Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

The ADA became law in 1990. The ADA is a civil rights law that prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in all areas of public life, including jobs, schools, transportation, and all public and private places that are open to the general public. The purpose of the law is to make sure that people with disabilities have the same rights and opportunities as everyone else.

https://adata.org/learn-about-ada

Top 4 tools inspectors use to grade ADA Compliance

The following are the standard tools that the Civil Rights Division uses in conducting its surveys under Project Civic Access:

1. Digital (Tech) Level

The slope of a walkway or curb ramp is instrumental in determining its accessibility. If the slope is too steep it can present a hazard to people using walkers, wheelchairs and other mobility aids.

Using a 24″ digital (tech) level is the most efficient and accurate method to measure a walkway's slope. Daily calibration of these devices will guarantee an accurate read. Also, if dropped, digital levels must be recalibrated before taking further readings. Calibration is a quick and simple process so ***don't skip this all-important step!***

How to use your digital level

It's nearly impossible to tell if the slope is off without measuring. To ensure ADA compliance don't trust your eye to gauge slope accuracy. ALWAYS MEASURE. Even highly experienced pros can misjudge the slope of a walkway without using a good tech level. Make sure to remove all construction debris, leaves, stones, etc. from ramps and walkways before taking a reading. Digital levels are extremely accurate so even a small amount of debris can skew your results.

There are 3 basic ways to read electronic levels. Ratio (such as 1:10), Percentage (%), and Degrees(°). The most common used measurement mode is Percentage. Whichever method you choose make sure to stick with it. Don't switch modes in the middle of the project. This will keep your survey data consistent and easy to understand.

The ADA has set standards for maximum running slopes and cross slopes. The running slope of the curb ramp is the slope in the direction that people travel when going up or down a ramp. The cross slope is perpendicular to the running slope and is measured across the ramp. https://www.ada.gov/pcatoolkit/app1curbramps.htm.

Surveyors should check ADA standards to make sure the running and cross slopes are accurate and in compliance. TIP: If a slope is in compliance at the steepest point of the ramp then it will be in compliance at all other locations on the ramp.

2. Metal Measuring Tape

Building successful ramps and walkways can be complex and requires precise measurements. A good tape measure is a necessity for these types of projects. Surveyors routinely measure long distances so you'll need at least a 25′ (or longer) metal tape measure with clear, easy-to-read

markings. As a rule you will not need to measure increments less than a 1/4″.

3. Digital Camera

Must have at least three megapixels of resolution with a zoom feature that can be used to photograph measurements on tape measures and digital levels. Surveying can be very taxing work. Mistakes can be made, so it is important to record all important data and measurements with digital pictures. A few good pics can expose potential miscalculations and keep the project on course.
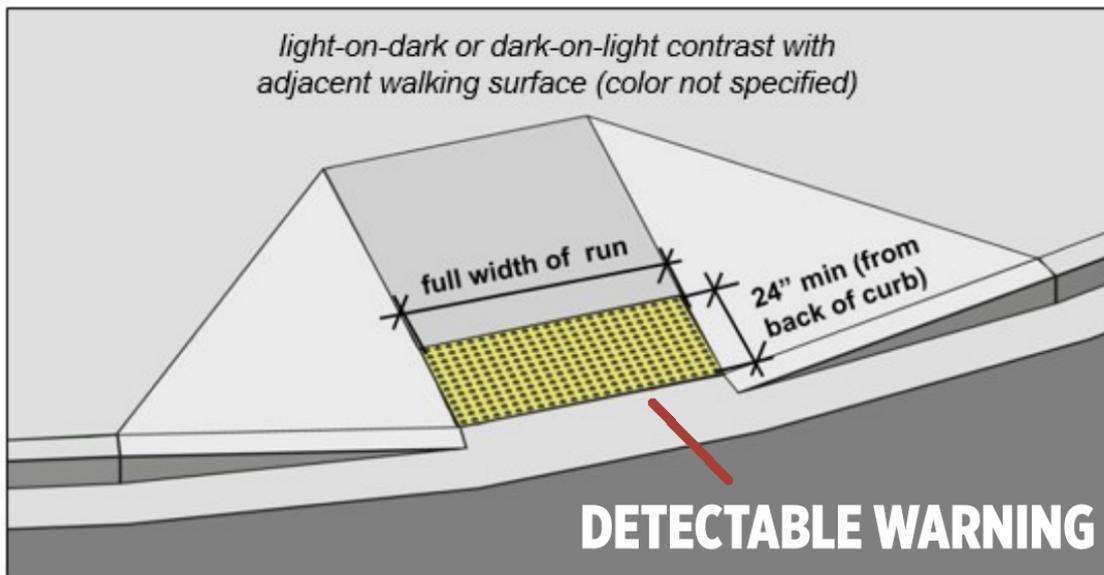
4. Pressure Gauge

It is important to measure the force required to operate faucets, doors and other devices that require pushing or pulling. To accommodate people with disabilities keep the required force to operate these devices to 5 pounds or less.

To properly measure the required force you will need a manual or electronic push-pull pressure gauge. Make sure to calibrate all devices to comply with associated manufacturer specifications.
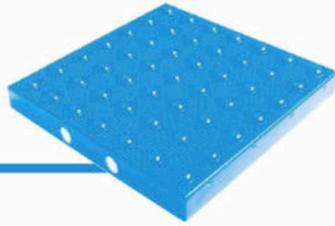
Curb Ramps and Detectable Warnings

Become familiar with DOT standards for installing detectable warnings.
[§406.8 (DOT's Standards), §705]

You will likely need to adhere to these standards and implement the proper detectable warning system, such as armor-tile, for your curb ramp or walkway.
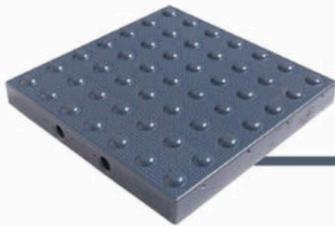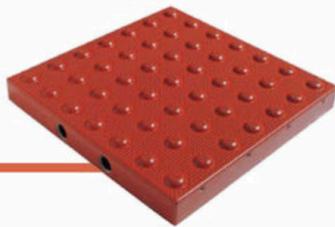
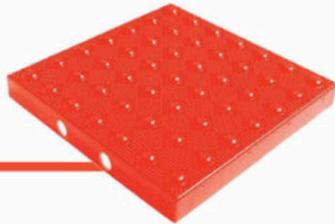# 9 COLORS WITH
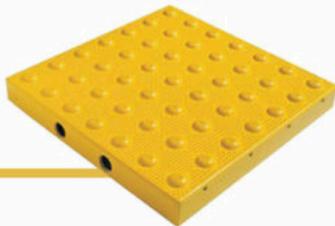## FEDERAL COLOR IDENTIFICATION

BLUE

BLACK

COLONIAL

DARK GREY

RED

LIGHT GREY

YELLOW

WHITE

OCHRE

digging deeper

Check out these links for more detailed information about ADA spec's, curb and ramp compliance and the tools mentioned in this article.

https://www.ada.gov/pcatoolkit/introapp1and2.htm

https://www.access-board.gov/ramps and curb ramps