

Best Practice for Accessibility

This document outlines key accessibility considerations and best practices for fostering inclusive environments within your business. Accessibility improvements should not be limited to changes made with the specific intention to improve accessibility, but should be incorporated into your design process whenever you update your premises. This will ensure ongoing enhancements without regression.



Note that in Aotearoa, the building code accessibility standard NZS4121 provides a foundation, but it is a minimum requirement and, in many cases, outdated. To truly foster inclusivity, aim to go beyond these basic standards and integrate best practice.

By following best practice, you can create a welcoming and usable space for all visitors, including those with mobility or sensory impairments. Implementing these practices will not only improve the experience for individuals with specific accessibility needs, but also enhance the overall visitor experience, fostering a more inclusive and supportive community.



To futureproof your business and enhance your customer experience before undertaking any structural improvement, [contact Jezza](#) at the [Makingtrax Foundation](#) for expert guidance and support.

Booking Options

Ensure your booking platform is optimised for accessibility, with features like screen reader compatibility and keyboard shortcuts, so customers with visual or mobility impairments can easily navigate it. To enhance accessibility, offering multiple communication options for booking creates a more reassuring and personalised customer experience. These options could include phone, WhatsApp, and email, catering to different preferences and needs.

Parking

Accessible parking requires:

- **Surface and Space:** A level area that is firm or paved, with an additional clear space of at least 1.5 metres.
- **Dedicated Use:** To be reserved exclusively for wheelchair users to ensure availability for those who need it.
- **Signage:** A visible mobility parking sign to clearly indicate its purpose.
- **Pathway Access:** If there is a height difference between the parking surface and pathway, a kerb ramp is required. Ensure the kerb ramp is safe, with smooth transitions and no trip hazards. Although the basic NZS4121 standard for the maximum gradient is 1:8, this is too steep for most independent wheelchair users. Aim to not exceed 1:12, (1:15 is best practice).

Pathways/Accessways

Pathways/accessways should meet the following requirements:

- **Width and Surface:** A consistent, firm surface texture at least 900mm wide (ideally 1,220mm wide) to accommodate manual wheelchair users.
- **Edging and Contrast:** Provide raised edging or contrasting colours to assist customers with vision impairments or cane users.
- **Clear Path:** Free of trip hazards or overhanging obstacles to maintain safe access.
- **Gradient:** Minimise side fall or cross-gradient slopes for easier navigation.

Stairs and Ramps

Stairs:

- **Contrast Strips:** Apply contrasting colour strips to the edge of steps for better visibility for those with vision impairments.
- **Tactile Indicators:** Install Tactile Ground Surface Indicators (TGSi) to help cane users navigate around obstacles such as steps and kerbs effectively.

Ramps:

- **Smooth Transitions:** Ensure smooth transitions at both ends with no trip hazards.
- **Gradient:** Avoid using the basic NZS4121 standard of 1:12, as it can be too steep for independent wheelchair users. Aim for a gradient of 1:14 or ideally 1:16.
- **Signage:** Clearly display the slope gradient in signage to inform customers.

Entrance

- **Thresholds:** Ensure door thresholds have no lip greater than 20mm, as even small lips can pose a trip hazard for wheelchair users or individuals with vision impairments.
- **Bevelled Edges:** Install bevelled edges at thresholds to provide a smooth transition for wheelchair access.
- **Portable Ramps:** Where necessary, provide portable threshold ramps to accommodate customers requiring additional support.

Restrooms and Changing Rooms

- **Accessible Rubbish Bins:** Provide an easy-to-open, non-foot-controlled, lined rubbish bin for the disposal of personal supplies such as catheters.
- **Clear Space:** Ensure the area is free of obstacles to allow unrestricted movement for wheelchair users and individuals with vision impairments.

Special Features (e.g., Reception Desks, Check-In Kiosks)

- **Provide Designated Limited Mobility Seating Area:** In the reception/check-in area.
- **Accessible Information:** Ensure important information and menus are available in bold, enlarged print with contrasting colours to support customers with vision impairments.

This resource has been developed in partnership with Destination Queenstown, Lake Wānaka Tourism and the [Makingtrax Foundation](#).