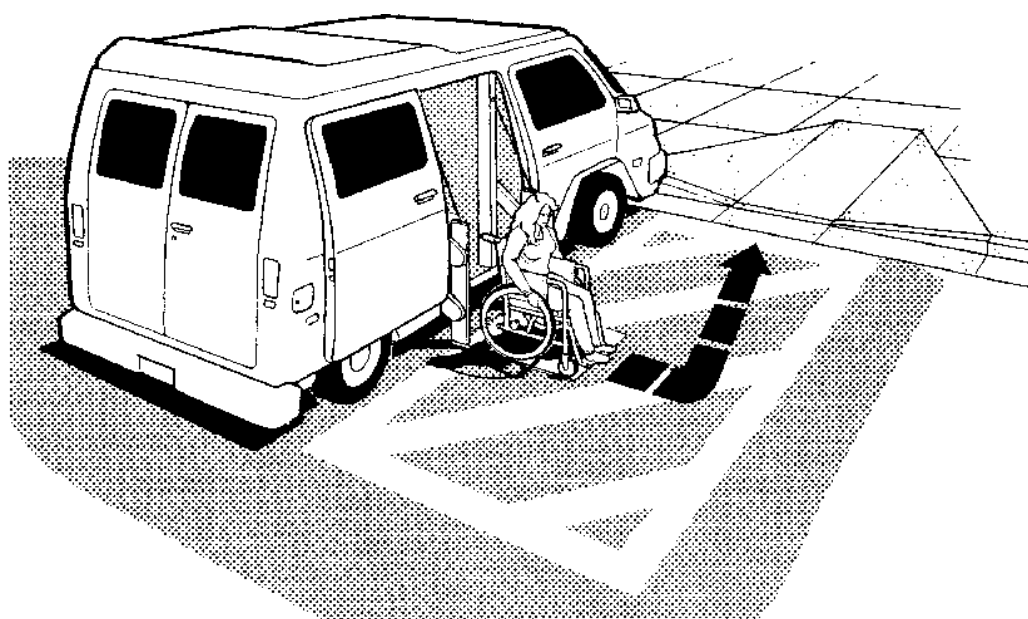


## Design Details: Van Accessible Parking Spaces

Vans equipped with lifts are an essential mode of transportation for many people who use wheelchairs and three-wheeled scooters. The lift-equipped van permits people to enter and exit the vehicle independently without having to leave their wheelchair.

The ADA creates new requirements for van accessible parking spaces. The ADA Standards for Accessible Design or Standards cover public accommodations, commercial facilities and certain State and local governments. State and local governments may choose between these Standards and the Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards (UFAS). Because UFAS does not specify how many van accessible parking spaces are required, only those State and local governments that have chosen the Standards as their ADA accessibility standard have specific, numerical requirements for van accessible parking. Requirements for State and local government agencies that have chosen the Uniform Federal Accessibility Standard (UFAS) are not addressed by this document.



*A Van Accessible  
Parking Space always  
has a minimum 96-inch  
wide access aisle next  
to the van*

The new requirement for van accessible parking spaces is an important one for van users but its implementation has caused some confusion among people responsible for providing parking.

The following section provides information about the design requirements for van accessible parking spaces and explains when these spaces are required, what features are required, and where to locate them on a site.

## Design Requirements for Van Accessible Parking Spaces

Van accessible parking spaces are identical to accessible parking spaces for cars except for the following:

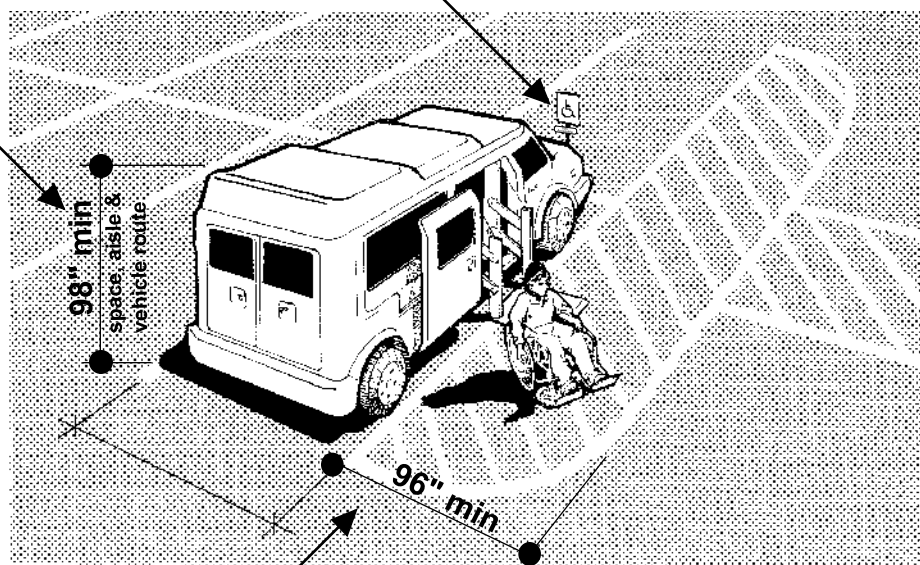
- the access aisle must be at least eight-feet wide (as opposed to five-feet wide) to accommodate a wheelchair lift mounted at the side of a van;
- vertical clearance of at least 98 inches is required along the vehicular route to the parking space, at the van parking space, and along the route from the space to the exit to accommodate the height of most vans; and
- the required sign must have the words “van accessible” below the international symbol of accessibility (see 4.6.4 of the Standards).

Sign with symbol of access  
and "Van Accessible"

98 inch min. vertical clearance  
for vans along route to space,  
at the parking space and along  
route to exit the site

*Unique Features of a Van  
Accessible Parking Space*

96 inch min. width access aisle  
provides space for lift

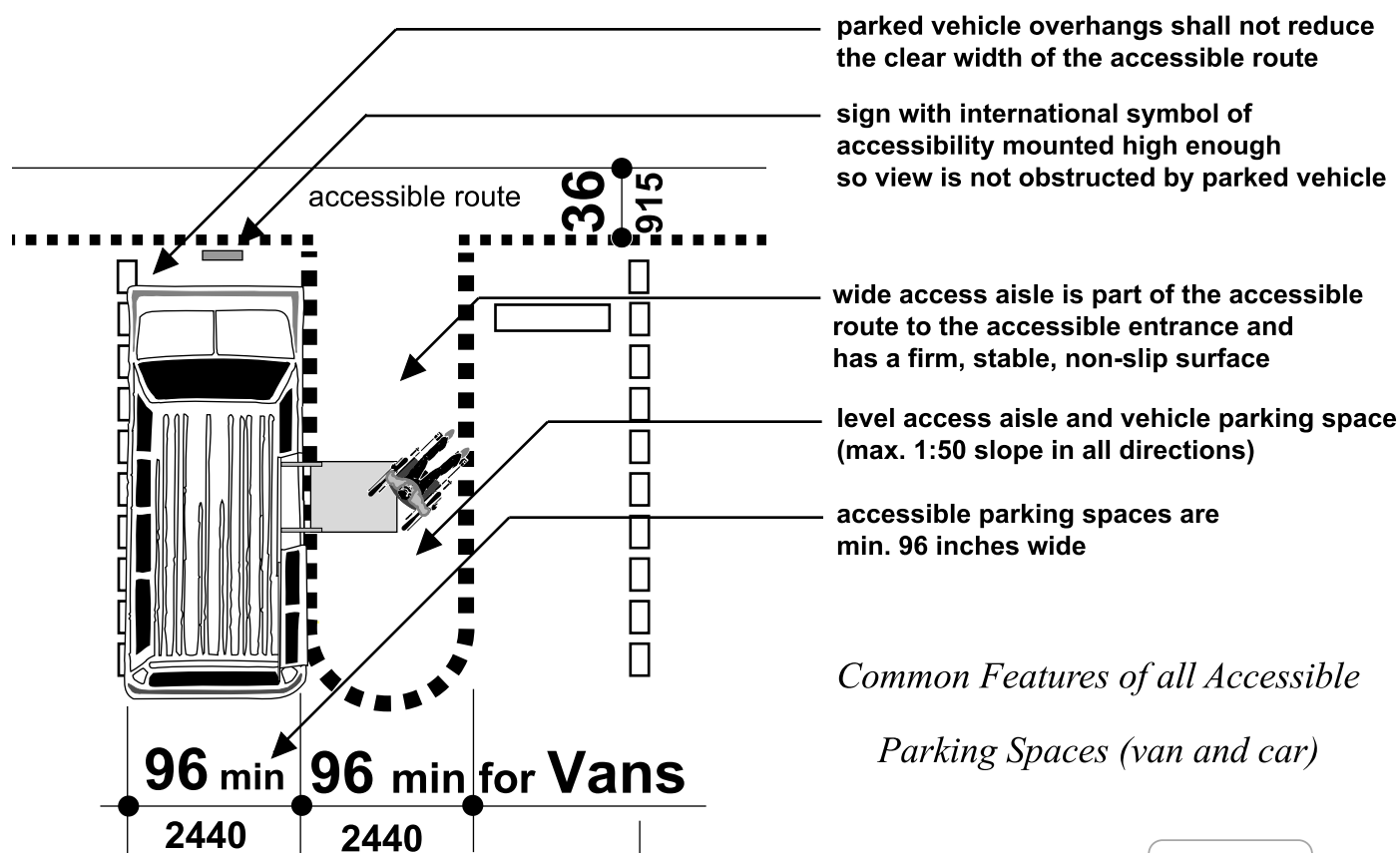


The other required features of van accessible parking spaces are the same as those for accessible parking spaces for cars. These include:

- the parking space for the vehicle must be at least 96 inches wide;
- the parking space for the vehicle and the entire access aisle must be level (with a maximum slope of 1:50<sup>1</sup> in all directions);
- the access aisle must have a firm, stable, non-slip surface;

<sup>1</sup> A 1:50 slope is nearly level and is usually adequate for drainage. The ratio means that a change in vertical height of no more than one unit can occur for every fifty units of distance. For example, a change of one inch in height over a distance of fifty inches.

- the access aisle must be part of an accessible route to a facility or building entrance(s), and
- a sign that complies with 4.6.4 of the Standards must be mounted in front of where the vehicle parks to designate the accessible parking space.



The access aisle must be located on a 36-inch-wide accessible route to the building entrance(s). Section 4.3 of the Standards contains requirements for accessible routes and includes specifications for width, passing space to permit two people using wheelchairs to pass, head room, ground surfaces along the route, slope, changes in levels, and doors. The accessible route must not be obstructed by any objects including vehicles that may extend into the accessible route, a curb, outdoor furniture, or shrubbery.

If an accessible route crosses a curb, a curb ramp must be used. However, a built-up curb ramp may not project into the minimum required space for the access aisle at an accessible parking space. When an accessible route crosses a vehicular way, a marked crosswalk may be part of the accessible route.



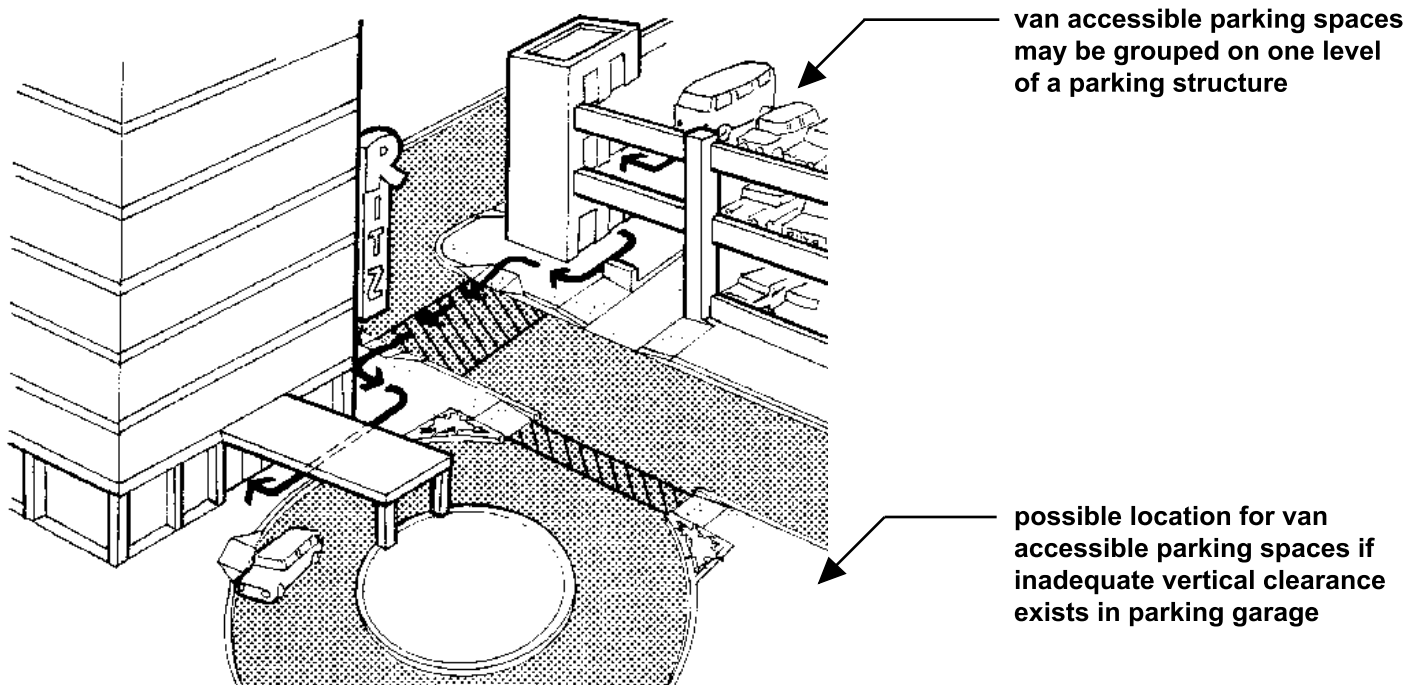
*Sample sign*

*for a van accessible parking space*

## Location and Dispersion of Parking Spaces

Section 4.6.2 of the Standards requires that accessible parking spaces, including van accessible spaces, be located on the shortest accessible route from adjacent parking to the accessible entrance of the building or facility. Accessible parking spaces and the required accessible route should be located where individuals with disabilities do not have to cross a vehicular lane. When parking cannot be located immediately adjacent to a building and the accessible route must cross a vehicular route, then it is recommended that a marked crossing must be used where the accessible route crosses the vehicular route. In facilities that have multiple accessible entrances with adjacent parking spaces, the accessible parking spaces must be dispersed.

When parking spaces are located in a parking garage, the Standards permit the van accessible parking spaces to be grouped on one floor (Standards 4.1.2 (5) (b)).



## When Van Accessible Spaces are Required

When you provide parking at a newly constructed place of public accommodation or at a commercial facility you must provide accessible parking spaces including van accessible parking spaces.

When you alter or renovate a parking lot or facility the following may apply.

- If you repave or otherwise alter the parking lot, you must add as many accessible parking spaces, including van spaces, as needed to comply.
- If you restripe the parking area, you must restripe so that you provide the correct number of accessible parking spaces, including van accessible parking.
- Existing physical site constraints may make it “technically infeasible” to comply fully with the Standards. However, in most cases a “technically infeasible” condition exists only in a portion of a lot, and other suitable locations for accessible parking spaces are often available.

## Number of Van Accessible Spaces Required

Section 4.1.2 (5) of the Standards specifies the minimum number of accessible parking spaces to be provided including van accessible parking spaces. One out of every eight accessible spaces provided must be a van accessible space. When only one accessible parking space is required, the space provided must be a van accessible parking space. Van accessible spaces can serve vans and cars because they are not designated for vans only.

In larger parking lots, both van accessible and accessible car spaces must be provided. For example, in a parking lot for 250 spaces where seven accessible parking spaces are required, one van accessible space would be required along with six accessible car parking spaces. In a parking lot for 450 spaces where nine accessible spaces are required, then two van accessible spaces would be required along with seven accessible car parking spaces.

Two van accessible parking spaces may share an access aisle.

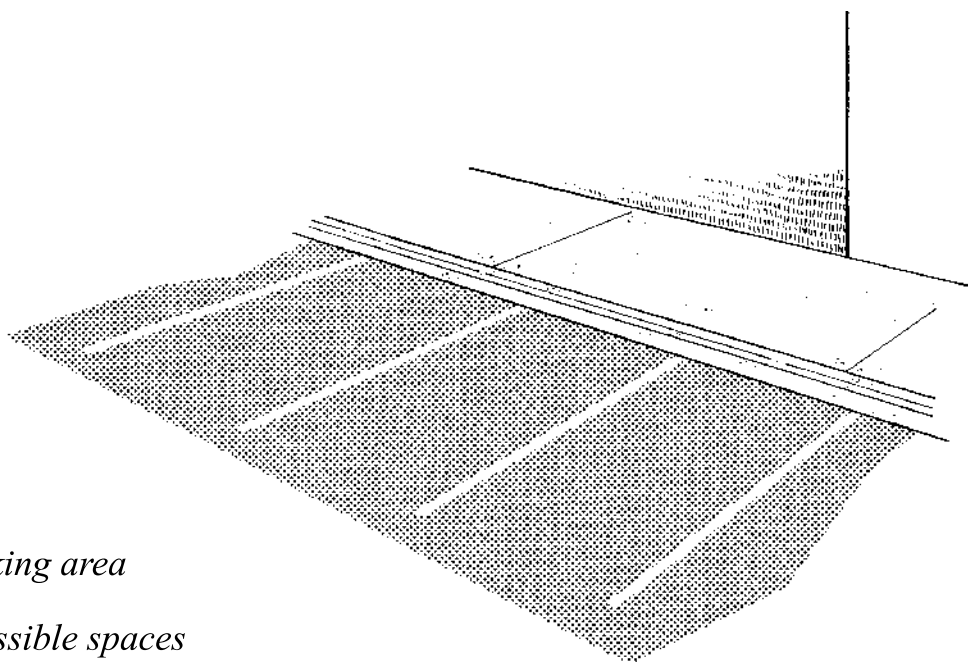
*When accessible spaces are required for new construction and during alterations, van accessible parking spaces must always be provided.*

## Readily Achievable Barrier Removal: Van Accessible Parking Spaces

Public accommodations must remove architectural barriers that are structural in nature in existing facilities when it is “readily achievable” to do so. Readily achievable means easily accomplishable and able to be carried out without much difficulty or expense.

The ADA provides flexibility for public accommodations undertaking barrier removal and does not require that the ADA Standards for Accessible Design (Standards) be complied with fully if it is not readily achievable to do so. Rather, the Standards serve as guidelines for barrier removal that should be met if physical conditions and cost permit. Deviation from the Standards is permitted unless it results in a safety hazard to people with disabilities or others.

Because removing barriers to accessible parking generally involves relatively low cost, it may be readily achievable for many public accommodations.



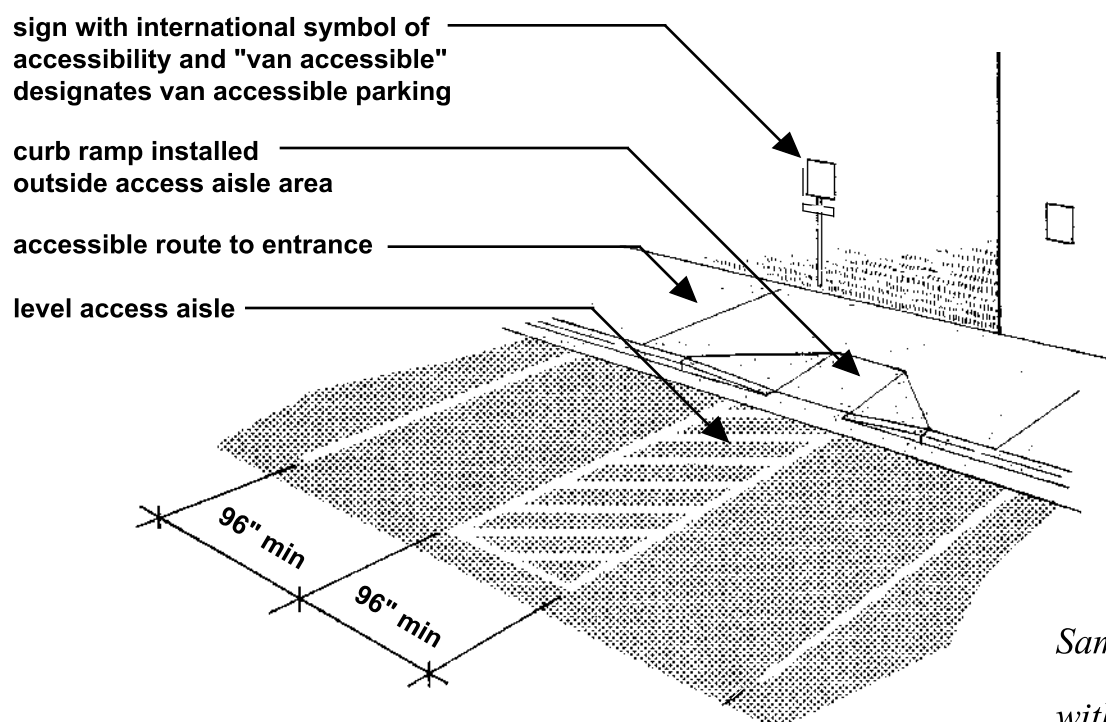
*Existing parking area  
without accessible spaces*

If readily achievable, the first accessible parking space that is provided as part of barrier removal activities should be a van accessible space. This type of parking space can be used by both vans and by cars and can be used by anyone who needs accessible parking.

Examples of barrier removal related to accessible parking may include restriping a section or sections of a parking lot to provide accessible parking spaces with designated access aisles, installing signs that designate accessible parking spaces, providing an accessible route from the accessible parking spaces to the building entrance, and providing a marked crossing where the accessible route crosses a vehicular way.

Where parking lot surfaces slope more than 1:50, select the most nearly level area that is available for the accessible parking spaces. When selecting the area for the accessible parking spaces, consider the location of the accessible route that must connect the access aisle to the facility's accessible entrance(s).

*If readily achievable, the first accessible parking space that is provided should be a van accessible space.*



*Same area with van accessible parking space added*

*Requirements for  
readily achievable  
barrier removal permit  
businesses to consider  
the effect of barrier  
removal on the opera-  
tion of their business.*

Requirements for readily achievable barrier removal permit businesses to consider the effect of barrier removal on the operation of their businesses.

For example, a small independently owned store has only three parking spaces for its customers. It determines that restriping the parking area to provide an accessible parking space could be easily accomplished without significant expense. However, to provide a fully complying van accessible parking space would reduce the available parking for other customers who do not have disabilities from three spaces to one. This loss of parking (not just the cost of the paint for restriping) can be considered in determining whether the barrier removal is readily achievable.

The ADA provides flexibility for the store to implement a solution that complies with the law but does not result in loss of business. For example, if it is not readily achievable to provide a fully compliant van accessible parking space, one can provide a space that has an access aisle that is narrower than required by the Standards if the result does not cause a safety hazard. Or, the store may provide the service (to a customer with a disability) in an alternative manner, such as curb service or home delivery. In some cases, providing a van accessible parking space that does not fully comply with the Standards will often be the preferred alternative approach, if doing so is readily achievable, because many people with disabilities will benefit from having a designated accessible parking space, even if it is not usable by everyone. If an accessible parking space is provided with a narrow access aisle, then a “Van Accessible” sign should not be provided and the store should be prepared to offer service in an alternative manner, if it is readily achievable to do so, to van users who cannot park in the space.

## Information Sources

### ADA Technical Assistance

The Department of Justice, through the Disability Rights Section, has responsibility for coordinating government-wide ADA technical assistance activities. Information and direct technical assistance are available from the agencies listed below. Use the list to select the agency responsible for ADA requirements in your area of interest. Some provide free publications in addition to other information services.

For State and local government programs, privately-operated businesses and services, access to facilities, design standards enforceable under the ADA, and information on tax credits and deductions contact:

**U.S. Department of Justice  
ADA Information Line**

(800) 514-0301  
(800) 514-0383 (TDD)

ADA-BBS:

(202) 514-6193

Internet:

<http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/adahom1.htm>  
[gopher://justice2.usdoj.gov:70/11/crt/ada](http://justice2.usdoj.gov:70/11/crt/ada)

For information about Tax Credits and Deductions, contact:

**Internal Revenue Service**

(800) 829-1040  
(800) 829-4059 (TDD)

For employment issues, contact:

**Equal Employment Opportunity  
Commission (EEOC)**

(800) 669-4000  
(800) 669-6820 (TDD)

For transportation, contact:

**U.S. Department  
of Transportation**

(202) 366-1656  
(202) 366-4567 (TDD)

Internet:

<http://www.fta.dot.gov>

For information on the ADA  
Accessibility Guidelines, contact:

**Access Board**

(800) 872-2253  
(800) 993-2822 (TDD)

Internet:

<http://www.access-board.gov/>

For additional ADA information  
and referral sources from Federally  
funded grantees, contact:

**Job Accommodation Network**

(800) 526-7234 (V/TDD)

Internet:

<http://www.janweb.icdi.wvu.edu/>

**Disability and Business  
Technical Assistance Centers**

(800) 949-4232 (V/TDD)

**Disability Rights Education  
and Defense Fund (DREDF)**

(800) 466-4232 (V/TDD)