



How to Create an Accessible Outdoor Patio

Part of reopening our economy is rethinking how we use public spaces. We're seeing expansion of restaurant, café and bar patios onto sidewalks and into the streets and parking spaces. If we are redesigning, let's fix the old barriers and Human Rights violations while we're at it.

The staff at DE is in a unique position to be aware of a multitude of great accessibility standards that consider a wide variety of accessibility accommodations for different disabilities. With over 6.2 million Canadians reporting they have had at least one type of disability and with over 1,000 Canadians a day turning 65 with a disability rate of 40%, we know these patios will want to welcome as many customers as possible!

The following are some of the best list of things to help these patios meet the intent of the Accessible Canada Act, Human Rights Code and AODA or AMA requirements. Following these will help, but it is still the responsibility of those creating patios to do everything they can to meet the legislative requirements of the Human Rights Code. We recommend speaking with your disabled patrons to see what other accommodations might be necessary. #NothingWithoutUs.

We have created the following information from many sources including **City of Mississauga Facility Accessibility Design Standards (FADS)**, **CNIB Clearing Our Path** as well as **Universal Design Principles**. Please let us know if there are other great ideas you have or come across that we can add!

Rationale

Where patios are provided, consider options for different levels of sun and wind protection, sound and atmosphere distractions and lighting. This is of benefit to individuals with varying tolerances for sun or heat, as well as people with sensory disabilities. Appropriate lighting levels ensure that the pathways, menus, and payment procedures are easy to access. Thresholds at the patio and ordering/payment stations must always be level and accessible to the pathway.

Overview

This guide covers six topics:

1. General Design Requirements
2. Path of Travel Design Requirements
3. Seating Area Design Requirements
4. Service Counter Design Requirements
5. Sample Patio Layouts
6. Additional Accessibility Considerations
7. Reference Materials





1. General Design Requirements

The following items cover topics not included with any greater detail in the rest of this document:

- A. Patios must be located on an accessible route or path
- B. Guards and railings must be designed to allow clear vision below the rail for persons seated in a wheelchair or scooter
- C. Guards and railings must incorporate pronounced colour contrast to distinguish the railings from the guards and the guards separating the patio from the street or sidewalk. Railings must be distinct from the surrounding environment to ease navigation around the patio and avoid obstructions of furniture
- D. Exterior paths of travel must not be obstructed
- E. Accessible parking must be in proximity to patios, but patios must not obstruct accessible parking - off-street and on-street
- F. Sanitizing and washing facilities must be on an accessible path and be within operable reach for people using wheelchairs or scooters
- G. Where a washroom is not available on the first floor or in a COVID-19 safe location, at least one accessible port-a-potty must be provided. See more about **Universal Washrooms**
- H. Accessible signage must indicate seating areas, paths, washrooms, and payment/assistance counters. See more about **Accessible Signage**





2. Path of Travel Design Requirements

Accessible sidewalks or walkways support the diverse needs of people of all abilities. Firm, stable and slip-resistant surfaces with appropriate widths, passing areas, and slopes must be free of obstructive furniture or hazards. Accessible paths must be illuminated and clearly contrasted with surrounding surfaces.

- A. The primary path of travel to all services and facilities is to be accessible and must be level or provide a ramp. See more about **Ramps**
- B. Thresholds must be flush with pathway and any elevation must be colour contrasted
- C. Where it is not possible to provide a path that is at least 1830mm wide which would allow wheelchairs or mobility devices to comfortably pass, the sidewalk or walkway must be at least 1370mm wide for accessibility.

Note: for COVID-19, paths of travel will need to be wider to adhere to social-distancing measures

- D. The patio surface must be a different colour and, if possible, a different texture to any sidewalk or pathway that runs beside it to make it distinct and easy to identify
- E. Where there is a step between different levels in an adjacent inaccessible route, the top edge of the step or curb must be a contrasting colour to reduce the hazard of tripping
- F. All portions of an accessible route must be equipped with adequate lighting to provide a minimum level of illumination of 50 lux

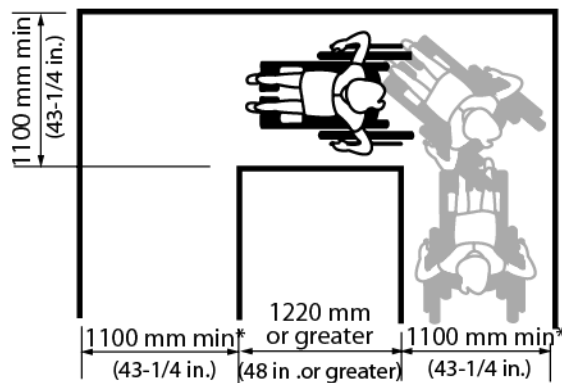


Figure 1: Clear path to turn around an obstacle must be 1100 mm minimum wide.



3. Seating Area Design Requirements

Tables with knee and toe space underneath are accessible to a person using a wheelchair or seated mobility device. An accessible path leading to a firm, level surface around the table, is required for mobility accessibility. A change in texture from a pathway to the table area is an important cue for a person who is blind. Tables that have the support leg(s) in the centre of the table provide a higher level of accessibility. Be wary of pedestal tables since they reduce clear knee space under a table surface. Seating must comply with the following:

- A. 100% of all seating must be accessible. Where this is not technically feasible, at least 20% and never less than 1 table in each seating area (if more than one patio is provided) must be accessible
- B. Customers and staff must be able to get to the table by means of an accessible route without blocking the accessible route
- C. The space around the table must have a level, firm ground surface extending minimum 2000 mm on at least two sides of the table for persons who use wheelchairs or other mobility devices and minimum 1220 mm on the other sides
- D. Where height-adjustable tables are not possible, ensure the top surface is located between 810 mm to 865 mm above the finished floor or ground surface
- E. Tables must have knee space underneath that is at least 810 mm wide by 480 mm deep and 685 mm high at each accessible seating space
- F. Chairs and tables must have a contrasting colour to their surrounding area to make them easier to see and find
- G. If patios are outside or music is playing the ambient noise creates a barrier to communication for those who have hearing loss. A portable assistive listening device, like a hearing loop, must be available for servers to use upon request
- H. Lighting at the table must be at least 100 lux at the surface to assist in reading bills or menu where this is technically infeasible a portable light source must be available

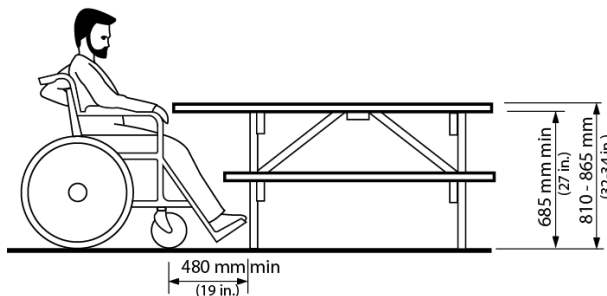


Figure 2: Table height must be 810 mm minimum and knee space must be 685 mm by 480 mm minimum at accessible tables.



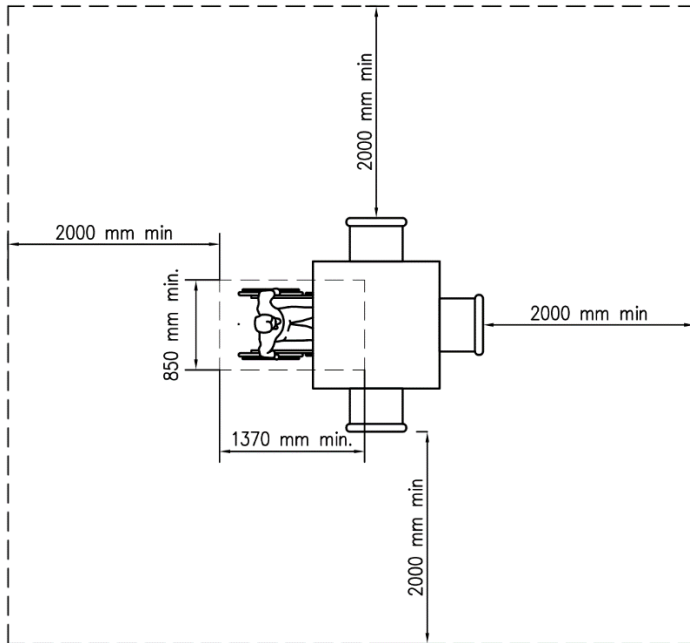


Figure 3: Accessible tables must have 2000 mm of firm, level ground surrounding them.



4. Service Counter Design Requirements

The AODA requires reception and service counters to be accessible to all visitors, here is how to fulfill that requirement:

- A. Adjustable height counters offer the best flexibility and accessible options for all customers, but where this is not available knee space must be on both sides of the counter below the counter surface
- B. The main service counter must be accessible if alternative heights are desired for other accommodations, they must be provided immediately adjacent to the main service counter
- C. Accessible counter surface height must be between 710 mm and 865 mm above the finished floor or ground
 - i. Counter surface width must be at least 920 mm
 - ii. Counter depth must be no more than 1270 mm
 - iii. Knee space height must be at least 685 mm
 - iv. Knee space width must be at least 810 mm
 - v. Knee space depth must be at least 480 mm
- D. If there is a physical barrier like plexiglass or glass barriers between the customer and service provider, the acoustics will not be optimal for people with hearing loss. If a speaker port has been provided it must not be higher than 1060 mm above the finished floor or ground. In addition, assistive listening devices at all counters but especially where barriers are provided are necessary. Where a built-in hearing loop system is not technically feasible a portable device/system must be provided. Counters must provide at least one type of Assistive Listening Device at each counter:
 - i. Speech Transfer Intercom System with volume controls for both staff and customers - this can be in a counter system or speaking port.
 - ii. Gooseneck or cordless microphone; or
 - iii. Telephone system with voice/speech amplification.
- E. Lighting must be at least 300 lux at the counter surface to assist in reading bills or menus and at least 100 lux on the customer and service providers' face to assist lip-reading

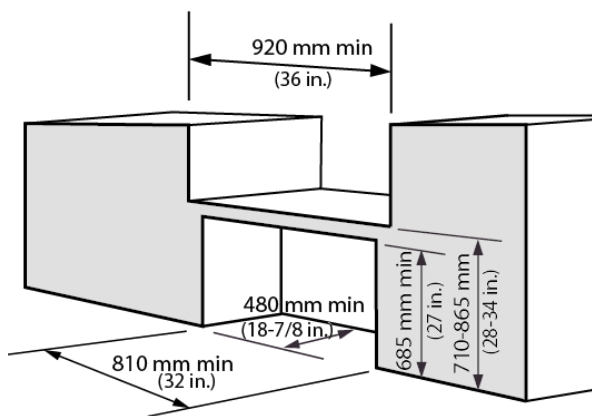


Figure 4: Accessible service counter with clear knee space of 810 mm by 480 mm minimum.





5. Sample Patio Layouts

Here are some sample patio layouts for café's, bars, and restaurants. Many of the design requirements mentioned above are visually demonstrated in these layouts. Use them as inspiration to make your patio accessible to all visitors!

Café Patio

The café patio layout is recommended for businesses with space on the sidewalk in front of their establishment.

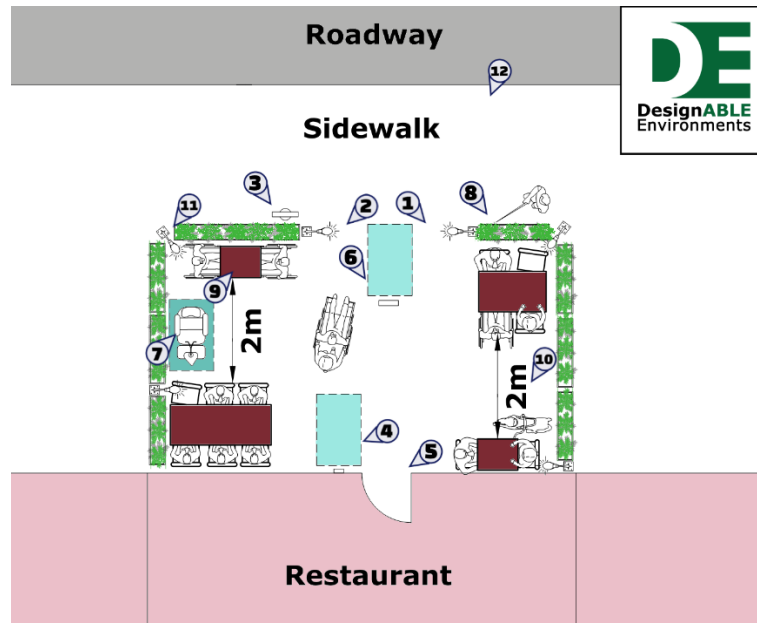


Figure 5: Diagram demonstrating an accessible layout for storefront patios.

Legend:

1. Flat, flush entrance or temporary curb ramp i.e. StopGap;
2. One-way entrance or exit;
3. Accessible signage with directions and information;
4. Clear space in front of push door operator;
5. Accessible entrance into restaurant;
6. Clear space in front of hand sanitizer;
7. Mobility scooter parking space;
8. Cane detectable physical barrier;
9. Table with appropriate knee and toe space or height adjustable;
10. Physical distance between patrons 2 metres wide;
11. Ambient lighting illuminating routes, service and seating areas;
12. Unobstructed sidewalk





Bar Patio

The bar patio layout is recommended for businesses with space in a closed curb lane approved by local municipal authority.

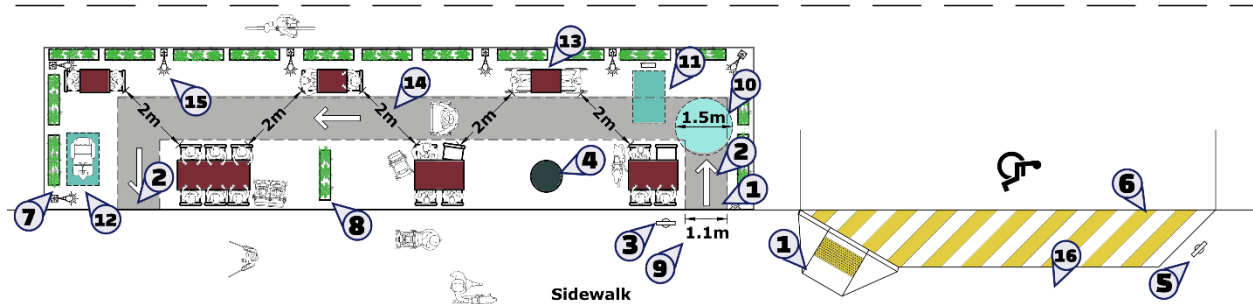


Figure 6: Diagram demonstrating an accessible layout for a built or street-level patio in a closed curb lane.

Legend:

1. Flat, flush entrance or temporary curb ramp i.e. StopGap;
2. One-way entrance or exit;
3. Accessible signage with directions and information;
4. Reception, service or payment counter;
5. Accessible signage with parking near entrance and accessible path;
6. Pedestrian access aisle;
7. Cane detectable physical barrier;
8. Cane detectable sound and privacy barrier;
9. One-way accessible route 1.1 metres wide;
10. Mobility device turn space 1.5 metre diameter;
11. Clear space in front of hand sanitizer;
12. Mobility scooter parking space;
13. Table with appropriate knee and toe space or height adjustable;
14. Physical distance between patrons 2 metres wide;
15. Ambient lighting illuminating routes, service and seating areas;
16. Unobstructed sidewalk





Restaurant Patio

The restaurant patio layout is recommended for businesses with space in a parking lot or expanded onto a closed street as approved by local municipal authority.

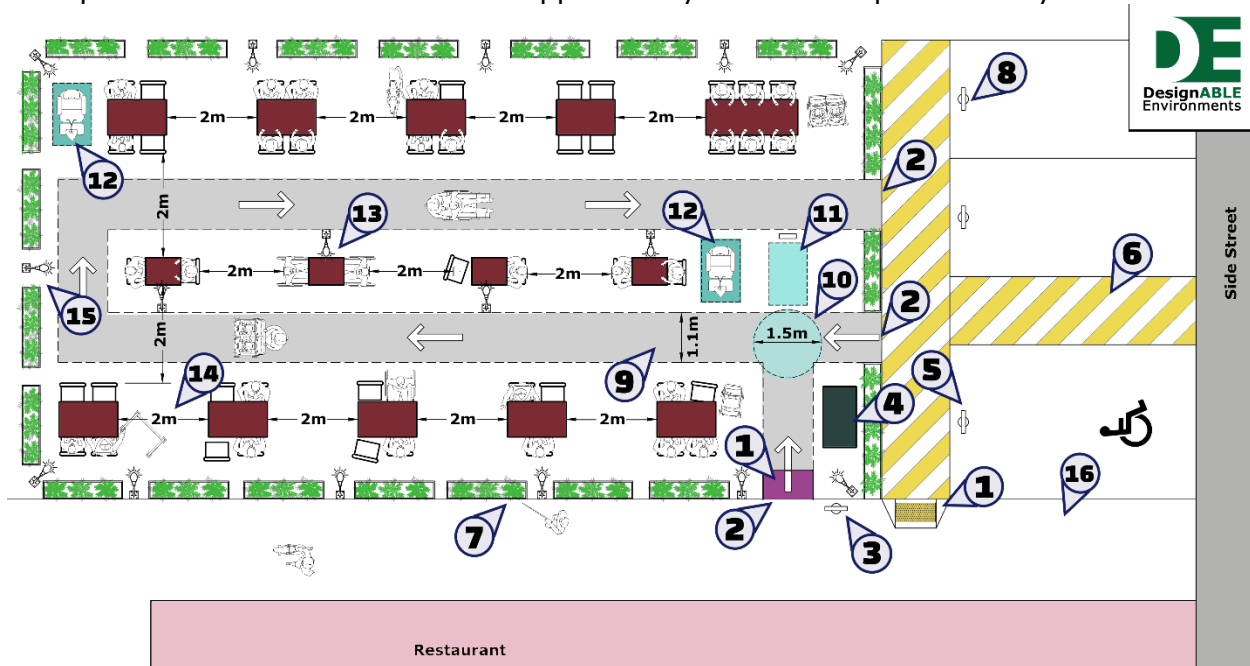


Figure 7: Diagram demonstrating an accessible layout for a patio in a re-purposed parking lot.

Legend:

1. Curb cut or temporary curb ramp i.e. StopGap;
2. One-way entrance or exit;
3. Accessible signage with directions and information;
4. Reception, service or payment counter;
5. Accessible signage with parking near entrance and accessible path;
6. Pedestrian access aisle;
7. Cane detectable physical barrier;
8. Order pick-up and drop-off parking;
9. One-way accessible route 1.1 metres wide;
10. Mobility device turn space 1.5 metre diameter;
11. Clear space in front of hand sanitizer;
12. Mobility scooter parking space;
13. Table with appropriate knee and toe space or height adjustable;
14. Physical distance between patrons 2 metres wide;
15. Ambient lighting illuminating routes, service and seating areas;
16. Unobstructed sidewalk





6. Additional Accessibility Considerations

As per **AODA Information and Communication Standards** and **AODA Customer Service Standards**, consider these accessibility provisions:

- A. Braille and large print menus
- B. The needs of customers with service or support animals
- C. Adult change bench facilities in washrooms

7. Reference Materials

Below are nine links to useful resources:

- A. Ontario Human Rights Code legislation: <http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/learning/working-together-code-and-aoda>
- B. Illustrated Technical Guide to the AODA Design of Public Spaces: <https://gaates.org/DOPS/loc.php>
- C. AODA Customer Service Standards: <https://aoda.ca/customer-care-standard/>
- D. AODA Information and Communication Standards: <https://aoda.ca/what-is-the-information-and-communications-standards/>
- E. City of Mississauga's Facility Accessibility Design Standards: http://www7.mississauga.ca/Departments/Marketing/Websites/Accessibility/Mississauga_FADS.html#a4.3.16
- F. CNIB Clearing Our Path: http://www.clearingourpath.ca/8.0.0-design-needs_e.php
- G. Effective Colour Contrast: https://pages.mtu.edu/~nilufer/classes/cs3611/interesting-stuff/designing-with-colors-1/color_contrast.htm
- H. Portable Hearing Loop: <https://www.harriscomm.com/equipment/loop-systems-receivers/loop-systems.html>
- I. Learn about Universal Design Principles: <http://designable.ca/universal-design.html>

DesignABLE Environments Inc. (DE) is a consultation firm that provides expertise to public and private sector clients on how to create built environments that meet the needs of all people, including persons with disabilities and the elderly. Since 1987, DE has been instrumental in developing and popularising the philosophies of barrier-free and universal design. Our staff work within project teams to ensure that the opportunities and options for inclusive design are simple and easy for our clients to take advantage of. We are skilled in the interpretation and application of a variety of accessibility standards and best practices, locally and from around the world. Our goal is to provide supportive built environments that promote independence, dignity, and safety for all.

