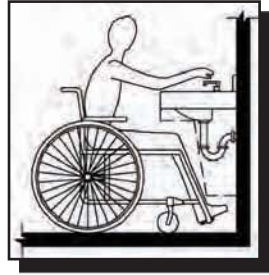


# American National Standard



*Accessible and Usable  
Buildings and Facilities*

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# 2003 Standard & Commentary

2003 ICC/ANSI A117.1 Standard and Commentary

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## FOREWORD

(The information contained in this foreword is not part of this American National Standard (ANS) and has not been processed in accordance with ANSI's requirements for an ANS. As such, this foreword may contain material that has not been subjected to public review or a consensus process. In addition, it does not contain requirements necessary for conformance to the standard.)

### Development

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 1961 edition 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. The 1998 edition largely achieved that goal. In 1998, CABO became the International Code Council (ICC).

### 2003 Edition

New to the 2003 edition are criteria for elements and fixtures primarily for children's use; enhanced reach range criteria; transportation facilities; additional provisions for assembly areas; and an addition and rearrangement for accessible dwelling and sleeping units. These new criteria are intended to provide a level of coordination between the accessible provisions of this standard and the Fair Housing Accessibility Guidelines (FHAG) and the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG). Illustrative figures are numbered the same as corresponding text to simplify the use of the Standard. Unless specified otherwise, figures are not part of the Standard. Should a figure appear to illustrate criteria that differ with the text of the Standard, the criteria stated in the text govern.

### ANSI Approval

This Standard was processed and approved for submittal to ANSI by the Accredited Standards Committee A117 on Architectural Features and Site Design of Public Buildings and Residential Structures for Persons with Disabilities. ANSI approved the 2003 edition on November 26, 2003. Committee approval of the Standard does not necessarily imply that all Committee members voted for its approval.

### Adoption

ICC/ANSI A117.1–2003 is available for adoption and use by jurisdictions internationally. Its use within a governmental jurisdiction is intended to be accomplished through adoption by reference in accordance with proceedings establishing the jurisdiction's laws.

### Formal Interpretations

Requests for Formal Interpretations on the provisions of ICC/ANSI A117.1–2003 should be addressed to: ICC, Chicago District Office, 4051 W. Flossmoor Road, Country Club Hills, IL 60478–5795.

### Maintenance—Submittal of Proposals

All ICC standards are revised as required by ANSI. Proposals for revising this edition are welcome. Please visit the ICC website at [www.iccsafe.org](http://www.iccsafe.org) for the official "Call for proposals" announcement. A proposal form and instructions can also be downloaded from [www.iccsafe.org](http://www.iccsafe.org).

ICC, its members and those participating in the development of ICC/ANSI A117.1-2003 do not accept any liability resulting from compliance or noncompliance with the provisions of ICC/ANSI A117.1-2003. ICC does not have the power or authority to police or enforce compliance with the contents of this standard. Only the governmental body that enacts this standard into law has such authority.

**Accredited Standards Committee A117 on Architectural Features and  
Site Design of Public Buildings and Residential Structures for  
Persons with Disabilities**

At the time of ANSI approval, the A117.1 Committee consisted of the following members:

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United Spinal Association (CU) . . . . .	Brian D. Black Dominic Marinelli (Alt)
World Institute on Disability (WID) (CU) . . . . .	Hale Zukas

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- George P. McAllister, Jr. (P)
- Jake L. Pauls, CPE (P)
- John P. S. Salmen, AIA (P)
- Kenneth M. Schoonover, PE (P)

**Acknowledgment**

The updating of this standard over the past 5 years could only be accomplished by the hard work of not only the current committee members listed at the time of approval but also the many committee members who participated and contributed to the process over the course of development. ICC recognizes their contributions as well as those of the participants who, although not on the committee, provided valuable input during this update cycle.



## INTEREST CATEGORIES

**Builder/Owner/Operator (BO)** – Members in this category include those in the private sector involved in the development, construction, ownership and operation of buildings or facilities; and their respective associations.

**Consumer/User (CU)** – Members in this category include those with disabilities, or others who require accessibility features in the built environment for access to buildings, facilities and sites; and their respective associations.

**Producer/Distributor (PD)** – Members in this category include those involved in manufacturing, distributing, or sales of products; and their respective associations.

**Professional (P)** – Members in this category include those qualified to engage in the development of the body of knowledge and policy relevant to their area of practice, such as research, testing, consulting, education, engineering or design; and their respective associations.

**Regulatory (R)** – Members in this category include federal agencies, representatives of regulatory agencies or organizations that promulgate or enforce codes or standards; and their respective associations.

**Individual Expert (IE)** (Nonvoting) – Members in this category are individual experts selected to assist the consensus body. Individual experts shall serve for a renewable term of one year and shall be subject to approval by vote of the consensus body. Individual experts shall have no vote.

<b>Category</b>	<b>Number</b>
Builder/Owner/Operator – <b>(BO)</b>	6
Consumer/User – <b>(CU)</b>	10
Professional – <b>(P)</b>	13
Producer/Distributor – <b>(PD)</b>	7
Regulatory – <b>(R)</b>	7
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>43</b>

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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 the ANSI 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 2003 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 code 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-