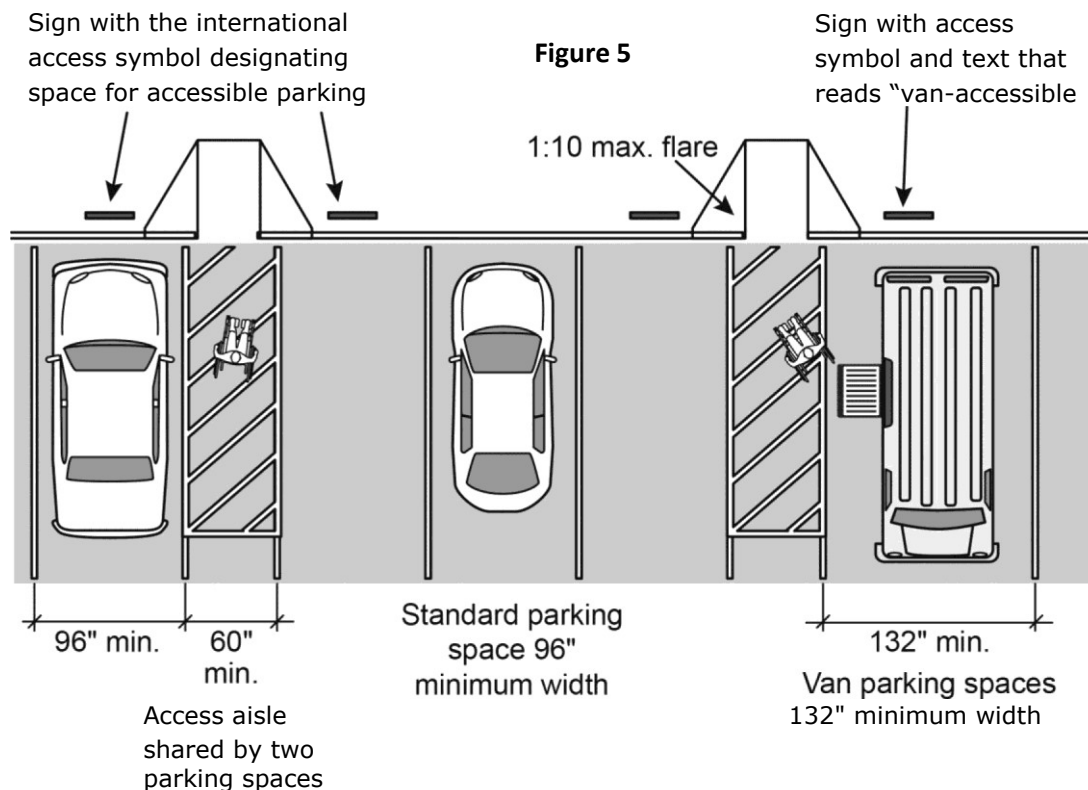
- The value of making temporary events accessible.
- An overview of the law.
- Planning strategies to help prevent discrimination.
- Typical barriers encountered by people with disabilities and solutions for removal.
- Methods of locating and coordinating available resources to achieve accessibility.

This guide addresses most questions about how to host an accessible temporary event. However, if you have additional questions, please call your regional ADA Center for more information at **1800949-4232**.

*The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is part of our larger civil rights tradition which recognizes and celebrates diversity and strives to include all members of our society. It is in this spirit that accessibility should be embraced.*

## PARKING

To use parking spaces safely, people with wheelchairs or other mobility aids need more space than is available at typical non-accessible parking spaces. Each accessible parking space must be equipped with a level access aisle to provide adequate space for car doors and van lifts to open and for users to maneuver. To conserve on space, two parking spaces may share one access aisle (Figure 5).



### Parking Spaces and Access Aisles

As many states have additional design requirements for accessible parking spaces, it is advisable to check your state and local building codes to ensure that your accessible parking spaces comply with both the ADA and state/local requirements. Accessible parking spaces must be as close as possible to a main event site or building entrance and be connected to that entrance by a smooth, level path without curbs or obstructions, i.e., an accessible route.

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## Number of Accessible Parking Spaces Required

At a minimum, there should never be fewer accessible parking spaces than specified in the ADA Standards (Table 1). Of these, at least one in every six accessible parking spaces must be “van accessible.” Van spaces, to be usable, must be wider than those designed for cars.

**Table 1: Number of Accessible Parking spaces as Specified in the ADA Standards**

Total parking spots in lot	Minimum number of accessible spaces required*
1 to 25	1
26 to 50	2
51 to 75	3
76 to 100	4
101 to 150	5
151 to 200	6
201 to 300	7
301 to 400	8
401 to 500	9
501 to 1000	2 percent of total
1001 and over	20 plus 1 for each 100 over 1000

**\*Note that one of every six accessible spaces, or fraction of six, must be van accessible. For example, if eight accessible spaces are required, two of those eight spaces must be van accessible.**

## Accessible Vans

To provide sufficient room to deploy a lift, van accessible spaces should be at least 132 inches wide. For events catering to a specific audience, the number of accessible spaces may have to increase beyond the minimum if the event is directed toward a population consisting of a large number of people who have mobility disabilities, for example, a function specifically for people who are older.

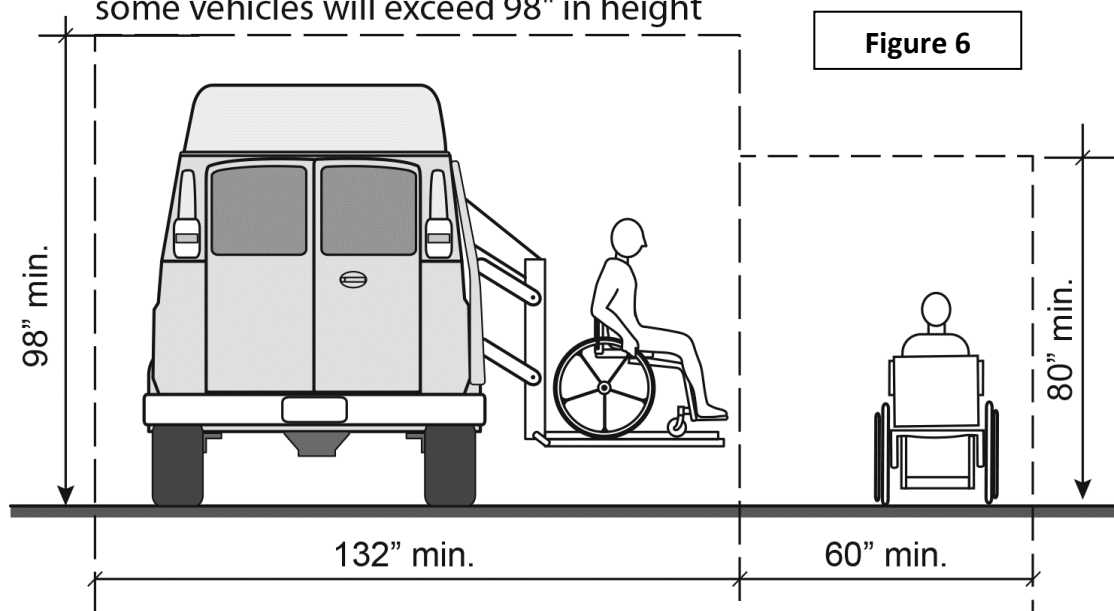
## Location

**General:** Accessible parking spaces must be level and adjoin an accessible route to entrances. Accessible parking spaces should be placed as close as possible to the accessible entrance served by the parking area to minimize the need for a person with a disability to travel long distances to merely arrive at the entrance.

Ideally, all parking areas should have accessible spaces. However, if one lot is closer to the event entrance, it may be best to locate all accessible spaces in that lot. Covered parking or unloading areas should be available for people with disabilities, who often take longer to get into and out of vehicles.

**Parking Garages:** Parking garages may be problematic because the vertical clearance at the entrance may be too low to accommodate personal vans equipped with raised roofs, a feature on many accessible vans. As stated in the Standards, vertical clearance for van-accessible parking spaces and the vehicular route to them is 98 inches minimum. Some personal use vans require even greater clearance, thus a vertical dimension greater than 98 inches is recommended. (Figure 6).

**Note:** these are minimum vertical clearances, some vehicles will exceed 98" in height



## Van Parking Space Vertical Clearance

Van-accessible spaces may be provided in alternate locations outside the garage, but as close as possible to an accessible entrance and at no additional inconvenience to the driver/passenger with a disability.

**Off-Site Parking:** If a significant portion of or all parking is located in areas not adjacent to the event site, accessible routes must be provided to and from accessible parking spaces in these areas. If the accessible route includes walks, streets, or parking facilities not under the control of the event organizer, it may be necessary to make prior arrangements to ensure that accessible spaces and routes to them are available.

Many of the temporary parking and walkway solutions presented in this chapter can also be used in off-site areas. One of the most critical issues is the use of curb ramps for crossing streets and parking lots. It may be possible to request that curb ramps be installed or to use strategically placed portable ramps as needed.

It may be best under these circumstances to create accessible, temporary parking on-site and indicate its availability both on directional signage and in publicity material.

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It may also be possible to use accessible vans or buses to shuttle people from outlying parking areas. This may be a large commitment of resources for an event if the use of shuttles is not already being planned for the benefit of other event participants. However, if a shuttle service is planned, the shuttle must be accessible and accessible parking spaces must be available in lots served by the shuttle.

### **Parking Signage**

Each accessible parking space should be clearly marked with a vertical sign displaying the accessibility symbol. Wider spaces for vans should be designated as “van accessible.”

Signs for accessible parking must be positioned in strategic locations along the site if those spaces are not located within the general parking areas. It may be necessary to designate accessible parking along the street when parking lots have severe grades or parking garages have low vertical clearances.

### **Upgrading Out-of-Date Accessible Parking Spaces**

Accessible parking spaces that were built before passage of the ADA may not conform to current standards. The most common problems are insufficient number, narrow access aisles, and spaces that lack or have improperly designed curb ramps.

These problems should be corrected as much as possible to meet the Standards. If permanent changes are not possible or cannot be made in time for an event, temporary solutions should be made.

**Access Aisles:** Many access aisles are too narrow, i.e., less than 60 inches wide. To solve this you can block off the entire adjacent parking space and add that space to the access aisle, thus increasing the area available in which to maneuver a wheelchair or mobility aid. This also is a good method for providing additional space around an existing curb ramp that projects into access aisles.

**Curb Ramps:** Many existing curb ramps have slopes that are too steep, have too much surface warp or cross slope, and have insufficient room for a person using a wheelchair to turn out of the ramp onto a level area. These conditions are dangerous and can cause many who use manual wheelchairs to tip and fall.

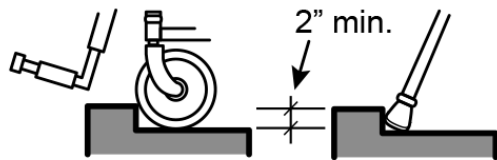
A few solutions to address problem curb ramps include:

- Adding a temporary ramp at another location even if it is necessary to create a new access aisle. The easiest method is to designate an entire parking space for this purpose because no additional striping of the lot is necessary.
- Installing edge protection where none exists (Figure 7).

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Edge protection prevents crutch tips and small caster wheels from slipping off edge of surface.

Figure 7



Curb Detail

Some people in manual wheelchairs, power wheelchairs, or scooters may be able to use steeper curb ramps (short run ramps) if the slope of the ramp is between 1:8 and 1:10 for a maximum rise of three inches or between 1:10 and 1:12 for a maximum rise of 6 inches. However, longer ramps are dangerous if they have a slope greater than 1:12.

Exposed drop-offs on curb ramps where no side flares are provided are a hazard, especially when crowds are present. Anyone could accidentally travel off the edge of the ramp and twist an ankle due to the abrupt level change. This condition is especially hazardous for people using wheelchairs who could be pitched out of their wheelchairs onto the pavement.

Railroad ties, planters, masonry blocks, and similar large objects set along the edge of an exposed drop-off can provide a warning and a physical barrier. Such objects should project at least two to four inches above the surface of the ramp. The best method to prevent an actual fall is to securely attach a permanent feature such as a return curb or side flare to the exposed edge of the ramp.

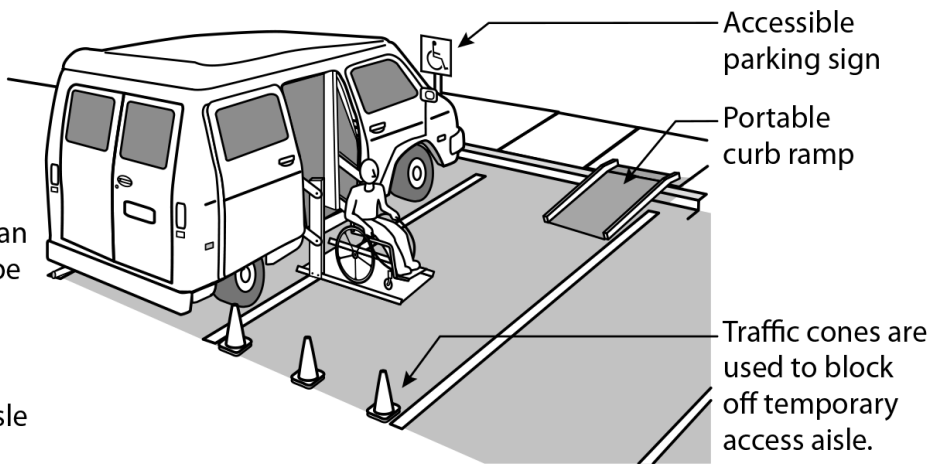
### **Creating Temporary Accessible Parking Spaces**

When necessary, temporary accessible spaces can be created in permanent paved lots, dirt lots, or fields.

**Existing Parking Lots:** Choose spaces that are level, close to an accessible entrance and near existing curb ramps. Mark or block off an existing parking space with cones, barricades, or pavement marking tape to create a new access aisle and use the accessibility symbol to designate the accessible spaces. If no existing curb ramps are available and the new parking spaces border on the sidewalk, place a portable curb ramp in the temporary access aisle to gain access to the sidewalk level (Figure 8).

**Figure 8**

When there is no accessible parking, an existing space can be temporarily used as an access aisle to make the spaces on either side of the aisle accessible.



## Temporary Modifications to Permanent Site Feature

**Temporary Parking Lots:** Grass fields or dirt lots used as temporary parking areas usually have no marked spaces. Most likely, participants will arrive and be directed to a parking space. Accessible spaces must be created and held in reserve for people with disabilities.

Accessible parking spaces should be located where the surface is firm and stable. Dirt should be hard and compact and grassy areas closely cut to ground level. Loose sand, gravel, and overgrown grassy areas are too difficult to travel across for many people using wheelchairs or those who walk with difficulty. Sites that become slippery or muddy when wet will not be usable by everyone. If it is possible to find a paved lot with an accessible route, locate accessible parking there.

As with all accessible parking, those designated in temporary lots should be level and near accessible entrances. The space should be laid out in accordance with the Standards and identified with the accessibility symbol. Use crowd control fences, traffic cones, and/or similar barricades to set aside accessible parking areas, and designate each space with a sign displaying the accessibility symbol. Create an accessible route from the parking access aisles to the event entrance.

You may need to place plastic or rubber matting over unstable natural surfaces to make them navigable for short distances (see “Natural Surfaces” in Chapter 4).

People using wheelchairs should not have to travel behind parked cars or cross vehicular traffic lanes. If this is unavoidable, the pedestrian route (especially where the route crosses traffic lanes), access aisles, and parking spaces should be clearly defined. Methods and materials to use include chalk or aerosol paint, ropes and stanchions, crowd control fences, and barricades at key points.



### Disclaimer

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