Architectural Modifications

Churches can take simple, effective and inexpensive steps to make their buildings more physically accessible for people with disabilities, Not only will such changes make your facilities easier to navigate, but they also will allow people with disabilities and their families to participate fully and enthusiastically in your church's services, activities and organizations.

Installing Accessible Parking Spaces

Parking spaces are often the first part of an accessible route of travel for people with disabilities. Proper design and location can create the difference between an accessible and an inaccessible church facility, and can ensure the safety of the people using them.

Accessible parking spaces are:

- Located as close as possible to the building, or accessible route of travel
- 8' wide with a 5' access aisle (two spaces can share one aisle) or an 8'access aisle will accommodate vans with lifts
- Clearly marked with signs mounted 80"high showing the international symbol of accessibility in addition to symbol marking on ground
- Located so that people with disabilities are not forced into automobile traffic or requires to pass behind parked cars

Creating an Accessible Passenger Drop-Off

A facility which requires automobile access but doesn't have an accessible passenger drop-off can force a user with a disability to either get out in traffic, or not use the facility at all. A safe, accessible drop-off creates an area where all users can get out of or into their cars or vans, and get directly onto an accessible route.

An accessible drop-off area includes:

- A level surface and a 5' x 20' access aisle adjacent to the vehicle space
- Curb, ramp for any change in level between the road and sidewalk
- Clearly posted signs with the international symbol of accessibility
- Location as close as possible to accessible entrances, especially where accessible parking is not available

Constructing A New Ramp

Ramps are the most common method of creating an accessible route of travel when bridging a height difference up to several feet. A straight ramp is the easiest to use since it requires no turns by the user. Ramps are accessible not only to people who use wheelchairs, but also to people with baby strollers, carts and walkers.

Ramps should include:

- Railings on both sides of the ramp
- 36 inch maximum width between the handrails or curbs
- Curb or railing at any drop-off greater than 2 inches
- A maximum slope of one inch of rise for every 12 inches of run
- A slip resistant surface
- 5' x 5' level landing at the top and bottom of each ramp
    - Ramp run cannot be longer than 30' without having a 5' level landing to rest