The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and PARKING

An overview of current accessible parking requirements.

WILLIAM F. KAVANAGH, AIA, is director of parking design with The Harman Group. He can be reached at bkavanagh@harmangroup.com.

By William F. Kavanagh, AIA

ACCESSIBLE PARKING REQUIREMENTS are fairly straightforward and easy to comply with if you understand what all of the applicable requirements are for a given garage location. This article will focus on some of the basic accessible parking requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) so you can quickly assess your existing parking facilities for compliance.

There are numerous accessibility requirements at the federal, state, and local levels. At the federal level, there is the ADA's *2010 ADA Standards for Design*. At the state level, there are the building code's accessibility chapter or state specific accessibility code, and their references to other accessibility standards such as *ICC/ANSI A117.1 Accessible and Useable Buildings and Facilities*. Finally, at the local level, there may be additional requirements listed in the zoning code or other ordinances. Where the various codes, standards, and ordinance requirements are in conflict, garage owners should comply with the most stringent.

On Sept. 15, 2010, the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) published revised regulations for Title II and Title III of the ADA of 1990. Accessibility at state and local government facilities is addressed by Title II. Title III pertains to places of public use and commercial facilities. These regulations adopted revised, enforceable accessibility standards called the *2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design*.

The *2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design* govern the construction of places of public use, commercial buildings, and state and local government buildings. These standards apply to all construction projects where the start date is on or after March 15, 2012. The obligation to improve the accessibility of existing buildings and sites is an ongoing one. You are required to remove any barriers going forward, especially when performing restoration or restriping efforts. Your parking facilities are not grandfathered by the accessibility code in place at its time of construction. In other words, it is highly likely that most parking garages in the country need to comply with these standards.

Both the *2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design* and *Guidance on the 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design* are available as free downloads from ADA.gov. The guidance provides detailed information about the changes, the reasoning behind those changes, and responses to public comments.

2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design Minimum Number of Accessible Stalls [208.2]

The minimum number of parking spaces required to be accessible is listed in Table 208.2 and based upon the total number of spaces in the garage. Whether or not a garage is in compliance is impossible to tell at first glance because the total number of parking spaces needs to be determined first. The number of spaces is calculated separately for each parking facility.

Table 208.2 Parking Spaces

Total Number of Parking Spaces Provided in Parking Facility	Minimum Number of Required Accessible Parking Spaces
1 to 25	1
26 to 50	2
51 to 75	3
76 to100	4
101 to 150	5
151 to 200	6
201 to 300	7
301 to 400	8
401 to 500	9
501 to 1,000	2 percent of total
1,001 and over	20, plus 1 for each 100, or fraction thereof, over 1,000

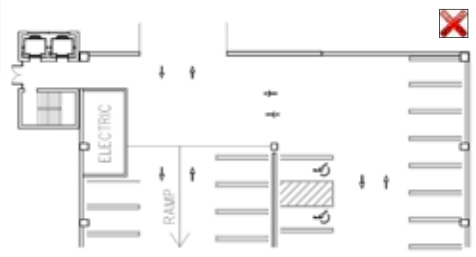
Van Accessible Stalls [208.2.4]

One-sixth of all accessible stalls need to be van accessible.

Shortest Accessible Route [208.3.1]

Accessible spaces are required to be located on the shortest accessible route between parking and the building served. Below you can see an electrical room where the accessible spaces should have been located.

"208.3.1 General. Parking spaces complying with 502 [accessible stalls] that serve a particular building or facility shall be located on the shortest accessible route from parking to an entrance complying with 206.4..."



2012 IBC Section 1106.6 has the same requirement.

Accessible Stall Dimensions [502.2]

Standard accessible stalls need to be a minimum of eight feet wide, and van-accessible stalls need to be a minimum of 11 feet wide or a minimum of eight feet wide with an eight-foot-wide access aisle. The operable word is "minimum"— a seven-foot, 11-inch-wide accessible stall would be considered a violation. Stall lengths are determined by local parking ordinances or zoning codes. Some examples of parking stall lengths are 18 feet; 18 feet, six inches; 19 feet; or even 20 feet long. You should be concerned if you see someone with a tape measure carefully perusing the accessible stalls in your parking facility.

Access Aisles [502.3]

Accessible stalls shall be served by an adjacent access aisle that is a minimum of five feet wide. Two spaces can share a common access aisle except for angled van accessible stalls, which require their own access aisle on the right side of the vehicle. Access aisles shall adjoin an accessible route. Access aisles shall extend the full length of the parking stall. It is not uncommon to see building columns, trash cans, or bollards encroach into the access aisle; these are not allowed.

"502.3.2 Access Aisle Length. Access aisles shall extend the full length of the parking spaces they serve."

2012 IBC references ICC A117.1- 2009 which has the same requirement [502.4.3].

Floor or Ground Surface [502.4]

Access aisles shall be at the same level as the parking spaces they serve. Changes in level are not permitted, except that slopes not steeper than 1:48 shall be permitted at the stalls and aisles. This is a fairly common violation. Ramps in the access aisle are a regular mistake. Because parking lots and parking garage floors are sloped for drainage of water, it is easy to exceed the 1:48 slope limit, which is fairly flat at about 2 percent. Some parking lots have been re-graded so as to provide this required low slope area for accessible parking (see images on page 41). Notice how the new darker pavement has been regarded at the accessible stalls. Be concerned if you see someone with a smart level, which allows for the measurement of slope percentages, at the accessible stalls in your parking facility.

"502.4 Floor or Ground Surfaces. Access aisles shall be at the same level as the parking spaces they serve. Changes in level are not permitted.
EXCEPTION: Slopes not steeper than 1:48 shall be permitted. [Stall & aisle]"

2012 IBC references ICC A117.1- 2009 which has the same requirement [502.5].

"502.4 Floor or Ground Surfaces. Access aisles shall be at the same level as the parking spaces they serve. Changes in level are not permitted.
EXCEPTION: Slopes not steeper than 1:48 shall be permitted. [Stall & aisle]"

2012 IBC references ICC A117.1- 2009 which has the same requirement [502.5].

Vertical Clearance [502.5]

Parking spaces for vans and access aisles and vehicular routes serving them shall provide a vertical clearance of 98 inches minimum. Van-accessible stalls are allowed to be grouped together on the ground floor rather than throughout all floors. This allows for the upper floors to have a lesser vertical clearance with shallower floor-to-floor heights.

"502.5 Vertical Clearance. Parking spaces for vans and access aisles and vehicular routes serving them shall provide a vertical clearance of **98** inches [**8'-2"**] minimum."

2012 IBC references ICC A117.1- 2009 which has the same requirement [502.6].

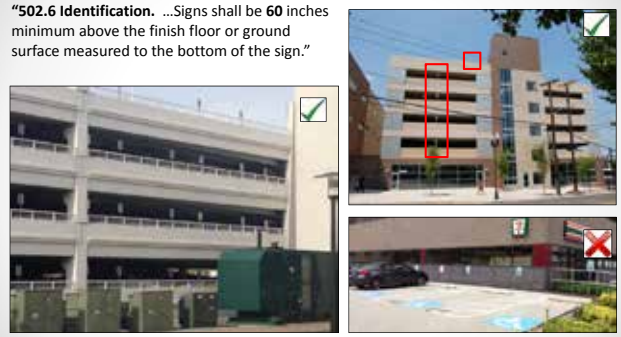
Identification [502.6]

Parking space identification signs shall include the International Symbol of Accessibility. Signs identifying van parking spaces shall contain the designation "van accessible." Signs shall be 60 inches minimum above the finish floor or ground surface, measured to the bottom of the sign. This minimum height requirement often results in signs being mounted between the openings of spandrels on the exterior of garages. Many architects are surprised to see these signs on the garage elevations they have worked so hard to design. Aside from the ADA requirements, signage in general can be challenging for accessible parking stalls. State signage requirements, including penalty signs, vary greatly.

"502.6 Identification. ... Signs identifying van parking spaces shall contain the designation "van accessible". Signs shall be **60** inches minimum above the finish floor or ground surface measured to the bottom of the sign."

2012 IBC references ICC A117.1- 2009 which has the same requirement [502.7].

"502.6 Identification. ...Signs shall be **60** inches minimum above the finish floor or ground surface measured to the bottom of the sign."



2012 IBC references ICC A117.1- 2009 which has the same requirement [502.7].

Based upon the accessibility requirements highlighted here, you should be able to quickly gauge how compliant your accessible stalls are in your parking facilities. For a more in-depth review and understanding, consider hiring an accessibility specialist.

Substantial effort has been made to ensure that all data and information presented here is accurate. However, the Harman Group cannot accept responsibility for errors or oversights in the use of these materials or in the preparation of engineering and architecture plans. The information contain herein is intended for use by professional personnel competent to evaluate the significance and limitations of its contents and able to accept responsibility for the application of the materials it contains.