



ACCESS CURRENTS

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TEITAC to Present its Report on the 508 Standards in April

The Telecommunications and Electronic and Information Technology Advisory Committee (TEITAC) will deliver its report to the Board on April 3, 2008. The report will include recommendations on updating the Board's Section 508 standards for electronic and information technology and its guidelines for telecommunications products covered by Section 255 of the Telecommunications Act. The Committee's presentation is scheduled for 3:00 at the Grand Hyatt in downtown Washington, D.C. and will be followed by a reception.

At the Committee's last meeting, which took place January 7 – 9, members continued their review of the recommendations prepared to date and sought consensus on remaining issues. In addition to recommendations on the substance of provisions, the Committee also addressed revisions to the organization and structure of the standards that take into account the continuously evolving nature of the technologies covered. The Committee's report will be the basis for the Board's first update of the Section 508 standards since their original publication in 2000. The Board will review the Committee recommendations and issue an update proposal which will be available for public comment.

The Committee is continuing its discussions by weekly teleconferences every Tuesday from 1:00 – 4:00 (Eastern). For further information on the Committee's conference calls or its presentation to the Board, visit the Board's website at www.access-board.gov/sec508/update-index.htm, the committee's website at <http://teitac.org/>, or contact Tim Creagan at creagan@access-board.gov, (202) 272-0016 (v), or (202) 272-0082 (TTY).

TEITAC Presentation

April 3, 2008

3:00 – 6:00

Reception

6:00 – 7:30

The Grand Hyatt

1000 H Street, N.W.

Washington, D.C.

Board to Hold Town Meeting in St. Louis in May

The Board will hold its annual town meeting in St. Louis this year in conjunction with the National ADA Symposium. Organized by the Great Plains ADA Center, the Symposium is a yearly three-day event covering various aspects of accessibility and the ADA. It also features an exhibit hall showcasing accessibility products and assistive technologies. All Symposium events, including the Board's town meeting, will take place at the America's Center.

The Board's town meeting will take place May 12th from 12:30 – 3:00 and will be open to the general public. It will provide a forum for participants to give feedback and recommendations to the Board on aspects of accessibility of concern to them. A portion of this meeting will focus on discussion of airport accessibility which is the subject of a new Board outreach initiative. As part of the conference, the Board will conduct break-out sessions on public rights-of-way, recreation facilities, bathroom access, the ADA guidelines and the International Building Code, and information technology and e-government.



For more information on the town meeting, contact Kathy Johnson at johnson@access-board.gov, (202) 272-0041 (v), or (202) 272-0082 (TTY). Information on the Symposium is available online at www.adasymposium.org/ or from the Great Plains ADA Center at (573) 882-3600 (v/TTY).



Department of Justice Submits Notice Adopting New ADA Standards

In December, the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) submitted a notice to update its ADA standards for administration review and clearance. If approved within the customary timeframe, the notice may be published for public comment in April. DOJ is expected to update its ADA standards according to revised guidelines issued by the Board. These standards apply to the construction and alteration of all facilities covered by the ADA except transportation facilities, which are subject to standards previously updated by the Department of Transportation. In addition to updating the standards, the DOJ notice is likely to address other topics covered by its regulations. A public comment period, expected to be 60 days in duration, will follow publication.

DOJ will need to issue a final notice to complete action which will include an effective date for the updated standards. Until that date, the existing standards remain in effect for all facilities other than transportation facilities. Current DOJ regulations require private sector facilities to meet the original ADA standards which have changed little since their publication in 1991. State and local government facilities must comply with either these standards or the Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards (UFAS).

Updated standards are in effect or pending for Federal facilities which are covered not by the ADA but by the Architectural Barriers Act (ABA). Most Federal facilities, including postal facilities, are subject to updated standards adopted by the General Services Administration and the U.S. Postal Service. Military facilities and federally funded housing remain subject to the existing standards (UFAS) until the Department of Defense and the Department of Housing and Urban Development adopt updated versions. Once these agencies and DOJ implement the new standards, a consistent level of access will be specified for all facilities covered by the ADA or the ABA. Additional information, including links to all relevant regulations and standards, is available on the Board's website at www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/standards-update.htm.

STANDARDS FOR ADA FACILITIES	
Transportation	Updated DOT standards
State and Local Government (except transportation)	Original ADA standards or UFAS
Places of Public Accommodation/ Commercial Facilities	Original ADA standards
STANDARDS FOR ABA (FEDERAL) FACILITIES	
Military and Housing	UFAS
Postal	Updated USPS standards
All Other Federal	Updated GSA standards

Advisory Committee on Emergency Transportable Housing Meets

The Board's Emergency Transportable Housing Advisory Committee convened its third meeting January 24th and 25th in Washington, D.C. This committee is examining access to housing trailers procured by the government for use in natural disasters. Members discussed issues of coverage, technical provisions, and various constraints on the design of housing trailers and residential sites on which they may be located. Through the close examination of such issues against the Board's accessibility guidelines, the Committee will advise the Board on whether provisions for residential facilities need to be tailored specifically for emergency transportable housing. The Committee's next meeting is scheduled for March 27th and 28th at the Board's offices. Committee meetings are open to the public. For further information, contact Marsha Mazz at mazz@access-board.gov, (202) 272-0020 (v), or (202) 272-0082 (TTY), or visit the Board's website at www.access-board.gov/eth/.

Committee Concludes Work on Accessible Vessel Alarm Systems

At a meeting in February, the Passenger Vessel Emergency Alarms Advisory Committee concluded its exploration of issues concerning access to vessel alarm systems and notification procedures for passengers who are deaf or hard of hearing. The Committee was established last year to advise the Board on how certain design and engineering constraints should be addressed in specifying accessible visual emergency notification systems. Its recommendations, which will be posted on the Board's website, will inform new guidelines the Board is preparing for passenger vessels. The committee's 13 members included representatives from disability organizations, the vessel and cruise ship industry and trade groups, and the National Fire Protection Association, among others. For further information, visit the Board's website at www.access-board.gov/pvaac/alarms/ or contact Paul Beatty at pvag@access-board.gov, (202) 272-0012 (v), or (202) 272-0082 (TTY).

Guidance on Rights-of-Way Access Available from the Board

Public streets and sidewalks present unique access challenges that are not encompassed by existing guidelines or standards. Access at street crossings for pedestrians with vision impairments, on-street parking, and constraints posed by terrain and space limitations are just some of the issues that often arise. The Board is developing guidelines for public rights-of-way that will address these and other issues so that practitioners have an established reference for achieving accessible streets and sidewalks.



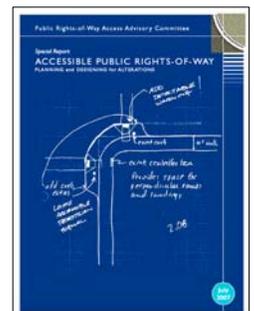
Board staff meets with representatives from the District of Columbia to discuss rights-of-way accessibility.

While work on these guidelines continues, interim guidance is available from the Board through an active outreach program on rights-of-way accessibility. The Board routinely provides training on the subject to various audiences at different conferences across the country as well as technical assistance on issues and specific projects in response to individual inquiries. In addition, it supports research to collect needed information and has produced design guides and other resources.

The Board also advises state and local jurisdictions on planning and program strategies. For example, Board staff members recently met with several state and local transportation departments. In December, the Board hosted a meeting with personnel from the District of Columbia Department of Transportation (DOT) to discuss a range of issues from drainage at curb ramps to the proper location of detectable warnings. Representatives from the Pennsylvania DOT also visited the Board for a day-long meeting on key rights-of-way access issues and feedback on its efforts to implement agency standards based on rights-of-way guidelines the Board released in draft form. Maryland's DOT has developed similar guidance for use by its State Highway Administration and has supported data collection efforts, including a consumer evaluation of products used for directing pedestrians around work zones.

Resources available from the Board include a new guide on sidewalk and street improvement projects published by the Institute of Transportation Engineers. *Accessible Public Rights-of-Way: Planning and Designing for Alterations* shows how access can be maximized in existing streetscapes. Design solutions, model sidewalks and case studies are illustrated through photographs and engineering plans.

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(continued from page 3) This guide recently received an award from the American Council of Engineering Companies. In addition, a popular video series demonstrating access issues from user perspectives that the Board produced and distributed on disk is now available on the Board's website. These and other resources are posted online at www.access-board.gov/prowac/. For more information on rights-of-way access, contact the Board at row@access-board.gov, (202) 272-0025 (v), or (202) 272-0082 (TTY).

NPS's Harpers Ferry Center: A Leading Resource on Exhibit Access

The National Park Service's Harpers Ferry Center, which oversees interpretive media for national parks, recently released updated guidelines for accessible exhibits and other media. The "Programmatic Accessibility Guidelines for National Park Service Interpretive Media" outline best practices for providing access to exhibits, artifacts, audio visual programs and tours, signage, and publications. While developed for national parks, the guidelines can be consulted in designing exhibits and visitor information at other sites.

The Center has refined and validated its best practices through various initiatives and review panels. Last September the Center organized a workshop on exhibit designs for C&O Canal visitor sites in the Washington, D.C. area. The event, which included participants from the Board, featured a review of plans and designs for new exhibits at two sites and solicited recommendations from invited panelists on access enhancements. Input was received on exhibit lighting, tactile models and panels, exhibit text, assistive audio, and planning, among others. Participants also reviewed large print park brochures and prototype tactile maps and exhibit panels developed by the Center. Additional information, including the updated guidelines, is available on the Center's website at www.nps.gov/hfc/accessibility/.



Access Currents is a free newsletter issued by the Access Board every other month by mail and e-mail. Send questions or comments to news@access-board.gov or call (800) 872-2253 ext. 0026 (voice) or (800) 993-2822 (TTY). Mailing address: 1331 F Street, N.W., Suite 1000; Washington, D.C. 20004-1111.

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