

ADA Accessibility Summary for Swimming Pools

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a civil rights law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability. On September 15, 2010, the ADA Guidelines finalized on July 23, 2004 (ADAAG 2004) were signed into law and now require compliance by all Title II (Public Entities) and Title III (Public Accommodations and Commercial Entities) by March 15, 2012. This includes recreation facilities, swimming pools, wading pools and spas.

ADA regulations cover both public and private facilities including pools operated by public park and recreation districts, hotels and motels, fitness and recreational sports clubs, country clubs, high schools and universities, waterparks, hospitals and health care facilities. Regulations may also apply to private residential facilities, such as homeowners, apartment and condo associations, if these facilities are open to the general public.

ADA guidelines provide specification of certain elements in the design of new and renovated facilities to ensure that individuals with disabilities are generally able to access swimming pools and spas and use a variety of features of the facility. The guidelines are the minimum level of accessibility required and are encouraged to be exceeded where possible to increase opportunities.

Summary Guidelines Permitted Means of Pool Access					
Pool Type	Sloped Entry	Lift	Transfer Walls	Transfer Systems	Stairs
Swimming Pools with less than 300 Lineal Feet of Pool Wall	X	X			
Swimming Pools - 300 or more Lineal Feet of Pool Wall - 2 means of entry required	X*	X*	X	X	X
Wave Action, Leisure River, Other Pools where User Entry is Limited to 1 Area	X	X		X	
Wading Pools	X				
Spas		X	X	X	

** Requires two means of access. Primary means must be by sloped entry or pool lift; secondary means can be any of the permitted types.*

ADA Final Guidelines for Swimming Pools, Wading Pools and Spas and Related Components

242.2 Swimming Pools Scoping	At least two accessible means of entry must be provided for swimming pools. Primary means must be a pool lift that is capable of being independently operated by a person with a disability or sloped entry. Secondary means may be pool lift, sloped entry, transfer wall, transfer system, or pool stairs.
Exception-pools less than 300 lineal feet	Swimming pools with less than 300 linear feet of pool wall must provide at least one accessible means of entry. Means must be pool lift or sloped entry.
Exception-pools with limited access	Wave action pools, leisure rivers, sand bottom pools, and other pools where user access is limited to one area must provide at least one accessible means of entry. Means must be pool lift, sloped entry, or transfer system.
Exception-catch pools	Catch pools are bodies of water where water slides drop users into the water. An accessible means of entry is not required but the pool must be served by accessible route that connects to the pool edge.
242.3 Wading Pools Scoping	Wading pools must provide at least one sloped entry.
242.4 Spas Scoping	Spas must provide at least one accessible means of entry. Means must be pool lift, transfer wall, or transfer system. Footrests are not required on pool lifts provided at spas but are encouraged, especially on larger spas where the water depth is 34" or more or where there is sufficient space.
Exception-spas in cluster	Where spas are provided in cluster, at least 5% in each cluster, or at least one spa must be accessible