

International Contractors Association

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Navigating the new realities of ADA Standards: “The Checklist for Access” for Public Play Areas

Many kids are looking longingly outside at what may be snow covered roads and front yards right now – eagerly anticipating the spring and summer play season when they can be outside as much as possible, enjoying their neighborhood playground. While these kids are daydreaming of play, industry professionals are working hard to make changes based on the March 15 mandatory compliance deadline for the 2010 Americans with Disabilities Act Standards for newly constructed and altered play areas.

This deadline has been years in the works, and in fact the standards are referred to as the 2010 standards, because that’s when they were first began to go into effect. But this coming March – the 15th exactly – is the date by which all new playground construction and alterations to existing playgrounds MUST be compliant with the standards.

Understanding the Standards

Because many communities and playground owners may not understand the details of the standards and what they mean for new or existing public play facilities, the International Play Equipment Manufacturers Association (IPEMA) – the industry’s membership association that provides third-party validation and certification for playground equipment and surfacing safety standards – has compiled a toolkit designed to help those in charge of public play facilities with compliance.

The “Checklist for Access” summarizes 12 key steps to compliance with the standards. This checklist, along with a fact sheet, FAQs and an “Ask the Expert” function, are all available on IPEMA’s Voice of Play website, found at www.VoiceofPlay.org. Other online resources are listed at the conclusion of the article.

IPEMA’s Checklist for Access

This checklist provided by IPEMA is intended to help owners of public play area’s understand how to use the Department of Justice’s 2010 Standards for Accessible Design.

NOTE: Newly constructed and altered play areas MUST comply with the 2010 Standards for Accessible Design (includes the play area guidelines) on or after March 15, 2012.

Summary of Important Dates:

New Construction & Alterations

DATE	APPLICABLE STANDARDS
September 15, 2012 – March 15, 2012	Title II: 1991 Standards, UFAS, or 2010 Standards Title III: 1991 Standards or 2010 Standards
On or after March 15, 2012	2010 Standards

Program Accessibility

DATE	APPLICABLE STANDARDS
September 15, 2012-March 15, 2012	1991 Standards, UFAS, or 1021 Standards
On or after March 15, 2012	2012 Standards

Requirements and Key Considerations for Existing Playgrounds

Unless undertaking alterations, existing play areas are not required to meet the 2010 Standards by March 15, 2012. Guidance is provided below.

March 15, 2012 is the Department of Justice’s compliance date for all entities covered by Title II and Title III must begin using the new (2010) accessibility standards. This means all new construction and alterations to existing facilities should begin utilizing these standards. It is important to understand that playgrounds built prior to March 15, 2012 are subject to review if they are undergoing alteration, if physical barriers exist or if communication barriers exist to the program, good, service, or activity offered at the facility.

The new Department of Justice’s 2010 Standards for Accessible Design trigger access if you are building a new playground or making an alteration to an existing playground. In both cases, owners need to provide a primary means of

However, IPEMA strongly recommends that even playground owner/operators who are NOT planning any updates or new construction review their access – with the following considerations in mind.

Conduct a complete audit of existing facilities and creating a realistic transition plan to remove all physical and communication barriers to programs, services and activities for people with disabilities.

Public Playground Accessibility Checklist

1. Public Playgrounds must have an accessible route to the play area at least 60" wide, maximum running slope of 1:20 and maximum cross slope of 1:50. The route to the play area is an accessible route. Minimum width is 36" and the maximum slope is 1:12. Any running slope over 1:20 or 5% is treated as a ramp with handrails and landings.
2. Within the play area, the safety surfacing must comply with ASTM F 1292-99 or -04 Standard Specification for Impact Attenuation of Surface Systems Under and Around Playground Equipment when located within the use zone for proper impact attenuation. All accessible routes within the play area, clear floor or ground spaces at play components required to be accessible and turning spaces must comply with ASTM 1951-99 Standard Specification for Determination of Accessibility of Surface Systems Under and Around Playground Equipment .
3. Within the play area, the accessible route must be at least 60" wide, with a maximum running slope of 1:16, a maximum cross slope of 1:48 and a minimum of 80" overhead clearance. For small play areas of less than 1000 square feet in total size, the accessible route must be at least 44" wide, with a maximum running slope of 1:16, a maximum cross slope of 1:48 and a minimum of 80" overhead clearance.
4. Composite play structures that include a transfer system as a means of access must meet the following criteria:
 - Transfer platform height must be between 11-18" with clear minimum width of 24" and depth of 14"
 - Transfer steps are maximum of 8" high and include handholds to aid movement.
 - Minimum 30" by 48" transfer space must be provided adjacent to the transfer platform. The 48" long minimum dimension of the transfer space shall be centered on and parallel to the 24" long minimum side of the transfer platform. The side of the transfer platform serving the transfer space shall be unobstructed.
5. Composite play structures that include ramps that connect elevated play components as a means of access must meet the following criteria:
 - Elevated ramps must be at least 36" wide, maximum running slope of 1:12 and maximum length of 144"(12inches) before providing a landing.
 - Elevated ramps must include handrails on both sides meeting hand-gripping criteria and with a height between 20-28". Elevated ramps with handrails, barriers beyond the ramp edge and barriers not extending within 1" of the ramp surface must have edge curbing at least 2" high for the entire ramp length. No handrail extensions are required.
 - When elevated ramps change in direction, a 60"x 60" minimum level landing must be provided at both the top and the bottom of each run.
6. Elevated ramps and accessible platforms attached at ramp levels shall have no openings on surface greater than 1/2" and vertical change in level less than 1/4" or up to 1/2" with a 2:1 beveled edge.
7. Openings on elevated ramp accessible platforms for access/egress play opportunities must be narrowed to 15" or less. (a safety requirement?)
8. Advisory Reach ranges for accessible manipulative and interactive sensory and communicative components must have reach range heights between 18-44" for 5-12 year old user age group and 20-36" for 2-5 year old user age group.
9. Ground level upper body equipment intended for use by a person using a mobility device must be less than 48" above protective surfacing.
10. Ground level play tables and components must have a minimum vertical knee clearance of at least 24" high, a minimum depth of at least 17" deep and a minimum width of at least 30". The maximum top of playing surface shall not exceed 31".
11. Composite play structures must have elevated accessible routes by ramp and or transfer systems to connect at least 50% of the elevated play components. Large composite play structures with more than 20 elevated play components must have at least 25% of the elevated play components connected by elevated ramps.
12. Play areas must have the minimum number of accessible play components and types on the accessible routes per the following criteria: Remember it is one of each type at ground level and 50% elevated that must be accessible. The trigger to use the table is for Additional Number and Types. Where elevated play components are provided, ground level play components shall be provided in accordance with Table 240.2.1.2 and shall comply with 1008.4. EXCEPTION: If at least 50 percent of the elevated play components are connected by a ramp and at least 3 of the elevated play components connected by the ramp are different types of play components, the play area shall not be required to comply with F240.2.1.2.

Additional Resources

www.VoiceofPlay.org
 www.ada.gov
 www.access-board.gov

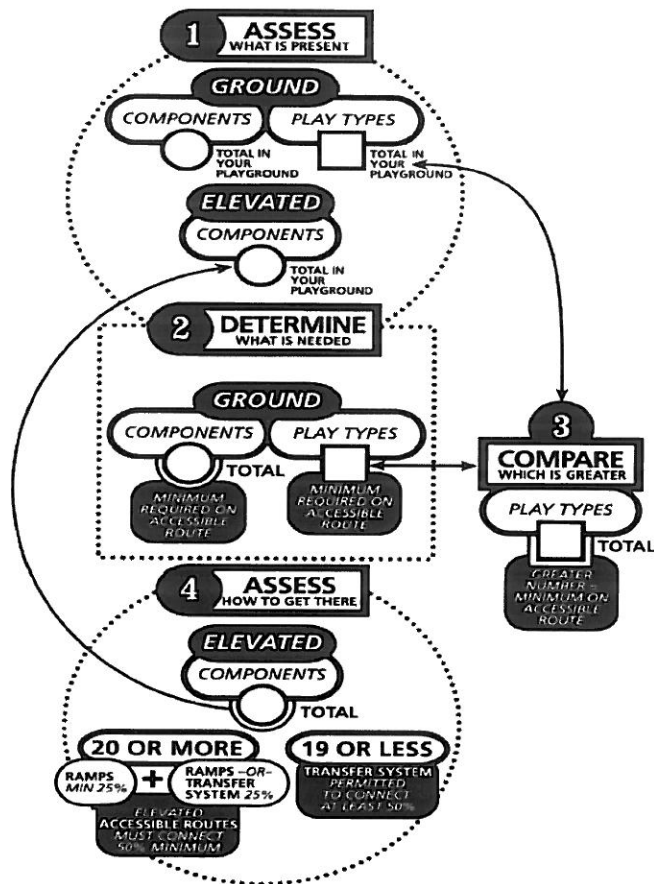


Table 240.2.1.2 Number and Types of Ground Level Play Components Required to be on Accessible Routes

Number of Elevated Play Components Provided	Minimum Number of Ground Level Play Components Required to be on an Accessible Route	Minimum Number of Different Types of Ground Level Play Components Required to be on an Accessible Route
1	Not applicable	Not applicable
2 to 4	1	1
5 to 7	2	2
8 to 10	3	3
11 to 13	4	3
14 to 16	5	3
17 to 19	6	3
20 to 22	7	4
23 to 25	8	4
26 and over	8, plus 1 for each additional 3, or fraction thereof, over 25	5