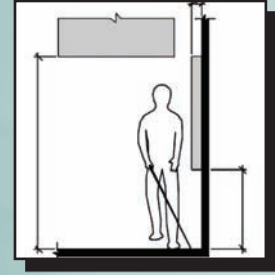


# American National Standard



*Accessible and Usable  
Buildings and Facilities*

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# 1998 Standard & Commentary

1998 ICC/ANSI A117.1 Standard and Commentary

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## FOREWORD

(This Foreword is not part of American National Standard A117.1-1998.)

The 1961 edition of ANSI Standard A117.1 presented the first criteria for accessibility to be approved as an American National Standard and was the result of research conducted by the University of Illinois under a grant from the Easter Seal Research Foundation. The National Easter Seal Society and the President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities became members of the Secretariat and the Standard was reaffirmed in 1971.

In 1974, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development joined the Secretariat and sponsored needed research, which resulted in the 1980 edition. After further revision that included a special effort to remove application criteria (scoping requirements), the 1986 edition was published and, when requested in 1987, the Council of American Building Officials (CABO) assumed the Secretariat. Central to the intent of the change in the Secretariat was the development of a standard that, when adopted as part of a building code, would be compatible with the building code and its enforcement. This edition has largely achieved that goal. In 1998, CABO became the International Code Council (ICC).

Suggestions for improving this edition will be welcome. They should be sent to ICC, Secretariat, ANSI A117 Committee, 500 New Jersey Ave, NW, 6<sup>th</sup> floor, Washington DC 20001.

This Standard was processed and approved for submittal to ANSI by the Accredited Standards Committee on Architectural Features and Site Design of Public Buildings and Residential Structures for Persons with Handicaps (A117). Committee approval of the Standard does not necessarily imply that all Committee members voted for its approval. At the time it approved this Standard, the A117 Committee had the following members:

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Special recognition is provided to the following individuals who also contributed as members of the committee during this review cycle:

Richard Hudnut (Chair 1987-1997)  
Frank Bosak (Vice-Chair 1987-1997)  
John P.S. Salmen

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## PREFACE

### Purpose and Application

This standard contains technical specifications (i.e., how to) for elements that are used in creating accessible functional spaces. For example, it specifies technical requirements for making doors, routes, seating and other elements accessible. These accessible elements are used for designing accessible functional spaces such as classrooms, hotel rooms, lobbies or offices.

This standard does not include scoping criteria (i.e., what, where and how many). Scoping provisions are contained in laws, ordinances or model building codes that reference this standard. This standard is for adoption by government agencies and by organizations setting model codes to achieve uniformity in the technical design criteria in building codes and other regulations. This standard is also used by nongovernmental entities as technical design guidelines or requirements to make buildings and facilities accessible to and usable by persons with physical disabilities.

Provisions of this standard are suitable for:

- the design and construction of new buildings and facilities, including both spaces and elements, site improvements and public walks.
- remodeling, alteration and rehabilitation of existing construction.
- permanent, temporary and emergency conditions.

Criteria are established for individual building spaces and elements. The intention is that these accessible spaces and elements combine to provide accessibility throughout a building and related site facilities. General criteria, such as the minimum width of an accessible route, can apply to different building or site elements, including sidewalks, corridors and aisles between library stacks. Other criteria are for specific elements such as drinking fountains, water closets, sinks and lavatories.

The principal purpose of the commentary is to provide a basic volume of knowledge and facts relating to building construction as it pertains to the regulations set forth in ICC A117.1.

In the chapters that follow, discussions focus on the full meaning and implications of the text. Guidelines suggest the most effective method of application, and the consequences of not adhering to the text. Illustrations are provided to aid understanding; they do not necessarily illustrate the only methods of achieving compliance.

The format of the commentary includes the full text of each section, table and figure in the standard, followed immediately by the commentary applicable to that text. At the time of printing, the commentary reflects the most up-to-date text of the 1998 ICC/ANSI A117.1. Each section's narrative includes a statement of its objective and intent and usually includes a discussion about why the requirement commands the conditions set forth. Standard text and commentary text are easily distinguished from each other. All standard text is shown as it appears in the ICC/ANSI A117.1 and all commentary is indented below the text with the symbol ❖.

Readers should note that the commentary is to be used in conjunction with the ICC/ANSI A117.1 and not as a substitute for the standard. The commentary is advisory only; the code official alone possesses the authority and responsibility for interpreting the code and referenced standards.

Comments and recommendations are encouraged, for through you input, we can improve future editions. Please direct you comments to the Codes and Standards Development Department at the Chicago District Office.

### Recommendations to Adopting Authorities

#### Administration

This standard does not establish which occupancy or building types are covered and the extent to which each type is covered. Such requirements for application of this standard must be specified by the adopting authority, including which and how many functional spaces and elements are to be made accessible within each building type.

The standard does not establish which or how many buildings, facilities and spaces or elements within these spaces must be made accessible. This standard correlates with the adoption of scoping provisions by the administrative authority. This is typically accomplished through the adoption of a model building code which references this standard. The adopted scoping provisions will establish where accessibility is required, and this standard will establish how those required elements and spaces are to be made accessible. A set of recommended scoping provisions was developed by the Board for the Coordination of the Model Codes of the *Council of American Building Officials*, and is reflected in the cur-