



ACCESS CURRENTS

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New 508 Standards Advisory Committee Holds Its First Meeting

The Telecommunications and Electronic and Information Technology Advisory Committee (TEITAC) held its first meeting September 27 - 29 in Arlington, Virginia at the National Science Foundation. The Board organized this committee to review its section 508 standards for electronic and information technology and to provide recommendations on how they should be updated. The committee will also address updating the Board's guidelines for telecommunications products covered by section 255 of the Telecommunications Act.

Committee Co-chairs Michael Paciello and Jim Tobias opened the meeting, following welcoming remarks from Board Chair David L. Bibb and Executive Director Lawrence Roffee. All 42 members of the committee attended the meeting, including representatives from the European Union and entities in Canada, Japan, and Australia. The Board provided a briefing on regulations governing committees of this type under the Federal Advisory Committee Act. The committee reviewed and approved protocols that will govern its work and meetings and discussed its objectives and milestones.



Members of the Telecommunications and Electronic and Information Technology Advisory Committee

In addition, members heard presentations and panel discussions on the 508 standards and issues that need to be explored as recommended by government, consumer, and industry representatives. Information was provided on various accessibility initiatives in the U.S. and abroad relating to electronic and information technology, including updates on efforts to develop standards by the European Union, the Japanese Standards Association, Industry Canada, and Australia's Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission.

The committee organized eight subcommittees devoted to different subject areas and assigned a committee member to convene each subcommittee's initial meeting. The subcommittees cover:

- General Interface Accessibility
- Web and Software
- Telecommunications
- Audio/ Video
- Self Contained, Closed Products
- Desktops, Portables, Peripherals, and Other Computer Hardware
- Documentation and Technical Support
- Purpose, Application, General Exceptions, Definitions, Equivalent Facilitation

Committee Meeting Dates (tentative)

Nov. 8 - 9, 2006
Feb. 6 - 8, 2007
March 27 - 29, 2007
May 23 - 25, 2007
July 25 - 27 2007

Before adjourning, the committee approved meeting dates for full committee meetings to be held over the next ten months. The committee's next meeting will be held November 8th and 9th from 9:00 to 5:00 in Washington D.C. at the U.S. Department of Education, Potomac Center Plaza, 10th Floor Auditorium, 550 12th Street, S.W. *(continued next page)*

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Interactive Website for Committee's Work Established

An interactive website at <http://teitac.org> has been set up to facilitate collaboration, discussion, and development of recommendations by committee and subcommittee members and other interested parties. Part of the site is a "wiki," which enables registered users to post and edit documents and to author materials collaboratively. All documents will be available to visitors, but users must register in order to post comments or edit documents. Instructions are provided on how to use the site and its features, participate in subcommittee deliberations, and subscribe to email lists. Information on the committee's work is also posted on the Board's website at www.access-board.gov/sec508/update-index.htm.



New ADA Standards Issued for Transportation Facilities

On October 30, 2006, the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) adopted new standards for transportation facilities covered by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Based on updated guidelines issued by the Board in 2004, the standards will apply to bus stops and stations, rail stations, and airports built or altered after November 29, 2006, as indicated in a notice published by DOT in the *Federal Register*. The standards may also apply to certain key rail stations and intercity rail stations but otherwise do not apply to existing facilities except in the case of alterations.

The new standards contain updated provisions that improve accessibility while facilitating compliance. For example, the standards clarify and enhance access to fare vending machines and bus stops, and include revised specifications for tactile warnings along boarding platform drop-offs that will accommodate a wider range of available products. These and other changes, including a revised format and numbering system, derive from the Board's overhaul of its ADA Accessibility Guidelines. Other facilities covered by the ADA, including places of public accommodation, commercial facilities, and state and local government facilities, are subject to standards maintained by the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ). DOJ intends to adopt similar standards for these facilities but has not released a timetable for this action.

The Board's guidelines are also being used to update standards under the Architectural Barriers Act (ABA) which applies to federally funded facilities. Several agencies are responsible for the ABA standards, including the General Services Administration and the U.S. Postal Service which previously adopted new standards that apply to most types of federal facilities and to postal facilities. ABA standards covering housing and military facilities will be updated by the Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Department of Defense. Once all agencies have issued new standards under the ABA or ADA, a consistent level of accessibility will be specified for the full range of facilities covered under both laws. Further information on the status of these efforts is posted on the Board's website at www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/standards-update.htm.

ADA Facilities	Agency	Standards Currently in Effect
Transportation	DOT	New standards take effect Nov. 26, 2006
Other Types of Facilities	DOJ	Existing standards still apply
ABA Facilities	Agency	Standards Currently in Effect
Federally Funded (other than postal, military, or residential)	GSA	New standards took effect May 8, 2006 (February 6, 2007 for leased facilities)
Postal	USPS	New standards took effect October 1, 2005
Military	DOD	Existing standards still apply
Residential	HUD	Existing standards still apply



The Board examined access to double-decker buses and other modes of public transportation in Las Vegas.

Board Holds Town Meeting in Las Vegas

The Board traveled to Las Vegas in September to hold a town meeting on accessibility and an information meeting specific to transportation vehicles. The town meeting focused on access issues of concern to the public and ways in which the Board's various program areas, including rulemaking, technical assistance, and training, can be responsive to them. Citizens and representatives from various organizations called attention to issues concerning implementation of the ADA's design standards, including enforcement, plans review, and training for designers and architects. Some of these concerns were raised in relation to Las Vegas, as well as to rural communities in Nevada. Participants also raised issues concerning accessibility to trails, sidewalks and bus stops, polling places, courthouses, and communication. Accessibility for people who are deaf and those with vision impairments were highlighted as areas meriting greater attention. In addition, a representative from the Passenger Vessel Association provided industry feedback on draft guidelines for passenger vessels that are currently available for public comment.

Information Meeting on Transportation Vehicles

Speakers at the information meeting on transportation vehicles included representatives from the National Center for Accessible Transportation and the Regional Transportation Commission of Southern Nevada. This meeting focused on recommendations that the Board should take into consideration in updating its ADA Accessibility Guidelines for Transportation Vehicles. Published in 1991, these guidelines address buses, vans, rail cars, and other modes of public transportation.

Commenters stressed the need to update the guidelines to address the growing range of mobility aids and assistive devices now on the market. Transit operators indicated that certain types of vehicles, boarding devices, and securement systems may not accommodate some newer types of mobility aids. Participants also urged the Board to examine access to new types of vehicles, including bus rapid transit, low floor buses, articulated buses, and street cars, as well as design innovations, including enclosed cabs and off-board fare devices. In particular, the Board was advised to revisit sections of the guidelines covering boarding devices, such as ramps, lifts, and bridge plates, boarding areas, securement systems and orientation, and mobility aid stowage. The Board held a similar meeting on the vehicle guidelines in Washington, D.C. in July. While in Las Vegas, the Board explored new types of vehicles available in the area, including a bus rapid transit system, double-decker buses, and a monorail.

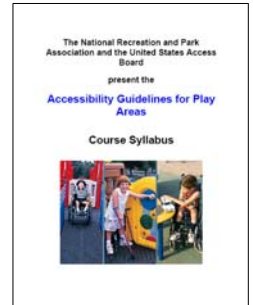
Courthouse Access Advisory Committee to Present Report

The Courthouse Access Advisory Committee, which the Board organized to promote accessible courthouse design, will present its recommendations at the next meeting of the Board in November. The Committee's report will provide design solutions and best practices for ensuring access to courthouses, including courtrooms, which pose unique challenges to accessibility. The Committee's report will also address strategies for promoting this guidance through websites and on-line courses, design guides and other materials, training, and outreach.

Over the course of its two-year charter, the Committee met in different cities across the country and toured a variety of courthouses at each location to collect information upon which to base its recommendations. Its presentation, which will be open to the public, will take place November 15th at 3:00 at the Marriott at Metro Center, 775 12th Street N.W., Washington, D.C. For further information, contact Dave Yanchulis at caac@access-board.gov (e-mail), (202) 272-0026 (v), or (202) 272-0082 (TTY), or visit the Board's website at www.access-board.gov/caac/index.htm.

New Training Course on Accessible Play Areas Available

The Board, in partnership with the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), has developed a new training course on its ADA and ABA accessibility guidelines for play areas. These guidelines cover access to play components, including elevated structures, surfacing, and other elements of play areas. The three-hour course, made available through NRPA, will be used to train park and recreation professionals, designers, landscape architects, manufacturers, operators, and others concerned with ensuring access to play areas. It covers all sections of the play guidelines, including ramp and transfer access to elevated play components, the number of play components required to be accessible, play surfacing, and other topics. The course was unveiled at NRPA's annual congress and exposition in Seattle on October 12th. For more information, contact NRPA at (703) 858-2148 or rgeiger@nrpa.org (email), or visit its website at www.nrpa.org/npsi.



Upcoming Section 508 Session to Address Document Archives

The next Section 508 "Lunch and Learn" program will be held December 13th from 12:00 to 1:30 at the Board's offices. This informal lunchtime discussion series highlights different aspects of compliance with section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act, which ensures access to electronic and information technologies procured by the Federal government. The upcoming session will focus on the conversion of electronic documents for accessibility, including high-volume collections, and will feature a speaker from a company engaged in this work. Those interested in the program can attend in person, though space is limited, or by teleconference (with realtime transcription). For more information, contact David Baquis at baquis@access-board.gov (email), (202) 272-0013 (voice), or (202) 272-0082 (TTY), or visit the Board's website at www.access-board.gov/sec508/training.htm.

Access Currents is a free newsletter issued by the Access Board every other month by mail and e-mail. Send questions or comments to news@access-board.gov or call (800) 872-2253 ext. 0026 (voice) or (800) 993-2822 (TTY). Mailing address: 1331 F Street, N.W., Suite 1000; Washington, D.C. 20004-1111.

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