

Draft Code of Practice on Accessible Heritage Sites

There will be public consultation on this CoP on the following dates:

- Monday 21 April, Silver Springs Hotel Cork
- Tuesday 22 April, Raddisson SAS, Galway
- Wednesday 23 April, Croke Park Dublin.

All Conferences will be from 10.30 until 1pm with refreshments in the morning and Lunch afterwards.

If you would like to attend or send a representative please RSVP to myself at this e-mail address. When registering your interest please indicate if you have any accessibility requirements.

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1. Introduction

The Disability Act 2005 (known throughout this Code of Practice as: the Act) is a positive action measure, which provides a statutory basis for making public services accessible.

This Code of Practice has been prepared by the National Disability Authority (NDA) at the request of the Minister of State for Disability and Mental Health, Dr Jimmy Devins, TD under section 30 of the Act, to guide public bodies on how to meet this obligation.

This Code explains the obligations of the heads of a public bodies to ensure that, as far as practicable, the whole or part of a heritage site in its ownership, management or control and to which the public has access, is accessible to people with disabilities and can be visited by them with ease and dignity – see the text of section 29 of the Act on “Access to heritage sites” in Appendix One.

The Code is supported by the associated complaints process which will apply under sections 38, 39 and 40 of the Act. These sections provide that an individual with a disability can make a complaint about any failure by a public body to comply with section 29 to an inquiry officer appointed by the body under section 39.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of their complaint they can appeal to the Ombudsman as provided under section 40 of the Act.

This Code will be available in a range of accessible formats (see page 23 for the list).

Who will benefit from these provisions?

The Act is designed to improve access to heritage sites for persons with disabilities. The term disability for the purposes of section 29 of the Act is defined in section 2 of the Act, i.e.: “in relation to a person, means a substantial restriction in the capacity of the person to carry on a profession, business or occupation in the State or to participate in social or cultural life in the State by reason of an enduring physical, sensory, mental health or intellectual impairment”.

Providing access for persons with disabilities to heritage sites can mean that the sites become more accessible to a wide range of people with different needs, such as children and elderly people.

What heritage sites are covered?

The heritage sites covered by the Code are defined in subsection 29(3) of the Act and include:

- a monument within the meaning of the National Monuments Acts 1930 – 2004,

- a heritage building or a heritage garden or park within the meaning of the Heritage Act 1995,
- a protected structure or a proposed protected structure with any attendant grounds, or an architectural conservation area, within the meaning in each case of the Planning and Development Act 2000,
- a nature reserve which is the subject of an establishment order within the meaning of the Wildlife Acts 1976 and 2000, and
- a national park owned by the State and under the management and control of the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government.

What public bodies are covered by the Code?

The Code applies to a wide range of public bodies, diverse in the nature of their work and size.

The public bodies covered by the code are defined in section 2 of the Act to cover:

- (a) a Department of State;
 - (b) the Office of the President;
 - (c) the Office of the Attorney General;
 - (d) the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General,
 - (e) the Office of the Houses of the Oireachtas;
 - (f) a local authority;
 - (g) the Health Service Executive;
 - (h) a person, body or organisation (other than the Defence Forces) established
 - (i) by or under any enactment (other than the Companies Acts 1963 to 2003) – this would include, for example, the Broadcasting Commission of Ireland established under the Radio and Television Act 1988; the Central Statistics Office, established under the Statistics Act 1993; the National Disability Authority established under the National Disability Authority Act 1999; the Courts Service established under the Courts Act 1998; and the Legal Aid Board established under the Civil Legal Aid Act 1995,
- OR
- (ii) under the Companies Acts 1963 to 2003, in pursuance of powers conferred by or under another enactment, and financed wholly or partly, whether directly or indirectly, by means of moneys provided, or loans made or guaranteed, by a Minister of the Government or shares held by or on behalf of a Minister of the Government. This would include for example, Dublin Bus, Bus Éireann and Iarnród Éireann.

Public bodies providing services to the general public from heritage buildings as set out in the Heritage Act 1995 should first and foremost consult the NDA's *Code of Practice on Accessibility of Public Services and Information provided by Public Bodies* to understand their statutory responsibilities in improving accessibility to people with disabilities. In addition, such bodies should consult this Code of Practice on Heritage Sites to identify how those areas of their buildings used by visitors with disabilities, including reception areas, toilets, meeting rooms and other facilities can be made accessible.

Addressing accessibility issues

To ensure heritage sites are accessible it is important to be aware of the obstacles encountered by persons with physical, sensory, intellectual or mental health impairments. Their needs will vary and will inform the kind of action that is appropriate and what can be delivered.

Obstacles to accessibility for people with disabilities encompass a broad range of elements including, for example:

- information, where presented in inaccessible formats;
- lack of awareness of the needs of people with disabilities;
- the physical environment e.g. poor design, layout, signage, lighting, etc.;
- service design e.g. where systems, procedures and practices can present obstacles.

Heritage sites can be made accessible when they are developed and adapted to meet the needs of those individuals who may otherwise not have access to them.

In general, this can be facilitated by adopting a proactive and consultative approach to design and service delivery that does not compromise either the archaeological, historical or environmental characteristics of a heritage site.

2 Scope, Aim and Application of the Code of Practice

Scope

Section 29 of the Act is the focus of this Code of Practice.

The Section sets out specific requirements regarding the accessibility of heritage sites which are under the ownership, management or control of a public body and to which the public has access.

This Code covers the following types of heritage site:

- Archaeological sites;
- Heritage buildings;
- Heritage gardens;
- Protected structures;
- Proposed protected structures;
- Nature reserves;
- National parks;
- Architectural conservation areas.

Aim

This Code has been developed in order to support public bodies in fulfilling their statutory obligation under section 29 of the Act (see Appendix One).

Application

This document is a practical guide for public bodies, giving examples of actions to make heritage sites accessible to people with disabilities.

It will also provide a useful source of information for people with disabilities accessing these heritage sites, their advocates, and organisations representing people with disabilities.

Objectives of this Code

The objectives of this Code are to:

1. support public bodies by providing a practical interpretation of the requirements of section 29 of the Act via a journey sequence through a heritage site set out in pages 10 to 21 of this Code;
2. give practical advice on how these requirements can be met while appreciating the range and diversity of heritage sites involved and the need to balance accessibility with site conservation and preservation.

3. Status of this Code of Practice

General

The Code provides guidance on section 29 of the Act. This section of the Act imposes a significant statutory duty upon public bodies which came into effect from 31 December 2007.

Public bodies that comply with this Code are considered to be in compliance with the Act. Subsection 30(6) states “compliance by a public body with an approved code of practice shall be deemed to be compliance with the relevant provision of this Act”.

The National Disability Authority Act 1999 enables the NDA to monitor codes of practice it has developed and that are approved by the Minister... Paragraph 8(2)(d) of the NDA Act 1999, sets out the NDA’s monitoring functions:

“to monitor the implementation of standards and codes of practice in programmes and services provided to persons with disabilities and to report to the Minister thereon”.

Obligations in relation to the Disability Act, 2005

Under section 29 of the Act, the head of a public body is obliged to ensure that the whole or a part of a heritage site is accessible to persons with disabilities and can be visited by them with ease and dignity.

Section 29 of the Act outlines a number of key issues that the head of the public body needs to take into consideration in ensuring that the heritage site is accessible:

- **Practicability:** the obligation applies as far as practicable. For example, deciding whether something is practicable may be guided by consideration of costs and conservation issues;
- **Scope:** it might not be possible to make the entire site accessible. The Act allows for a part of a heritage site to be accessible;
- **Public access:** the obligation applies only to sites to which the public has access.

In the case of certain public transport, buildings the sectoral plan prepared by the Department of Transport, under sections 31 and 34 of the Act, specifies the timeframe(s) for making particular public transport buildings accessible (see subsection 31(5) of the Act).

Responsibilities and Accountability

Section 29 of the Act places a responsibility on the head of a public body, who is defined in section 2 of the Act as being: “the person who holds, or performs the functions of the office of the chief executive officer (by whatever name called) of the body”. As such, they are required to ensure, that the body complies with the provisions set out in section 29.

This Code aims to support the head of the public body in meeting their obligations under the Act.

When implementing the Code, it might be necessary to contact a relevant organisation with a responsibility for, and expertise in, the conservation, preservation and protection of heritage sites. A list of these organisations is contained in Appendix Three of this document.

Structure of the document – Core Elements

The next section of the Code of Practice is divided into nine core elements of the journey sequence through a heritage site which public bodies need to consider when implementing the Code of Practice. This journey covers the essential components of a visit to a heritage site from pre-visit information to leaving the site at the end of the visit. At each point of the journey sequence there are potential barriers to accessibility as well as practical solutions and guidance that public bodies can draw on and implement.

Each core element includes information on:

- the rationale for each element;
- a specific, overall goal that public bodies can be aiming for;
- what public bodies can be looking to achieve;
- what they may find useful in considering what they need to do; and
- a good practice example of the core element being applied.

4. Core Elements of the Code

4.1 Pre-visit Information

4.1.1 Rationale

The diverse needs of people with disabilities need to be considered when preparing and publicising pre-visit information for heritage sites. This information is essential to ensure that people with disabilities can anticipate and prepare for any potential barriers they may encounter at a heritage site.

4.1.2 Goal

Pre-visit Information about the site should be made available in accessible formats to allow people with disabilities to plan their visit.

4.1.3 What public bodies can do to achieve this goal:

- Public bodies should undertake comprehensive access audits of their heritage sites to identify the barriers to accessibility along the journey sequence and highlight these barriers in their pre-visit information;
- Heritage sites should develop action plans to address barriers to accessibility and these action plans can be placed on their websites;
- When carrying out access audits of their heritage sites public bodies should consult with people with disabilities in order to capture their diverse needs and to best identify the different barriers to accessibility that are to be addressed along the journey sequence;
- All potential visitors to a heritage site can have access to pre-visit information about the site;
- Pre-visit information can set out how people with disabilities can journey through the site;
- Pre-visit information should, when necessary, make it clear that certain parts of the site are inaccessible due to the need to preserve the historical character of a site or the need to maintain an environment for the benefit of the local wildlife;
- Heritage site staff should inform people with disabilities about the extent of access on site;
- Pre-visit information leaflets can be made available in alternative formats
- Pre-visit information can specify whether assistance dogs can, or cannot, accompany their owner on site;
- Websites should meet the Double A level conformance with the Web Accessibility Initiative's (WAI) Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) [<http://www.w3.org/WAI/>] ;
- Where access is restricted or impossible to achieve a virtual representation or tour of the heritage site can be provided.

4.1.4 Good practice example

Wicklow Mountains National Park

The web site for the Wicklow Mountains National Park indicates that guided tours are available all year by advance booking. It indicates that the Visitor Centre is accessible for visitors with disabilities, but access to the graveyard is very difficult for wheelchair users.

4.1.5 Public bodies may find the following useful in considering what they need to do:

- IT Accessibility Guidelines, National Disability Authority, 2007, www.accessit.nda.ie/.
- Web Accessibility Initiative's (WAI) Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG), <http://www.w3.org/WAI/>.
- Access to ATMs, UK design guidelines, Centre for Accessible Environments, 2002.

4.2 Approach and entry

4.2.1 Rationale

The approach and entry to a heritage site is an important step in the journey sequence. Entry to a site can vary from open access to a national park, negotiation of un-staffed gates for a monument to secure and ticketed entry. The location and layout of parking and set down areas is an essential early step.

The principal public entry point may not always be a front entrance, but is the entry that most people will use in order to enter the site. It is often the starting point for visitors (e.g., information or reception desk or office or the point from which interpretation starts).

4.2.2 Goal

The principal public entry point to the heritage site should be made accessible where practicable.

4.2.3 What public bodies can do to achieve this goal:

- There can be accessible parking bays laid out as near as possible to the principal public entry point to the site or point of interest;
- Accessible parking bays should have side and rear transfer zones for removal and set up of a wheelchair from the boot of a vehicle or for use of a rear-, or side-, mounted wheelchair hoist;

- Accessible coach parking bays can be laid out as near as possible to the principal public entry point to the site or point of interest;
- Accessible coach parking bays should have side and rear transfer zones for the use of rear-, or side-, mounted wheelchair hoists;
- The signs indicating that a bay is designated an accessible parking bay should not be at ground level as this may create a problem finding the bays at popular sites in a busy high season or if misused;
- There can be clear information accessible to all, discouraging the misuse of accessible parking bays;
- Car parks should be well lit and, where practicable, covered;
- There can be accessible drop off and pick up points laid out as near as possible to the principal public entry point to the site or point of interest;
- Accessible drop off and pick up points should have side and rear transfer zones for removal and set up of a wheelchair from the boot of a vehicle or for use of a rear-, or side-, mounted wheelchair hoist;
- There should be well defined step free and barrier free routes to the main accessible entrance or point of interest in keeping with the character of the site;
- There can be firm level surfaces from the parking area to the entrance. As an alternative to gravel, for example, crushed limestone can be used;
- Where steps are provided, closed handrails can be provided;
- Where an entrance cannot be made entirely accessible trained staff can be on hand to assist people with disabilities;
- Areas where tickets are sold and checked can be made accessible;
- Unobtrusive platform lifts can be installed to create an accessible entrance;
- An accessible entrance can be located in the basement or lower ground floor with an accessible route starting from there.

4.2.4 Good practice example

Treasury Building, Dublin Castle

The current solution being progressed is for an external lift tower at the back of the building facing onto a yard that currently does not have public access and faces away from the main vista of the castle. It will benefit from direct connection to the centre of the building on all levels and provide for additional connection with the basement if required in the future. It also provides for a level approach from the street, in contrast to the steeply sloping Castle Yard to the front of the building.

4.2.5 Public bodies may find the following useful in considering what they need to do:

- The British Standards Institution BS 8300: Design of buildings and their approaches to meet the needs of disabled people, 2001, incorporating amendment No 1, 2005, London, The British Standards Institution.

- Improving Access to Heritage Buildings- A practical guide to meeting the needs of people with disabilities, Australian Council of National Trusts (Eric Martin), Australian Heritage Commission, 1999.
- Overcoming the Barriers: Providing Physical Access to Historic Buildings, Welsh Historic Monuments, Cadw, Cardiff, 2002.

4.3 Wayfinding

4.3.1 Rationale

Wayfinding is the term used to describe the information available on site to help people navigate around it. There can be visual, tactile and audio wayfinding, a complete wayfinding system or a stand alone sign. Clear wayfinding signage and information is critical to ensure ease of movement throughout a heritage site and to facilitate ease of exit from the site.

4.3.2 Goal

Wayfinding features should be made accessible and be designed in a manner that complements the character of the heritage site.

4.3.3 What public bodies can do to achieve this goal:

- Wayfinding information can be provided in a range of alternative formats. These include, for example, large print maps, tactile directories with audio-described directions or raised letters on signs;
- Wayfinding signage should use large sans serif text set in good visual contrast to a matt background;
- Wayfinding signage should use simple language, with upper and lower case letters and should be supported by internationally recognised pictograms or symbols;
- Lighting and acoustics can be set at an appropriate level so that people with sensory impairments can circulate around the site;
- A site map and directory sign should be available to indicate facilities and routes;
- Members of staff should be available to direct visitors;
- Wayfinding can be facilitated by the absence of sharp turns and protruding obstacles.

4.3.4 Good practice example

Wexford Wildfowl Reserve

Though most of the signs and interpretation panels are visual formats they present clear print that is separate from supporting images and diagrams all with good visual contrasts.

4.3.5 Public bodies may find the following useful in considering what they need to do:

- See it Right: Making information accessible for people with sight problem, RNIB, 2006.
- RNIB Clear print guidelines, RNIB, 2006.
- Talking Images Guide: Museums, galleries and heritage sites- improving access for blind and partially sighted people, RNIB, 2003.

4.4 External landscape

4.4.1 Rationale

An accessible external landscape is vital if people with disabilities are to have the opportunity to fully experience what a heritage site has to offer. The external landscape may include the heritage landscape or the setting for a heritage building or monument. It might include paths, resting points, activity areas and viewing points.

4.4.2 Goal

The external landscape of a heritage site should be made accessible without compromising the character of the heritage site or damaging the natural environment.

4.4.3 What public bodies can do to achieve this goal:

- All paths and routes should be smooth and level and of a reasonable width;
- There can be benches and chairs with arms and backs at rest points along paths and routes. Where provided, they should be set back from the paths and routes so there is no obstruction of other users;
- Tapping rails can be provided for visually impaired visitors;
- Paths and routes should be monitored and maintained particularly in the high season;
- The areas adjacent to rest points should be wide, flat, and smooth to facilitate ease of movement;
- Access to rougher or less firm terrain can be provided over short distances with different types of board walk;
- Alternatives to loose gravel can be sourced for paths and routes into the natural landscape;
- Boardwalks can be covered in wire mesh to reduce slipping in damp areas;
- Shelters, appropriate to the site's character, can be provided at rest points;
- Tactile terrain markers can be provided at regular intervals or points of interest;

- Lawns and grassed areas can be regularly cut during the growing season.

4.4.4 Good practice example

Wexford Wildfowl Reserve

A board walk is being developed to provide an inclusive multi-sensory experience of the reed beds. More work is expected to be done to extend it and make as level as possible.

4.4.5 Public bodies may find the following useful in considering what they need to do:

- A guide to accessible green space, The Sensory Trust, R Price and J Stoneham, 2001.
- Accommodation of Disabled Visitors at Historic Sites in the National Park System, Washington, D.C.: Park Historic Architecture Division, National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior (Ballantyne, S. Duncan and Harold Russell Associates, Inc.), 1983.
- A Good Practice Guide to Countryside Access for Disabled People, Expanded CD edition, Cupar: Fieldfare Trust, 2005.

4.5 Circulation within heritage buildings

4.5.1 Rationale

Easy and safe circulation within heritage buildings is at the heart of the visitor experience. Internal circulation covers horizontal and vertical routes to public areas of interest or facilities. Considerations include ease of navigation and manoeuvre space, level changes, quality of finishes, lighting and acoustics.

4.5.2 Goal

People with disabilities should be able to circulate within a heritage building in a manner consistent with the general public where the historical, structural and natural integrity of the site allows.

4.5.3 What public bodies can do to achieve this goal:

- There should be step free alternatives to all routes;
- If it is not possible to make alterations to a heritage site a virtual representation or tour can be provided;
- Where the historical, architectural or natural heritage of the site allows, there should be a good visual contrast between backgrounds and any fixtures or fittings attached to them or placed in front of them;

- Wheelchairs can be available on site for mobility impaired people to borrow or secure for the duration of their visit with a deposit refundable on leaving the site;
- Induction loops for the hearing impaired should be installed where this does not compromise the historical, architectural or natural heritage of the site;
- Reception desks can be designed and installed at low levels and without solid fronts;
- The flow of visitors through the site should be planned in such a way that it does not act as an obstacle to accessibility;
- Acoustics could be enhanced by use of soft textile hangings or a suspended acoustic ceiling;
- Sites can install accessible platforms and passenger lifts.

4.5.4 Good practice example

Muckross House, Co. Kerry

A passenger lift has been installed adjacent to the central historic stairs within a space previously taken-up by service cupboards.

4.5.5 Public bodies may find the following useful in considering what they need to do:

- Building Sight: A handbook of building and interior design solutions to include the needs of visually impaired people, RNIB (Peter Barker, Jon Barrick and Rod Wilson), London, 1995.
- Specifiers' Handbook for Inclusive Design: Automatic Door Systems, Centre for Accessible Environments and RIBA Enterprises, London, 2005.
- Specifiers' Handbook for Inclusive Design: Platform Lifts, Centre for Accessible Environments, London, 2005.
- Specifiers' Handbook for Inclusive Design: Internal floor finishes, Centre for Accessible Environments and RIBA Enterprises, London, 2006.

4.6 Interpretive information available on site

4.6.1 Rationale

Clear interpretive information is vital to help visitors understand more about the site and its heritage significance. This interpretive information may include panels, audio and multi-media information, tactile items and surfaces. It might also include a virtual representation or tour as an alternative to achieving physical access. This might be presented on site where there is limited access in some areas or remotely where the physical layout of the site presents extreme barriers to access.

4.6.2 Goal

People with disabilities should have the opportunity to learn about, experience and understand the unique historic, archaeological or natural character and significance of a heritage site from the interpretive information available on site.

4.6.3 What public bodies can do to achieve this goal:

- Portable audio guides can be designed for visitors with visual impairments incorporating audio description along with the conventional narration;
- Interpretation resources can be multi-faceted and provide opportunities for sensory interaction;
- Interpretation resources can be integrated throughout the journey sequence ;
- Where access is restricted or impossible to achieve a virtual representation or tour of the heritage site can be provided;
- Audio-visual presentations can be available in accessible versions and can incorporate health and safety and accessibility information;
- Interpretive panels should be at an appropriate angle and height, have the correct script and should be designed with the necessary contrast between text and background;
- Interpretive panels should be located where they are most accessible;
- Scale models can be provided with sensory features such as tactile surfaces and Braille;
- Some staff members can be trained in the use of Irish Sign Language.

4.6.4 Good practice example

Brú na Bóinne, Co. Meath

A replica of the site gives people a comparative or near experience of the Newgrange monument and offers an alternative for people who cannot visit the monument due to the limited physical access, lack of time, fear of enclosed spaces or if all tours are booked. Visually impaired people can explore the reproduction of the tomb interior through touch.

4.6.5 Public bodies may find the following useful in considering what they need to do:

- Designing Exhibitions and Museums to Include People with Disabilities: A Practical Guide, The National Museums of Scotland (Gail Nolan), 1997.

- Another Eyesight: Multisensory Design in Context, Julia Ionides and Peter Howell, The Dog Rose Press, 2005.
- Talking Images Guidance: Museums, galleries and heritage sites - improving access for blind and partially sighted people, RNIB, 2003.

4.7 Programmes and events

4.7.1 Rationale

Accessible educational programmes, tours and events can enhance the visitor experience and appreciation of our heritage. Alternative formats for such programmes may include virtual, or touch, tours or presentations through Irish sign language.

4.7.2 Goal

Programmes and events serve to enhance the visitor experience and should be made accessible.

4.7.3 What public bodies can do to achieve this goal:

- Heritage sites should consult with people with disabilities to ascertain any special requirements when planning programmes and events;
- Classes, educational talks, exhibitions, performances, etc can be held in an accessible part of the site;
- Events and programmes can take in to account the diverse needs of people with disabilities and make use of alternative presentation methods;
- Where a heritage site cannot be made accessible, an outreach programme delivered in an accessible location off site, can be developed to ensure people with disabilities can experience what the site has to offer;
- Heritage sites can stipulate accessible features in advertisements for programmes and events;
- If a site is used for public or private ceremonies on a regular basis accessibility provisions can be incorporated in to management operations for such occasions.

4.7.4 Good practice example

Brú na Bóinne, Co. Meath

At Newgrange access for all visitors to the monuments is in groups led by a guide on the site. If a group of people with disabilities want a tour arranged and there are considerations around space and access, staff will, if appropriate, arrange for tours with fewer numbers on them.

4.7.5 Public bodies may find the following useful in considering what they need to do:

- First Steps in Producing Accessible Publications, National Disability Authority, 2006.
- Plain English Guidelines, National Adult Literacy Agency, 2005.
- Arts Council Goals 2006 – 2010, Partnership for the Arts.

4.8 Facilities

4.8.1 Rationale

Facilities such as WCs, cafes, education centres form a central part of the visitor experience as all visitors need to relax or take a break at some stage of their journey through the site. By their nature visitor facilities will either be newly built or adaptations of existing structures.

4.8.2 Goal

Visitor facilities should be made accessible.

4.8.3 What public bodies can do to achieve this goal:

- Facilities should have wide and level layouts with good colour contrasts providing enough space for wheelchairs and other mobility aids;
- Cafés and restaurants can have flexible rather than fixed seating with enough space to allow for ease of movement;
- Accessible WCs should be provided and located at either the beginning or end of the journey around the site to facilitate the flow of visitors;
- Accessible WCs can be designated unisex to allow for the presence of a carer/personal assistant of a different gender;
- Large print menus can be provided in cafes and restaurants;
- There can be staff available to assist with carrying trays, when requested to do so;
- Trays can be provided that are easily gripped and slip resistant;
- Where refreshments and food are provided the service counter and payment point should be accessible;
- Where temporary facilities exist on site they can be made accessible for the duration of their use;
- Picnic areas can have wide, level routes with furniture set at an appropriate level;
- Shops on site can have accessible aisles, shelves and payment points.

4.8.4 Good practice example

Muckross House, Co. Kerry

The basement wheelchair accessible WCs include extra space beyond minimum requirements, good visual contrasts, flush on transfer side and a level tap on WC pan side.

4.8.5 Public bodies may find the following useful in considering what they need to do:

- Building for Everyone: Inclusion, Access and Use, National Disability Authority, 2002.
- Building Regulations 2000, Technical Guidance Document M: Access for People with Disabilities, The Stationery Office, Government of Ireland, Dublin, 2000.
- Good Loo Design Guide, Centre for Accessible Environments and RIBA Enterprises, 2004.

4.9 Emergency egress

4.9.1 Rationale

Public bodies have an obligation to ensure that all users of their heritage sites can escape safely in an emergency. The responsibility for evacuating people with disabilities lies with those who manage the heritage site on a day-to-day basis. The specification for emergency egress involves an evacuation plan with provision for people with disabilities taking in to account the different needs of different disabilities.

4.9.2 Goal

Heritage sites should have a plan in place, backed up by trained staff, to cater for the safe egress of people with disabilities from the site and to assist them in the event of an emergency departure.

4.9.3 What public bodies can do to achieve this goal:

- Emergency evacuation strategies, that include provision for people with disabilities, should be developed for all sites;
- Emergency evacuation strategies should consider the particular difficulties faced by people with disabilities – on recognition time, response time and movement time;
- Where the site covers more than one level evacuation chairs should be provided with staff trained in their correct use;
- There should be sufficient levels of trained people on site to manage an evacuation strategy;
- Emergency access and escape routes should be clearly signposted;

- Escape signs should be well lit and have tactile surfaces;
- Emergency exit routes should be on level ground with no obstacles;
- Consideration can be given to other ways of raising the alarm including visual alarms, paging system, vibrating devices and tailoring of the sound frequencies delivered;
- Refuge areas can be provided within protected stair enclosures;
- Directional sound systems can be installed as they can be tailored to identify particular building features such as stairs or emergency exits and indicate the vertical direction to be taken on stairways;
- Discreet and sensitive smoke detection systems, known as aspirating detectors, can be installed as they can dramatically reduce the time to detection, allowing additional time for escape.

4.9.4 Good practice example

Muckross House, Co. Kerry

The emergency evacuation plan takes account of people who require using the lift and an evacuation chair is provided on the mezzanine/first floor landing.

4.9.5 Public bodies may find the following useful in considering what they need to do:

- The British Standards Institution BS5588 Part 8 and Part 12: British standard for design, planning and management for means of escape for disabled people, London, The British Standards Institution.
- Personal Emergency Egress Plans, The Northern Officer Group, IHS.
- Promoting Safe Egress and Evacuation for People with Disabilities, National Disability Authority, 2008.

Appendix One: Section 29 of the Disability Act, 2005

29.—

(1) (a) The head of a public body shall, as far as practicable, ensure that the whole or a part of a heritage site in its ownership, management or control to which the public has access is accessible to persons with disabilities and can be visited by them with ease and dignity.

(b) *Paragraph (a)* shall not apply if its application would—

(i) have a significant adverse effect on the conservation status of a species or habitat or the integrity of a heritage site, or

(ii) compromise the characteristics of the site.

(2) Nothing in this section shall be construed as authorising or requiring the adaptation or modification of any heritage site contrary to law.

(3) In this section “heritage site” includes—

(a) a monument within the meaning of the National Monuments Acts 1930 to 2004,

(b) a heritage building or a heritage garden or park within the meaning of the Heritage Act 1995,

(c) a protected structure or a proposed protected structure, with any attendant grounds, or an architectural conservation area, within the meaning in each case of the Planning and Development Act 2000,

(d) a nature reserve which is the subject of an establishment order within the meaning of the Wildlife Acts 1976 and 2000, and

(e) a national park owned by the State and under the management and control of the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government.

(4) This section shall come into operation on 31 December 2007.

Appendix Two: Accessible Formats

Please note that this Code is also available in the following formats:

- Plain English;
- Easy-to-Read Summary;
- Large Print;
- Audio Tape, CD or audio file for download;
- Braille;
- Accessible HTML (Irish and English).

Appendix Three: Further Information and Advice

For further information and advice on any aspect of this document please contact:

National Disability Authority
25 Clyde Road,
Ballsbridge,
Dublin 4,
Ireland.

Tel. (01) 6080400

Fax. (01) 6609935

www.nda.ie

Standards Unit at the NDA e-mail: standards@nda.ie
