



UNITED STATES ACCESS BOARD

amusement rides boating facilities fishing piers & platforms golf courses miniature golf sports facilities swimming pools & spa

accessible golf courses



a summary of
accessibility guidelines
for recreation facilities



JUNE 2003

A FEDERAL AGENCY COMMITTED TO ACCESSIBLE DESIGN

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This information has been developed and reviewed in accordance with the Access Board's information quality guidelines (www.access-board.gov/infoquality.htm).

Accessibility Guidelines for Recreation Facilities



Introduction

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a comprehensive civil rights law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability. The ADA requires that newly constructed and altered state and local government facilities, places of public accommodation, and commercial facilities be readily accessible to, and usable by, individuals with disabilities. The ADA Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG) is the standard applied to buildings and facilities. Recreational facilities, including golf courses, are among the facilities required to comply with the ADA.

The Access Board issued accessibility guidelines for newly constructed and altered recreation facilities in 2002. The recreation facility guidelines are a supplement to ADAAG. As a supplement, they must be used in conjunction with ADAAG. References to ADAAG are mentioned throughout this summary. Copies of ADAAG and the recreation facility accessibility guidelines can be obtained through the Board's website at www.access-board.gov or by calling 1-800-872-2253 or 1-800-993-2822 (TTY). Once these guidelines are adopted by the Department of Justice (DOJ), all newly designed, constructed and altered recreation facilities covered by the ADA will be required to comply.

The recreation facility guidelines cover the following facilities and elements:

- Amusement rides
- Boating facilities
- Fishing piers and platforms
- Miniature golf courses
- Golf courses
- Exercise equipment
- Bowling lanes
- Shooting facilities
- Swimming pools, wading pools, and spas

This guide is intended to help designers and operators in using the accessibility guidelines for golf courses. These guidelines establish minimum accessibility requirements for newly designed or newly constructed and altered golf courses. This guide is not a collection of golf course designs. Rather, it provides specifications for elements within a golf course to create a general level of usability for individuals with disabilities. Emphasis is placed on ensuring that individuals with disabilities are generally able to access the golf course and



use a variety of elements. Designers and operators are encouraged to exceed the guidelines where possible to provide increased accessibility and opportunities. Incorporating accessibility into the design of a golf course should begin early in the planning process with careful consideration to the layout of the course, golf car paths, and other circulation paths.

The recreation facility guidelines were developed with significant public participation. In 1993, the Access Board established an advisory committee of 27 members to recommend accessibility guidelines for recreation facilities. The Recreation Access Advisory Committee represented the following groups and associations:

- American Ski Federation
- American Society for Testing and Materials (Public Playground Safety Committee)
- American Society of Landscape Architects
- Beneficial Designs
- City and County of San Francisco, California, Department of Public Works
- Disabled American Veterans
- Environmental Access
- Golf Course Superintendents Association of America
- Hawaii Disability and Communication Access Board
- International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions
- Katherine McGuinness and Associates



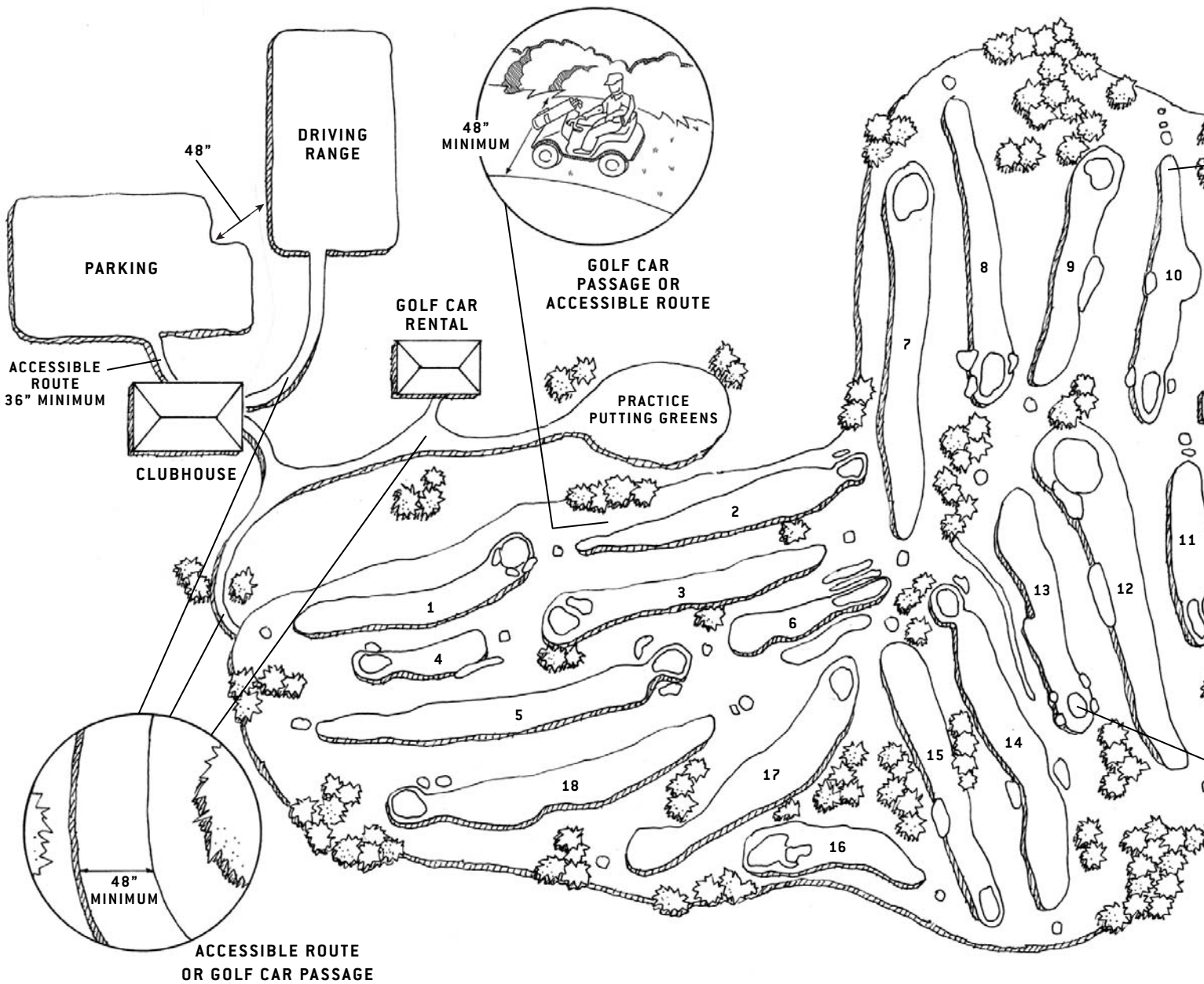
EASTERN AMPUTEE GOLF ASSOCIATION

- Lehman, Smith, and Wiseman Associates
- Michigan Department of Natural Resources
- National Council on Independent Living
- National Park Service
- National Recreation and Park Association
- New Jersey Department of Community Affairs
- Outdoor Amusement Business Association
- Paralyzed Veterans of America
- Professional Golfer's Association
- Self Help for Hard of Hearing People
- States Organization for Boating Access
- Universal Studios
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- U.S. Forest Service
- Y.M.C.A. of the U.S.A.
- Walt Disney Imagineering

The public was given an opportunity to comment on the recommended accessibility guidelines, and the Access Board made changes to the recommended guidelines based on the public comments. A notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM) was published in the Federal Register in July 1999, followed by a five-month public comment period. Further input from the public was sought in July 2000 when the Access Board published a draft final rule soliciting comment. A final rule was published in September 2002.

"Whenever a door is closed to anyone because of a disability, we must work to open it....Whenever any barrier stands between you and the full rights and dignity of citizenship, we must work to remove it, in the name of simple decency and justice."

ACCESSIBLE ROUTE OR GOLF CAR PASSAGE CONNECTING ELEMENTS

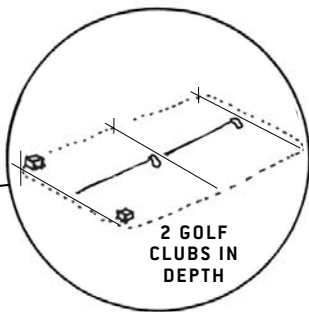


The promise of the ADA...has enabled people with disabilities to enjoy much greater access to a wide range of affordable travel, recreational opportunities and life-enriching services."

President George W. Bush, New Freedom Initiative, February 1, 2001

Golf Courses

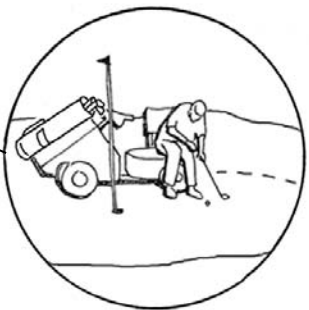
The recreation facility guidelines described in this guide focus on newly designed or newly constructed and altered golf courses and driving ranges. Other provisions contained in ADAAG address elements commonly found at a golf course, such as accessible vehicle parking spaces, exterior accessible routes, and toilet and bathing facilities. ADAAG addresses only the built environment (structures and grounds). The guidelines do not address operational issues. Questions regarding operational issues should be directed to the Department of Justice, 1-800-514-0301 or 1-800-514-0383 (TTY).



TEEING GROUNDS



WEATHER SHELTER



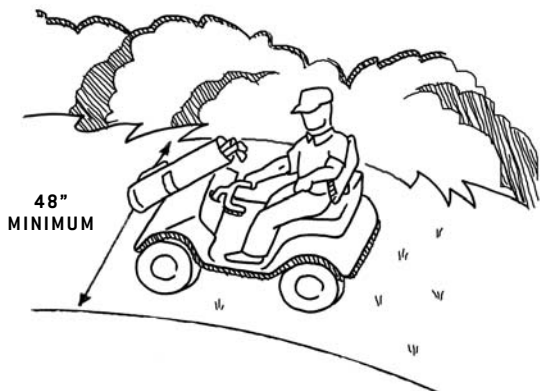
PUTTING GREEN

Accessible Routes

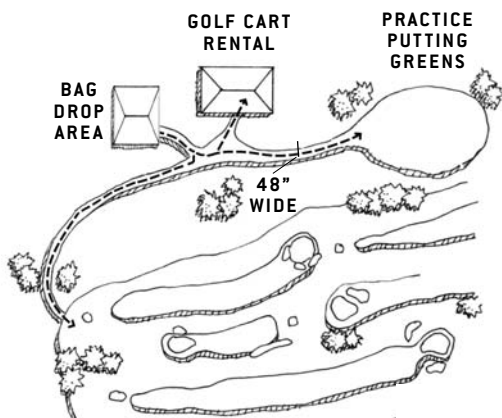
Accessible routes are continuous, unobstructed paths connecting all accessible elements and spaces of a building or facility on golf courses. The accessible route must comply with ADAAG provisions for location, width (minimum of 36 inches), passing space, head room, surface, slope (maximum of 1:12 or 8.33%), changes in level, doors, egress, and areas of rescue assistance, unless modified by specific provisions outlined in this guide.

Alternative Golf Car Passage

Providing an accessible route that complies with ADAAG may be impractical throughout a golf course for several reasons.



**GOLF CAR PASSAGE
OR ACCESSIBLE ROUTE**



**ACCESSIBLE ROUTE OR
GOLF CAR PASSAGE**

First, the route of play for a golfer is dependent on where the ball lands and is therefore unpredictable. The guidelines assume that on many courses, golfers use a golf car to move throughout the course.

Second, requiring an accessible route throughout a course could alter the slopes within some courses and alter the nature of the sport by eliminating some of the challenge of the game. Therefore, a golf car passage may be substituted for an accessible route *within* the boundary of a golf course. A golf car passage is a continuous passage on which a motorized golf car can operate. While a golf car passage must be usable by golf cars, it does not necessarily need to have a prepared surface and may be part of a golf car path. The golf car passage could be located on areas such as fairways, greens, and teeing surfaces. A golf car passage can be substituted for all or part of the accessible route connecting elements within the boundary of the course and must be a minimum of 48 inches in width.

A golf car passage may also be substituted for an accessible route *outside* the boundary of the golf course when connecting certain elements. This is limited to the golf car rental area, bag drop areas, practice putting greens, accessible practice teeing grounds, course toilet rooms, and course weather shelters.

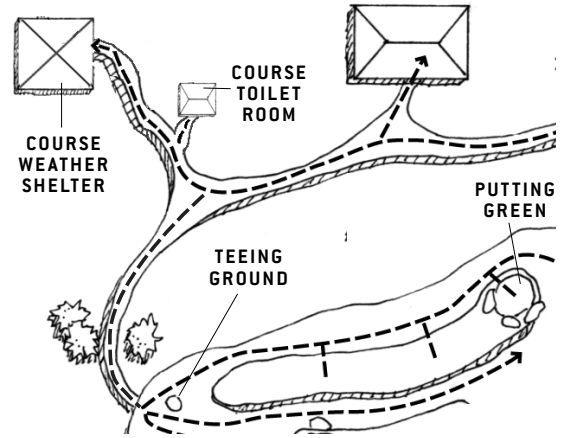
Accessible Route Guidelines

Where an accessible route is used, the golf course guidelines modify ADAAG's accessible route provisions. They increase

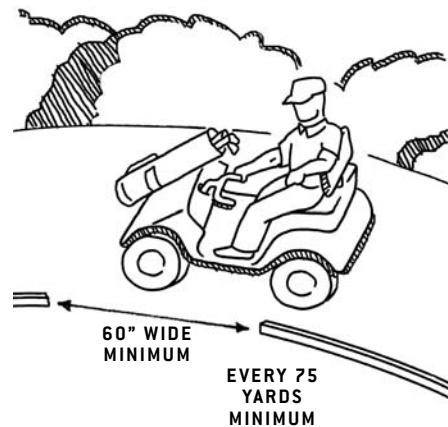
the minimum width for an accessible route from 36 inches to 48 inches. If an accessible route is provided instead of a golf car passage, it must connect accessible elements and spaces located within the boundary of a golf course. The 48-inch minimum width for the accessible route is necessary to ensure passage of a golf car on the accessible route. This is important where the accessible route is used to connect the golf car rental area, bag drop areas, practice putting greens, accessible practice teeing grounds, course toilet rooms, and course weather shelters. These are areas outside the boundary of the golf course, but are areas where an individual using an adapted golf car may travel. Where handrails are provided along an accessible route, the guidelines increase the minimum width of the route to 60 inches to accommodate the passage of a golf car.

Course Barriers

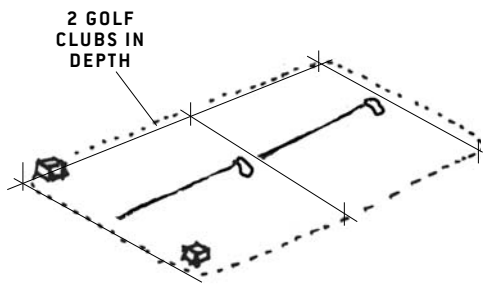
Curbing or other man-made barriers often line golf car paths to restrict golf cars from entering certain portions of the course or to reduce erosion. Where man-made barriers are provided that prevent golf cars from entering a fairway, openings at least 60 inches wide at intervals not exceeding 75 yards must be provided. These dispersed openings will provide access to the course at reasonable intervals, enabling a golfer using a golf car to play the game without extended travel distances and time requirements.



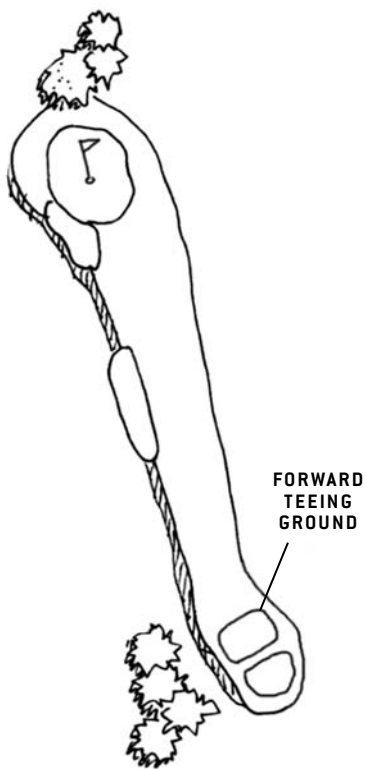
GOLF CAR PASSAGE OR ACCESSIBLE ROUTE ON FAIRWAY



COURSE BARRIERS



TEERING GROUND



MULTIPLE TEEING GROUNDS

Teeing Grounds

The “teeing ground” is the starting place for a hole of golf. A rectangular area usually two club-lengths in depth, the teeing ground’s borders are defined by the outside limits of two “tee-markers.” The design and construction of new teeing grounds or the alteration of an existing teeing area must allow golf cars to enter and exit within these limits.

- Forward Teeing Ground—The forward teeing ground for each hole must be connected by either an accessible route or a golf car passage. Existing courses do not have to provide access to the forward teeing ground in alterations, if terrain makes compliance infeasible.
- Multiple Teeing Grounds—If one or two teeing grounds are provided for a hole, only the forward teeing ground must be accessible either by an accessible route or a golf car passage. If three or more teeing grounds are provided for a hole, two teeing grounds must be accessible. This will allow persons with disabilities to play from different tees appropriate to their skill level, while providing flexibility to course operators and designers.

Putting Greens

Each putting green must be designed and constructed so that a golf car can enter and exit the green. The green must be connected by a golf car passage so that a golf car can reach the green.



PUTTING GREEN

Weather Shelters

Course weather shelters must be designed and constructed to allow a golf car to enter and exit, and have a clear floor or ground space of 60 inches by 96 inches minimum. This space will allow a golf car to be driven directly into a weather shelter.

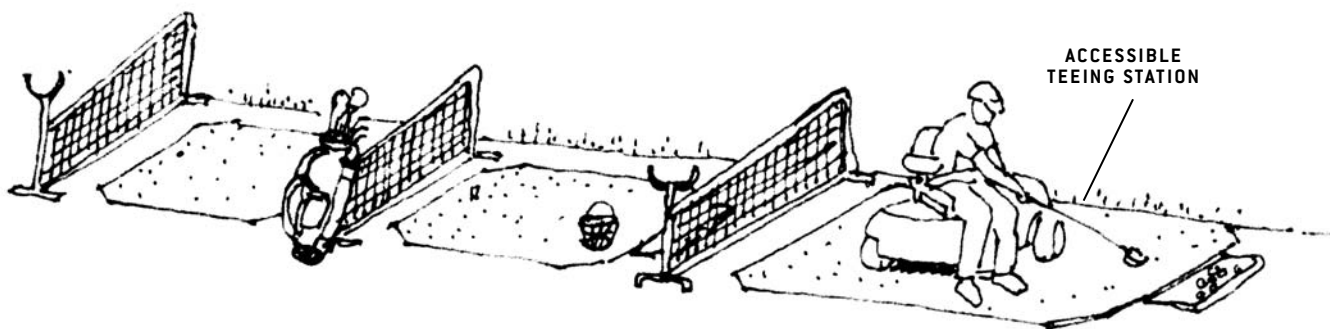


WEATHER SHELTER

Driving Ranges

Both stand-alone driving ranges and driving ranges adjacent to a golf course that provide teeing stations or practice teeing grounds must comply with the following:

- **Accessible Routes**—An accessible route or a golf car passage must connect accessible teeing stations with accessible parking spaces. The accessible route must be a minimum of 48 inches wide. If handrails are provided, the accessible route must be a minimum of 60 inches wide. This will allow a person who plays golf from a golf car to practice driving a golf ball from the same position and stance used when playing the game.



TEEING STATION

- Teeing Stations—If teeing stations or practice teeing grounds are provided, at least five percent, but not less than one, of the practice teeing grounds must be accessible and provide space for a golf car to enter and exit.

Single Rider Adaptive Golf Cars

In recent years, single rider adaptive golf cars have been used to increase access for persons with disabilities on golf courses. Questions have arisen concerning their use. The Access Board develops and maintains accessibility guidelines for the built environment. It is outside the jurisdiction of the Access Board to address operational issues such as the use of these cars. Operators should contact the Department of Justice at 1-800-514-0301 or 1-800-514-0383 (TTY) regarding issues relating to the use and operation of adaptive golf cars.



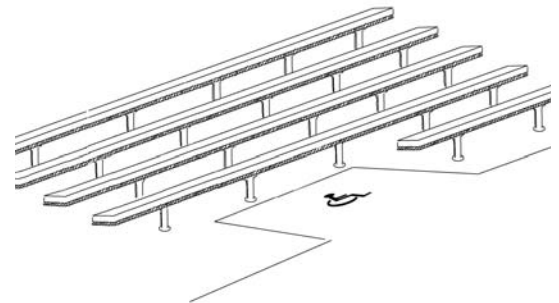
SOLORIDER

Temporary Facilities

ADAAG also requires temporary facilities such as bleachers for tournaments, assembly seating areas, portable toilet facilities, concessions, and all other available amenities to provide access. Access to temporary facilities on a golf course may be achieved through either an accessible route or golf car passage. Facilities hosting tournaments or competitions must comply with all the other requirements of the ADA, including the general obligation to provide an equal opportunity to individuals with disabilities to enjoy the services provided.

More Information

You can obtain copies of the recreation facility guidelines, which include golf courses, and further technical assistance from the U.S. Access Board at www.access-board.gov, **1-800-872-2253**, or **1-800-993-2822 (TTY)**.



ACCESSIBLE BLEACHERS



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