

# Audit tool for assessing physical accessibility of outdoor walking paths

This is an easy-to-use checklist to assess the physical suitability of an outdoor walking path for people of all abilities, particularly for those with a mobility disability. It should be completed by or with a person with a mobility disability.

Accessibility considers people walking unaided as well as those using a walking stick or frame, wheelchair, or other mobility device to travel at human speed. When this tool uses the term 'walk' it refers to people travelling in any of these ways.

What to bring:

- This audit tool (either printed or electronic), **for more information please click here:** [www.victoriawalks.org.au/accessible-walks](http://www.victoriawalks.org.au/accessible-walks)
- A tape measure or similar measuring device (for measuring gaps, step height, door widths, etc).
- An inclinometer to measure slope. iPhones have an inbuilt inclinometer (Open Measure > Level) and there are free inclinometer apps available for Android mobile phones, such as 'Simple Inclinometer'.

Instructions:

- Take lots of photos, including of facilities such as the path itself, inside the toilet block, car park, etc. This helps people know what to expect.
- Use the following to score each criterion. Some criteria must be met fully for the walk to be considered accessible for all abilities. Where a section of path is not suitable for people of all abilities (when you use a cross), note the location and explain why. These can be sent to the path owner (e.g. council or Parks Victoria) to let them know what changes need to be made for it to be considered fully accessible.
- Other criteria are 'to note', identified by the icon shown below. Where these criteria are not met or facilities not provided, this should be noted in the walk description and a photo if appropriate. People can use this information to decide whether the walk is still suitable for them.

Location of walk: \_\_\_\_\_



Tick if walking path meets the criteria.



Cross if walking path does not meet the criteria.






Criteria to note but not essential for an accessible walk.

## 1. Getting to the walk

An accessible walk requires people to be able to get there in the first place. Consider access by both car/private vehicle and public transport, if nearby.



✓ OR ✗	Criteria	Considerations	Notes
	The path between the car park/drop off zone and the start	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distance</li> <li>• Surface (firm, wide and flat)</li> <li>• Ramps</li> </ul>	

	of the walk is easy for a person with disability to use.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Road crossings</li> <li>• Is the car park safe to walk through?</li> </ul>	
	Is accessible parking/drop off zone available?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Space for drivers to pick up/drop off people and/or park.</li> <li>• Location of parking/drop off zone.</li> <li>• Are people likely to have any issues in exiting vehicles (e.g. space, surface)?</li> </ul>	
	(Where applicable) Is there an accessible path between the public transport stop and the start of the walk?	<p>Note whether public transport is available for getting to the walk. If it is, consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approximate distance to start of walk from stop/station</li> <li>• Path surface (firm, wide and flat)</li> <li>• Ramps</li> <li>• Road crossings</li> </ul>	
	(Where applicable) Does the public transport stop provide a reasonable waiting experience?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Passenger information</li> <li>• Shelter</li> <li>• Seating</li> </ul>	

## 2. The path itself





To be accessible, a path must be continuous, firm, sufficiently wide and flat.

✓ OR ✗	Criteria	Considerations	Notes
	The path is at least 1.2m wide.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pinch points and approximate location</li> <li>• Is the path generally wide enough for two people to travel side-by-side or pass?</li> </ul>	
	The path surface is free from hazards.	Pooling water, slippery surfaces or obstacles e.g. rocky surface, tree roots, etc. Gaps between bars in grates and boardwalks should be less than 13 mm wide.	
	There is a step free walking path option.	<p>To be considered accessible for all abilities, there must be a path option with no steps.</p> <p>Some people can use single or a small number of steps. For each location with steps, note the number of steps and take a photo.</p>	
	The path is generally flat – gradient.	Note locations which are more than 1 in 14 (7.14%, 4.1 degrees) <i>along</i> the path.	






	The path is generally flat – crossfall.	Note locations which are more than 1 in 40 (2.5%, 1.43 degrees) <i>across</i> the path.	
	The space above path (at least 2m) is clear of obstacles.	Consider overhanging branches.	
	Are there any hazards within 1m of the path?	Consider sharp drop offs, soft edges and bodies of water and whether safety rails are present.	
	(Where applicable) Are road crossings provided where needed?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the path cross road/s?</li> <li>• Are there any issues in crossing the road (e.g. lots of traffic but no signals)?</li> </ul>	

### 3. The surrounding environment

Outlining what to expect helps people to decide if the walk is suitable for them and helps address anxiety, which can be a significant barrier to participation. For those with mental disability particularly, minimising surprises is key.

	Are shade and shelter available along the path?	Note particularly exposed locations due to direct sun or regular high winds.	
	Is the walking route clearly marked?	<p>There are clear directions and information telling people which way to go.</p> <p>There may also be information about walking distances and times.</p>	
	Are there options to turn around after starting the walk?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Space to turn a wheelchair around.</li> <li>• Options to walk a different, shorter way after departure.</li> <li>• Points along the walk allow vehicle access.</li> <li>• Mobile phone coverage.</li> </ul>	
	Are there any other things to note?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unexpected and loud noises e.g. loud traffic, aeroplanes.</li> <li>• Dogs off leash</li> <li>• Paths shared with people riding bikes</li> <li>• Path subject to flooding (and location)</li> </ul>	

### 4. Facilities

These are nice to have and helpful to know about in advance.			
	Is seating available?	Note location, type (formal with armrests, logs, etc), shading and whether it is easy to get to for a person with disability.	
	Are accessible toilets provided?	Note location, gender and whether they are easy to get to for a person with disability. The website <a href="https://toiletmap.gov.au/">https://toiletmap.gov.au/</a> provides information about toilet type, access and amenities.	
	Is drinking water available?	Is it easy to get to and use?	
	Is the area generally well maintained?	Note any issues with maintenance and cleanliness.	
	Are there other facilities? e.g. playgrounds, BBQs, tables, bins, food and drinks for purchase	Note what they are and whether they are easy to get to for a person with disability. Also note dedicated accessibility features e.g. viewing platform with dedicated space for wheelchairs.	



*Walking and rolling together: accessible walking trails for people with disability* is a partnership of [Victoria Walks](#) and [Scope](#)

[www.victoriawalks.org.au/accessible-walks](http://www.victoriawalks.org.au/accessible-walks)



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