

## SOME BASIC SUGGESTIONS FOR PLANNING BARRIER FREE FACILITIES

- \* One primary entrance in every building should have at least a 32 - inch opening, lightweight doors and level thresholds. This entrance should provide access in multi-floor buildings to elevators large enough to allow a wheelchair to turn around.
- \* Floors should have sufficient texture to allow wheelchairs to move without slipping and people with canes and crutches to navigate with ease.
- \* Stairs should have risers of seven inches or less and have at least one handrail on each stair extending eight inches beyond both the bottom and top steps.
- \* Restrooms should have at least one stall wide enough for a person in a wheelchair. This stall should also have grab bars, as should urinals.
- \* Water fountains, public telephones, light controls, fire alarms, towel dispensers and vending machines should be installed at about 45 inches from the floor to accommodate wheelchair bound and handicapped children.
- \* Ramps to entrances above ground should have a gradient of not more than one foot for every twelve feet. A ramp should have 32-inch-high handrails on at least one side.
- \* Ground surrounding a building should be graded to provide at least one primary entrance accessible to handicapped individuals.
- \* Parking lots should have several larger spaces reserved for the handicapped.
- \* Public walks should be at least four feet wide with no gradient greater than 5 percent. They should be of continuing common surface, uninterrupted by abrupt changes in level.
- \* Smooth-surfaced (not slick) walks should be installed across soft sanded areas, such as beaches, to bath houses, rest rooms, swimming, fishing, and boating areas.
- \* Boating and fishing dock ramps should have a grade of not more than one foot in every twelve feet, with rails on at least one side of the ramps and docks.
- \* Wading and swimming pools should be adapted with ramps to allow easy access for wheelchair-bound people.
- \* Outdoor theaters should have some removable seats to accommodate wheelchairs.

\* Permanent outdoor cooking facilities should have variable heights for use by wheelchair bound people or by those who would have difficulty bending or stooping.

\* Warning signals should be both visual and audible for the deaf and blind; safety devices which depend on sound—such as a lifeguard's whistle, should be augmented by visual warning flags.

\* Information on signs in parks and other outdoor areas should be designed with large raised letters for the visually impaired. Tape recordings might augment the written word, providing information for both the blind and the deaf.

\* Special visual and sensual warning signs should be placed in danger areas such as ridges on door knobs leading to a steep flight of stairs going down, a precipitous portion of a pathway should be marked by a ridge in the path, etc.

There are countless suggestions for ways to make areas more accessible. An upcoming issue of Design offers suggestions for construction of barrier free facilities.