



Stage 2 Reforms of the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002



Accessible boarding points: Portable boarding ramp edge barriers

Currently, there is an absence of a clear requirement for portable boarding ramps to have edge barriers in the Transport Standards. This poses a risk to the safety and confidence of people who use mobility aids when travelling on public transport. There is an opportunity to provide a clear requirement for all portable boarding ramps to have edge barriers.

Reform options

Maintain current requirements in the Transport Standards

Transport Standards Section 6.2 *Boarding ramps*, would remain unchanged and no new guidance material would be issued.

Non-regulatory option

The Transport Standards Guidelines and / or The Whole Journey Guide would be updated to include advice for edge barriers on portable boarding ramps.

Specific guidance may include the following:

- Recommended ramp edge height
- Ramp edge design, including shape and contrast

Regulatory option

Transport Standards Section 6.2 would be amended to include the following (including any requirements retained or amended from the status quo):

There are three regulatory options for consideration relating to the height of edge barriers. Option 1 is a performance based standard. Option 2 sets a prescriptive requirement for edge barrier heights. Option 3 sets a perspective requirement for edge barrier heights and cites an Australian Standard.

1. All portable boarding ramps that are not fixed to conveyances **must have vertical edge barriers of a safe height above the ramp surface on both sides**. Edge barriers may be curved, chamfered, or tapered at either end.

2. All portable boarding ramps that are not fixed to conveyances **must have vertical edge barriers 65 to 75 millimetres above the ramp surface on both sides**. Edge barriers may be curved, chamfered or tapered at either end.
3. All portable boarding ramps that are not fixed to conveyances **must have vertical edge barriers 75 millimetres above the ramp surface as per AS3856.1 (2021), clause 7.1 (b) on both sides**. Edge barriers may be curved, chamfered, or tapered at either end.

All of the options pertain to buses, (except dedicated school buses), trains, trams and light rail.

The Transport Standards Guidelines and / or The Whole Journey Guide would be updated for all three options to include advice for edge barriers on portable boarding ramps.

Case study

Gareth catches the train. His local station is heritage listed and has a low platform. Gareth uses a powered wheelchair and boards the train at the accessible door in the middle of the platform. A staff member assists Gareth to board and exit the train by deploying a portable boarding ramp.

Gareth's experience today

Gareth is waiting for his normal train to arrive and is standing with a staff member. Once the train arrives, the staff member deploys the boarding ramp. The long ramp has a dark, non-slip surface leading to the side edges of the ramp. Gareth is always apprehensive about using the ramp. Gareth cautiously makes his way onto the ramp. Just before reaching the top, Gareth oversteers and the front left wheel of his device slips off the side of the ramp. Gareth is jerked forward and falls into the side of the train door, stopping him from falling further. Gareth's hand is caught under the weight of his device. Embarrassed and in a lot of pain, he calls the staff member to assist. The staff member holds onto Gareth as he withdraws his hand, allowing Gareth to reverse his device back onto the ramp. He is embarrassed and in a lot of pain.

Gareth's experience under the proposed reforms

Gareth is waiting for his normal train to arrive and is standing with a staff member. Once the train arrives, the staff member deploys the boarding ramp. The ramp is about 900mm long and has a dark, non-slip surface and vertical edge barriers on either side. The edges are bright yellow and contrast well with the rest of the ramp. Gareth confidently makes his way onto the ramp. Just before reaching the top, Gareth oversteers and the front left wheel of his wheelchair bumps into the ramp's edge barrier. Gareth adjusts as the staff offers assistance. Gareth confirms he's okay and finishes boarding the train. Gareth is a little embarrassed and thanks the staff member before making his way to the allocated space.

Have your say

Public consultation on the Stage 2 reform of the Transport Standards will open from 15 March to 9 August 2022.

For further information:

- **Website:** <https://www.infrastructure.gov.au>
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- **Survey:** <https://edm.infrastructure.gov.au/survey.php?sid=28710&name=portable-boarding-ramp-edge-barriers>

