



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



# Accessible boarding points: Signals and process for requesting boarding devices

Currently, existing requirements for signals or other processes for requesting boarding assistance in the Transport Standards are not sufficiently explicit and reference an outdated Australian Standard. People who are hearing impaired or deaf are at a disadvantage when communication systems require verbal interaction. There is an opportunity to clarify the requirements for signals and other processes for requesting boarding assistance, and to update the reference to Australian Standards to reflect the use of modern technology.

## Reform options

### Maintain current requirements in the Transport Standards

Transport Standards Section 8.7 *Signals requesting use of boarding device*, would remain unchanged and no additional guidance would be issued.

### Non-regulatory option

Guidance would be updated to include advice on good practice for requesting boarding devices, including:

- Communication of the need for boarding and alighting assistance in real time (the time of need) rather than through prior booking.
- Request signal device location and controls
- Hearing augmentation systems
- Staff training

### Regulatory option

Transport Standards Section 8.7 would be amended to include the following (including any requirements retained or amended from the status quo), to include requirements for signals and a process for requesting boarding assistance:

- Passengers who require assistance to alight must be able to communicate in real time to notify that they wish to alight.

- A request signal device that must be touched or pressed should be located in the allocated space and positioned as per AS1428.1 (2009) *Clause 13.5.3 (c)*
- Timing of the notification for alighting assistance must not exceed that of other passengers requesting a vehicle or vessel to stop.
- If an electronic notification system has an audio component it must be linked to a hearing augmentation system that conforms to AS1428.5 (2021) *Section 3.2*.
- The force required to press a button must be in the range of 2.5 to 5 newtons.
- Controls and operating mechanisms must be operable with one open hand and must not require tight grasping, pinching, or twisting of the wrist and shall have a switch with one surface dimension of at least 25 millimetres. Controls must comply with AS1428.1 (2009), *Clause 13.5.4, Power-operated door controls*.

Call and control buttons:

- Call and control buttons **should** have an integral, continuously operating light.
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These requirements pertain to buses (except dedicated school buses), coaches, ferries, trains, trams and light rail.

The Transport Standards Guidelines and / or The Whole Journey Guide would be updated to provide advice concerning the new requirements.

## Case study

Armit has a mobility impairment and uses a walking frame for assistance. He has reduced dexterity and experiences tremors that affect his fine motor control. Armit also has some hearing loss.

### Armit's experience today

Armit wants to request the driver deploy the boarding ramp when they arrive at his stop. He notices a small 'stop' button on the wall leans over to press it. The button is in an awkward location and is difficult for Armit to reach. The size of the button also makes it difficult for him to push. Due to the time it takes for Armit to press the button, he misses his stop. Finally, Armit presses the button, however he doesn't hear a sound or a light, so he's unsure whether it's worked. Armit, now concerned, calls out to the driver that he wants to stop. The driver calls back that he knows. Embarrassed, Armit exits the bus.

### Armit's experience under the proposed reforms

Armit wants to request the driver deploy the boarding ramp when they arrive at his stop. Armit notices a large 'stop' button on the wall adjacent to the priority seat. The button protrudes out from the wall and is large enough for Armit to easily press with the palm of his hand. As soon Armit applies pressure, the button makes a noise and flashes, suggesting it has been activated. Confident, Armit waits for his upcoming stop. The driver stops and deploys the ramp and Armit leaves the bus and thanks the driver.

## 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:

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- **Survey:** <https://edm.infrastructure.gov.au/survey.php?sid=28718&name=signals-and-process-for-requesting-boarding-devices>