

MEMORANDUM

CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

STREETS DEPARTMENT – TRANSPORTATION PLANNING & ANALYSIS ADA RAMP UNIT

TO : File

FROM : Nancy Sen, Director, Transportation Planning & Analysis



DATE : February 13, 2013

**SUBJECT : Interim Policy
Handling Building Entrance Modifications & Brick Sidewalks
on ADA Curb Ramp Designs**

The Streets Department is preparing formal policy for handling building entrances affected by ADA curb ramp designs. In advance of the formal issuance of this policy, the Streets Department ADA Unit offers the following guidance as interim policy to be followed on all ramp designs, until further notice on the subject.

Modification to Building Entrances

Background:

1. The Streets Department has discretion to review and approve ramp designs with steps and entrances accessory to one and two family dwellings because replacements of exterior steps are exempted from needing L&I Building Permits.
2. When impacting existing steps and entrances in other than one and two family dwellings, a permit is not needed when the Streets Department, acting as a government agency, is performing infrastructure repairs; but, we are required to at least "maintain the (existing) level of accessibility provided".

Guidance for One and Two Family Dwellings

1. We may add one or more steps to an existing set in the public ROW;
2. The new step(s) must be dimensionally uniform with the existing steps; step riser height and tread width dimensions must be clearly identified in plans.
3. When the total number of steps exceeds 3 or more we must add or extend the handrail. Only one handrail is required;
4. When the top of the landing with the new step(s) exceeds 30-in. above grade, a guard with maximum 4-in. diameter openings must be installed
5. The slope of the landing at the base of the steps in the direction of egress must be equal or less than the existing slope for a distance of 36-in. This slope does not need to be less than 2%.
6. When there is a grade level entrance (no step) into a building, the level entrance must be maintained. We cannot replace it with a ramp and step.
7. No permits are required.

If the above 7 conditions cannot be met, the location may warrant an L&I building permit. In such cases, contact the Streets Department before proceeding with the ramp design.

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Guidance for All other Occupancies (Same as above with the following additional requirements):

1. We may add one or more steps to an existing set in the public ROW;
2. The new step(s) must be dimensionally uniform with the existing steps; step riser height and tread width dimensions must be clearly identified in plans.
3. When the total number of steps exceeds 3 or more, we must add or extend the handrails. Two handrails are required and the handrails shall extend 12-inches past lowest step.
4. When the top of the landing with the new step(s) exceeds 30-in. above grade, a guard with maximum 4-in. diameter openings must be installed.
5. The slope of the landing at the base of the steps in the direction of egress must be equal or less than the existing slope for a distance of 44-in. This slope does not need to be less than 2%.
6. When there is a grade level entrance (no step) into a building, the level entrance must be maintained. We cannot replace it with a ramp and step.
7. No permits are required.

If the above 7 conditions cannot be met, the location may warrant an L&I building permit. In such cases, contact the Streets Department before proceeding with the ramp design.

Guidance for Historical Occupancies

1. Approval of the Historical Commission is required when steps are added to a locally historically certified building or a building located in a local historic district.

Guidance for Ramps in Brick sidewalks

Anywhere (historical or not) where we have high integrity brick sidewalks, we will install brick landings and flares and use brick cheek walls (if needed). Refer to Streets Department standard drawing, "ADA Curb Ramps on Brick Sidewalk," SW-ADA, 4 sheets; attached to this policy email.

If you have any questions regarding the above, please contact myself or Elias Issac, Streets Department ADA Coordinator, at (215) 686-5511 or elias.issac@phila.gov.

Interim Policy References:

Letter from Streets Commissioner to L&I Commissioner on 5/14/12

Discussions between Deputy Commissioners Dave Perri, Streets and Mike Fink, L&I; follow up email from Dave Perri, dated 6/18/12

Attachment

"ADA Curb Ramps on Brick Sidewalk" standard drawing, SW-ADA, 4 sheets total.

Cc: ADA File E. Issac D. Perri D. Gatti V. Fleysch W. Gural
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ADA Ramp Reviewers