

Americans with Disabilities Act

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) became effective January 26, 1992. The ADA was updated May 2012. The intent of this legislation is to ensure that people with disabilities have access to employment, public accommodations, government services, transportation, telecommunications, and commercial facilities.

The placement of carpet in the affected public areas of commercial facilities places certain obligations on the specifier, building owner and others. Compliance requirements should be thoroughly understood by the specifier; therefore, the following has been excerpted from the United States Access Board, Guide to the ADA Standards: <https://www.access-board.gov/guidelines-and-standards/buildings-and-sites/about-the-ada-standards/guide-to-the-ada-standards/chapter-3-floor-and-ground-surfaces>

This guide explains requirements in the [ADA Standards](#) for floor and ground surfaces. Specifications for floor and ground surfaces address surface characteristics, carpeting, openings, and changes in level. They apply to:

- interior and exterior accessible routes, including walking surfaces, ramps, elevators, and lifts
- stairways that are part of a means of egress
- required clearances, including clear floor space, wheelchair seating spaces, turning space, and door maneuvering clearances
- accessible parking spaces, access aisles, and accessible passenger loading zones

Carpet [[§302.2](#)]

Carpet that is thick, cushiony, or loose impairs accessibility, particularly wheelchair maneuvering. The standards specify the maximum pile height (1/2" measured to the backing, cushion, or pad) and texture (level or textured loop, level cut pile, or level cut/uncut pile) and require firm backing. Cushions or pads also must be firm or can be avoided to ensure greater firmness.

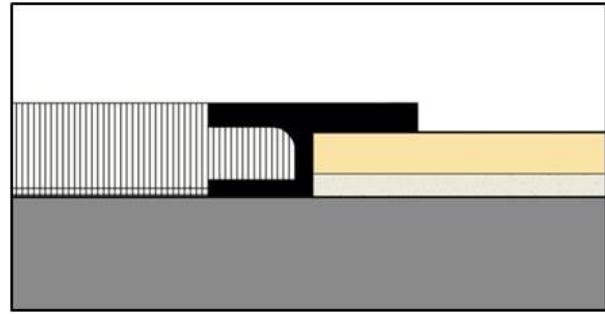
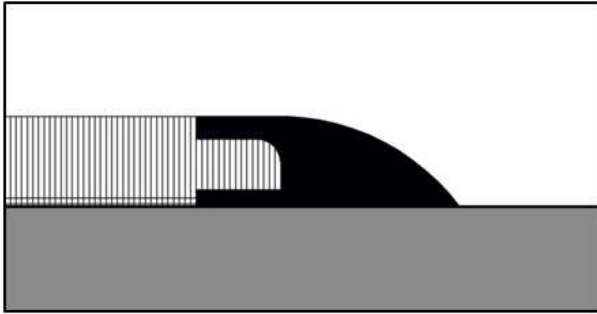


Carpeting must be securely attached so that it does not shift or buckle against wheeled traffic. Cushions or pads, if used, also must be properly secured to resist movement. Rolling or buckling occurs when carpet is not properly secured and makes wheelchair maneuvering very difficult.

Exposed edges must have trim on the entire length of the exposed edge and be fastened to the floor to prevent curling. Trim must meet specifications for changes in level, including requirements for beveled edges when the height exceeds ¼ inch. The maximum height is ½ inch.

Carpet Edge Treatment

Carpet to Tile Transition



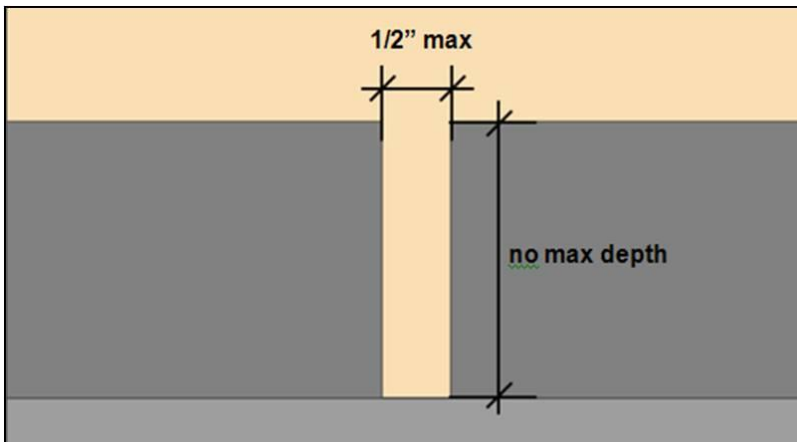
1/2" max height, 1:2 max beveled edge

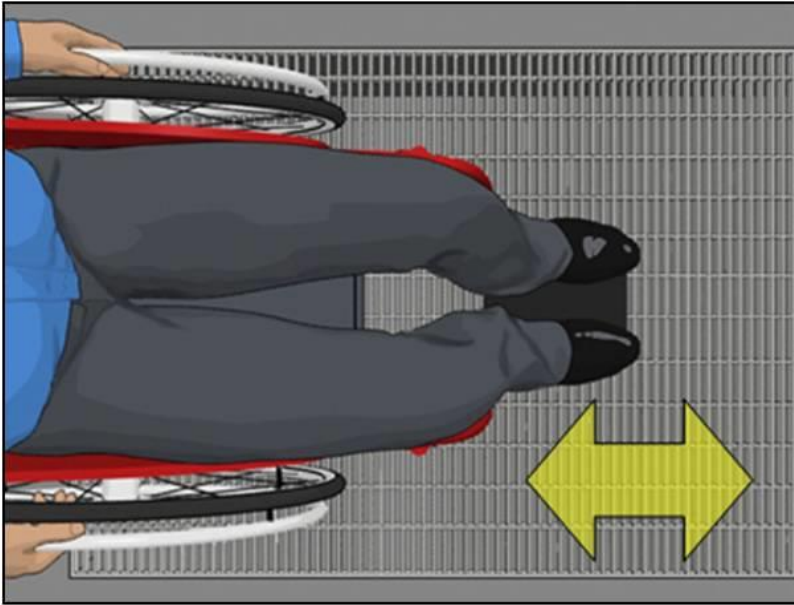
Changes in level 1/4" max high permitted vertical edge

Openings [\[§302.3\]](#)

Openings in ground and floor surfaces, such as grates, are limited in width to prevent passage of a ½" diameter sphere. Wheelchair casters can get wedged into wider openings.

Surface Opening (Cross Section)



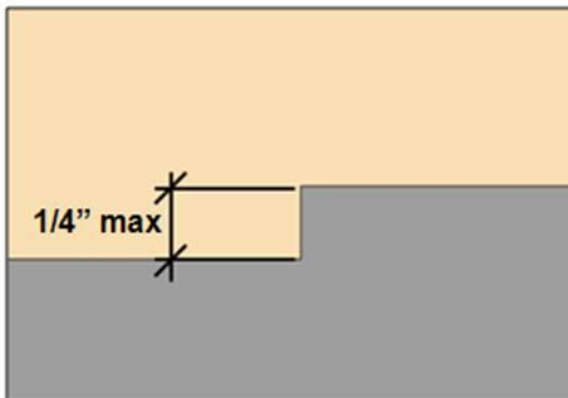


Elongated openings, like those of most grates, must be oriented so that the long dimension is perpendicular to the dominant travel direction. In locations where there is no dominant flow pattern, openings must be limited to 1/2" in both dimensions. Where an accessible route is available to bypass openings completely, they can be oriented in any direction.

Changes in Level [[§303](#)]

Changes in level can be up to 1/4" without treatment or 1/2" if beveled with a slope no steeper than 1:2. Changes in level above a 1/2" must be treated as a ramp or curb ramp (or a walkway if a slope no steeper than 1:20 can be achieved). These specifications apply to all portions of accessible routes, including thresholds and carpet trim.

1/4" Max Change in Level



1/2" Max Change in Level

