

# Mandatory barrier free construction in Berlin

Berlin's administration has published comprehensive handbooks on barrier-free construction, that have been developed together with civil society and are mandatory for all Berlin State construction projects.

## BERLIN – DESIGN FOR ALL: ACCESSIBLE PUBLIC BUILDINGS AND PUBLIC OUTDOOR SPACE

- Year of existence:** 2011/2012
- Country/region of origin:** Berlin, Germany
- Beneficiaries targeted:** All, incl. persons with disabilities
- Responsible body:** Senate Department for Urban Development and the Environment
- Stakeholders:** Public and private sector (construction departments and industry, architects)

### FACTS & FIGURES

- Barrier-free construction has become an integral part of public construction.
- Universal Design was implemented in an exemplary way for the memorial of Stasi victims.
- European Commission Access City Award 2013.
- Coordinator of the EUROCITIES' Working Group Barrier-free City for All.

### IN BRIEF

The handbooks: Berlin - Design For All: Accessible Public Buildings and Berlin - Design For All: Public Outdoor Space were written by Berlin's Accessible Construction and Transportation Working Group composed of disability associations, disability commissioners and Berlin's administration. They aim to be simple and intuitive, give orientation for the planning process and give concrete assistance to update existing construction codes. Since 2011, both handbooks are mandatory for all Berlin State construction projects. They have been translated into English and Russian.

## INNOVATIVE ASPECTS

### Design for All

While taking demographic needs and social sustainability into account, Berlin's handbooks aim to promote a design that benefits all users.

### A concept on accessibility

In the planning process of construction developments, an overall consistent concept has to be drafted, promoting Design for All as an integral part of administrative, planning and implementation processes.

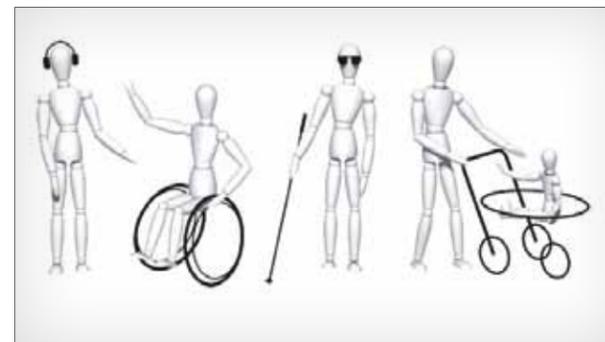
### Involving persons with disabilities

Since 2001, Berlin has worked closely with disability organisations, disability commissioners and the state disability advisory board, through the working group Barrier-Free Construction and Transportation.

## HISTORY

As early as 1992, Berlin's Senate adopted ten guidelines for making Berlin a more disability-friendly city. The Building Regulations for Berlin regulate minimum barrier-free construction requirements and the List of Technical Building Regulations, last updated in 2012, mandates the need to adhere to accessibility standards such as DIN 18040 Part 1, DIN 18040 Part 2, and DIN 18024 Part 1, as well as other regulations. Beyond the usual building codes, public building projects in Berlin are subject to additional quality standards as outlined in the handbooks Berlin - Design For All: Accessible Public Buildings of 2012 (updated) and Berlin - Design For All: Public Outdoor Space of 2011. Both handbooks are legally binding for Berlin state building projects as stipulated by the Senate of Berlin. For all other publicly accessible buildings that are in private ownership, the use of these handbooks is strongly recommended in the light of current social policy goals (Berlin's Equal Rights Act).

«By mandating a consistent concept of accessibility for construction projects, with input from Disability Commissioners, Berlin made an important step towards implementing Design for All.»  
(Gerd Grenner, Senate Department for Urban Development and the Environment, City of Berlin)



Cover of the handbook Berlin - Design for All - Accessible Public Buildings © Senate Department for Urban Development and the Environment, City of Berlin

## KEY FEATURES

The handbook: Berlin - Design For All: Accessible Public Buildings covers:

- General requirements for barrier-free access, which include: access to orientation and information, information systems, lighting, acoustics, etc.
- Public access including transport connections.
- Functional areas in buildings including information concerning: entrances, escape routes, places of public assembly, office spaces, sanitary facilities, changing areas, etc.
- Functional elements of buildings including: pathways, parking spaces, ramps, stairways, lifts, doors, floor covering, walls and ceilings, etc.
- Selected facilities for public use and places of public assembly, such as sports venues, theatres, cinemas, concert halls, exhibition spaces, hotels, education and sport facilities, childcare facilities, schools.

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**SOURCES** [www.stadtentwicklung.berlin.de/bauen/barrierefreies\\_bauen/en/handbuch.shtml](http://www.stadtentwicklung.berlin.de/bauen/barrierefreies_bauen/en/handbuch.shtml)

The handbook on Public Outdoor Space covers:

- Structural elements, including surface design, stairways, inclined surfaces and ramps, etc.
- Additional structural elements, such as equipment, orientation and information systems, resting areas, lighting, temporary use, etc.
- Selected public outdoor space such as living environment, parks, playgrounds, etc.

## IMPLEMENTATION

The handbooks are the result of the Barrierfree Construction and Transportation Working Group composed of disability associations, Disability Commissioners and Berlin's administration. As both handbooks are now mandatory, every public construction project has to consider accessibility requirements. In cases where specific criteria on barrier-free use of a building are set out, candidates have to prove their relevant qualification. All contracts must include the duty to comply with both handbooks and the obligation to draft an accessibility concept. For larger building projects the Disability Commissioners have to be consulted. In addition, a Coordinating Office for Accessible Construction is also in place.

## FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

Berlin is currently developing a set of recommendations on how to draft a consistent accessibility concept, and fact sheets for different building types. One of the greatest obstacles to overcome is that of the education of architects, which does not currently include accessible construction. Additionally it has proven difficult to find effective solutions for the adaptation of existing buildings with preservation orders.

Nominated by: Gerd GRENNER and Ingeborg STUDE, Senate Department for Urban Development and Environment, City of Berlin, Germany