

Good Access is Good Business



Merri-bek
City Council

More information for small business and retailers to assist you to make your business more accessible to the community.

PHYSICAL ACCESS – Outside

People with disabilities should be able to find your business and gain entry the same way as people without a disability. All people should be able to move past your business along a clear path of travel. Which means there should be nothing blocking their way.

This additional information can assist you to make your business more accessible for people with a disability.

Signage - Make sure your signs and menu boards:

- Are placed up high and not blocked from view by objects such as tables or product display stands or plants.
- Has large font. Choose fonts which are simple and easy to read
- Are well lit if you are trading in the evenings or at night
- Signs should have good contrast too, so that people with vision impairments can see them.

Two good ways to check if your signs have large enough writing and good contrast (brightness and colour):

1. Squint your eyes and look at them. If you can still read them they have large enough writing and good brightness contrast
2. Photocopy your signs, menus etc. If they are still easy to read in black and white, then there is good colour contrast.

Footpaths - Keep footpaths clear of obstacles

- People with vision impairments often use the fronts of buildings to find their way around. Unexpected obstacles can put them in danger
- People who use wheelchairs or other mobility aids need a clear path of travel along the footpath. This will also help them get into to your shop more easily
- Keep your footpath clean and free of rubbish. Litter and wet leaves can be slippery or be a trip hazard
- Merri-bek's Footpath Trading Policy requires between 1.8-1.5m to be kept clear between the outside wall of your shop and any dining furniture (including umbrellas heaters), portable signs or product displays.

Entrances

- Ensure entrance is clearly visible. Using a colour that contrasts with the surrounding environment will make it easy for people with a vision impairment to see the doorway.
- Reflective glass can be confusing for people with a vision impairment, as they may accidentally walk into them due to glare, shadows and reflections. Adding safety markings to the glass makes it easier to tell the difference between windows and doorways.
- Make sure doorways are wide enough. 800-850mm is required for people who use wheelchairs, scooters or other mobility aids can get in and out easily.
- Keep the doorways clear of obstacles such as signs, sandwich boards, products displays, shelves etc... that could impede customers who use wheelchairs or other mobility aids from entering safely. Keeping entrances clear will also assist people pushing prams and delivery people.
- If there is more than one entrance, make sure the main entrance is clearly signed.
- Level entry is best because stairs are a barrier for people who use wheelchairs and other mobility aids, people with arthritis and people with prams or trolleys. Consider installing a ramp.
All ramps must comply with Australian Standards. If you would like to install a ramp, or check an existing ramp, please contact Council's Urban Planning Branch or Building Surveyor on 9240 1111.

Doors

- Entrance/exit doors should be clearly marked
- Glass doors should have markings so people don't walk into them.
- If they are not automatic, doors should be easy to open, and have handles instead of knobs. Handles should be set low so that a short person or someone in a wheelchair can reach them.

If you would like to discuss:

- providing a ramped entrance to your business
- providing wider car spaces for people with disabilities
- improving the width or safety of pathways outside your business
- improving the lighting of pathways or car-parks
- removal of hazards, such as overhanging trees.

Please speak to Council on 9240 1111

For more information, please contact Council Safety and Amenity Branch on 9240 1111 or visit our website merri-bek.vic.gov.au

PHYSICAL ACCESS – Inside

People with disabilities should be able to move around your business, find products, browse, reach goods and pay for them the same way as people without a disability. They should also be able to get assistance easily if required.

Inside entrance

- Doormats should be secure and flush with the floor so that they are not a trip hazard.
- Handrails should be installed where there is either a ramp or stairs.

Clear sight lines

- There should be clear sight lines between the entry and counter so staff can see customers who many need assistance to enter the shop or purchase goods.

Lighting

- All areas of your business should be well lit, including: passageways, counter areas, information displays and product shelving.
- Cafes and restaurants should ensure there is adequate lighting to be able to read menus and menu boards, as well as find the restrooms easily.

Seating

- If your customers need to wait, make a chair available for someone who may need to rest.
- Cafes and restaurants should have enough space between tables for people using wheelchairs or other mobility aids to move around. There also should be at least one table that is high enough for a person using a wheelchair to sit close enough to the table to eat easily (750mm – 800mm high).

Passageways

- Aisles between shelves and product displays should be kept clear and preferably 1.2m wide so people using wheelchairs and other mobility aids can move easily around inside your shop.
- The area around the service counter/cash register should be large enough for people using a wheelchair to turn around easily
- Avoid overhanging fixtures or things that stick out as they can be dangerous for people who are blind.
- All floor surfaces should be kept clean, dry and made of a non-slip material.

Signs

- Signs, product information, pricing, and menu boards should be positioned so that people who use wheelchairs or who are short statured can see them easily.
- Menu boards and information displays should be easy to read. Large, clear fonts are best (for example 18 point Arial font).

- Note: A large font alternative menu available on request can be useful if reprinting existing menus is difficult.
- All information should have good contrast (clear difference between words and background)
- Consider having pictures as well as words (such as a coffee cup or slice of cake) to assist people with an intellectual disability or who have trouble communicating tell you what they would like to purchase.

Counters:

- Ensure that at least part of your customer service counter area is lower (750 – 800mm high) for people using wheelchairs or who are short statured.
- Shops with checkout aisles must have at least one checkout aisle is 1.2m wide and has a lower counter (750 – 800mm).

EFTPOS:

- Provide electronic payment systems and EFTPOS machines that are user friendly for people who are blind.
- Ensure EFTPOS machines have cords long enough to pass over to someone using a wheelchair or scooter.

Noise:

- Background noise can make it difficult for people with a hearing disability to communicate. Too much noise or music can also be distressing for people with an intellectual disability. Find ways to reduce background noise if possible. And ensure you can turn music down or off if required.
- A Hearing Loop (or Induction Loop) is an electronic device that assists people who use a hearing aid to hear at counters, especially if there is a screen from the public at the counter. For more information about how they work and how you can install one at your business, please contact Council’s MetroAccess Officer on 9240 1111.

Toilets:

- Where toilets are provided for the public (such as in cafes, or where customers may be on the premises for a while) an Accessible Toilet should be provided where possible. Under building laws a Unisex Accessible Toilet counts as a male and female toilet (all in one).
- If you do not have an accessible toilet, you should know the location of the nearest available accessible toilet so you can advise your customers if required. For location information visit www.toiletmap.gov.au

Note: If the nearest available accessible toilet is within another business it is a good idea to get approval for you customers to use it. If you decide to install an accessible toilet you will need to contact the Council Planning Officer, Building Surveyor or MetroAccess Officer on 9240 1111.

For more information on accessible design ideas and technical requirements contact an Access Consultant at Association of Consultants in Access Australia Inc. www.access.asn.au

Merri-bek Language Link

Italiano	Italian	9280 1911	Türkçe	Turkish	9280 1914	普通话	Chinese (Simplified)	9280 0750
Ελληνικά	Greek	9280 1912	Tiếng Việt	Vietnamese	9280 1915	National Relay Service: 13 36 77 or relayservice.com.au		
عربي	Arabic	9280 1913	पंजाबी	Nepali	9280 0751			