



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



Infrastructure access paths: Stairs on trains

The current requirements for stairs in the Transport Standards are generic and not specific to each type of public transport conveyance. As a result they are not fit-for-purpose for trains as the provision of internal stairs in rail cars is not always achievable. There is an opportunity to set requirements for stairs specific to trains and update references to Australian Standards which will provide greater accessibility features.

Reform options

Maintain current requirements in the Transport Standards

Transport Standards Section 14.3 *Compliance with Australian Standards – conveyances* and Section 11.3 *Handrails on steps*, would remain unchanged and no additional guidance for stairs on trains would be issued.

Non-regulatory option

Guidance would be updated to include advice on internal stairs on board trains, including accessibility features and handrail geometry.

- Internal stair design, such as opaque risers, geometry, height, nosings and luminance contrasting
- Handrail requirements, such as size and location in relation to access paths
- Tactile ground surface indicators are not required at train, tram and light rail stairs and steps.
- Operators and providers can refer to:
 - AS1428.1 (2009) – *Design for access and mobility – General requirements for access – New building work Clause 11.1 (c), (d), (e), (f) and (g).*
 - AS1428.1 (2009) *Clause 12 (b).*

Regulatory option

Transport Standards section 11.3 would be amended to include modality specific requirements for stairs on trains. The regulatory option also includes updated Australian Standard references and handrail requirements for all conveyances (except dedicated school buses and small aircraft.)

Section 11.3 *Handrails on steps*, would be amended to include the following (including any requirements retained or amended from the status quo):

- A handrail on stairs or steps need not extend beyond the top or bottom of the steps and stairs.
- If the handrail is interrupted or terminates abruptly at the top or bottom step a domed warning indicator with a height of between 4 to 5 millimetres and a diameter of between 10 to 12 millimetres must be provided on the top of the handrail 150 millimetres from the end of the handrail.
- Handrails must have at least 30 per cent luminance contrast with any background wall or surface adjacent to the handrail, within a distance of 2000 millimetres from the handrail.
- Handrails must comply with AS1428.1 (2009) *Clause 12 Handrails*.

These requirements would apply to conveyances (except dedicated school buses and small aircraft).

The Transport Standards would include the following new requirements for stairs:

- Where internal stairs and steps are provided, they must have opaque risers and comply with AS1428.1 (2009) *Clause 11.1 (c), (d), (e), (f) and (g)*.
- Stair and step geometry must comply with:

Sub-option 1

The riser and going specifications of the National Construction Code, Table D2.13¹.

Sub-option 2

Riser and going dimensions that are safe and fit for purpose.

- The minimum access path width on stairs and steps must be 850 millimetres.
- Stairs and steps must not intrude into access paths.
- TGSIs are not required at train, tram and light rail stairs and steps.

These requirements would apply to trains, trams and light rail.

The Transport Standards Guidelines and / or The Whole Journey Guide would be updated to reflect new requirements.

Case study

Inger catches the train everyday to her job in the city. Inger has a vision impairment and a medical condition meaning she experiences pain and fatigue when standing for extended periods, so she prefers to sit in the priority seats close to the door.

Inger's experience today

Inger boards the train during peak hour on a very busy day. She notices that all seats on the lower floor are occupied and there are many passengers already standing. Inger knows there are often free seats on the upper deck so she makes her way to the stairs. The stairs are very narrow. Inger takes her time and reaches out for the handrail. She take a moment to find the handrail because it is a similar colour to the wall. Worried for her safety, Inger looks down to take her next few steps, but struggles to locate the edge of the next step as there is no contrast strip. Inger makes her way to a nearby seat and sits down, short of breath and worried for her safety.

Inger's experience under the proposed reforms

¹ Australian Building Codes Board, *The National Construction Code*, 24 December 2021, <https://ncc.abcb.gov.au/ncc-online/NCC/2019-A1/NCC-2019-Volume-One-Amendment-1/Section-D-Access-and-Egress/Part-D2-Construction-Of-Exits>

Inger boards the train during peak hour on a very busy day. She notices that all seats on the lower floor are occupied and there are many passengers already standing. Inger knows there are often free seats on the upper deck so she makes her way to the stairs. The stairs are wide enough for two people to pass in opposite directions. Each step is a familiar height and depth, similar to the steps at their train station. Inger reaches out for the handrail and feels it at a familiar height. The handrail is easy to see for Inger, as it is in a colour that contrasts well with the wall. Inger looks down to take her next few steps, and can easily see the edge of each step due to a wide contrast strip at the top of each step. Inger takes the final step and makes her way to a nearby seat and sits down.

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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