

Accessibility Standards for Career and Technical Education Classrooms and Labs

As recipients of state and federal funds, Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs are required to make their facilities accessible for use by disabled students. Although the specific standard that applies is tied to the date that construction began, and the dates of any subsequent modifications, the goal should be to make your facility as accessible as possible. As classrooms and/or labs are updated or modified it is essential to assure that CTE environments are accessible. The following items will assist you in arranging and/or planning classrooms and labs that are barrier free.

Doorways: The entrance must provide a minimum of 32 inches of clear egress. The door should be equipped with a lever style or U-shape door handle (one that can be operated with a closed fist). There should be an unobstructed route into the room that is maintained at a minimum of 36 inches. The force required to open the door should not exceed 5 pounds.

Aisle(s): A minimum of one 36-inch aisle throughout the classroom is required. Disabled students should be able to move freely about the room to any area that any other student can access. Disabled students should be able to be seated in any area of the room that is mutually agreeable to the student and teacher.

Desk/work station: A minimum of one adjustable desk or workstation should be available to meet the needs of a disabled student. The approach and area around this desk or workstation should allow ample room for access by a disabled student. The location of this desk or workstation should not disadvantage or discriminate against the student in any way.

Height of items within the room: All items for student use (pencil sharpeners, paper towel dispensers, soap dispensers, eyewash, safety equipment, tools, equipment, etc.) should be mounted or placed so that the highest operating part of the item does not exceed 48 inches from the floor.

Classroom identification: The name/number identifying the classroom shall be marked in Braille as well as appropriate characters (not smaller than 5/8 inch), and shall be mounted at eye level (centerline 60 inches off the floor) adjacent to the door.

Restricted areas: Areas of storage for hazardous materials, custodial areas, engine or boiler rooms, doorways opening directly onto stairs, electrical service areas, or any area in which students could potentially be injured are required to have an identifying door knob (a knurled surface on the back of the knob) to warn vision impaired students that this is a dangerous area. Although these areas are rarely found in classrooms, if they are present, they need to be identified.

Sinks: If available, the height of the sink should not exceed 34 inches. The knee space beneath the sink should be at least 27 inches clear from the floor level. The pipes under the sink must be insulated to prevent injury. Handles must be operable with a closed fist.

A 36-inch path to the sink must be maintained. If the sink is enclosed in a base cabinet, the floor should be level with the room, and the doors must open more than 90 degrees, or slide into the cabinet to allow access.

Evacuation plans: A specific and effective building evacuation plan must be developed for each individual mobility-impaired/disabled student. Please collaborate with the appropriate special education staff and building administration in charge of evacuations/emergency plans in the development of such a plan. Also make sure that the student, paraprofessionals, neighboring teachers, and substitutes are aware of the actions to be taken in the plan.

Fire alarm: Visual and audible warnings should be included. If you do not have visual warning strobes, please develop a specific plan with your special education department for hearing impaired students (see evacuation plan above).

Water fountains: If provided, spout height must not exceed 36 inches. The fountain should be operated by push controls located on the front of the fountain. There should be 30 to 40 inches of clear access to the fixture.

Lockers: If provided as a part of the classroom/laboratory setting, they must meet accessibility standards. There should be clear access to the designated locker. The locker has a shelf located at the bottom (rather than top) of the locker. Hooks do not exceed 48 inches from the floor. The mechanism can be operated and opened with a closed fist. (If you do not have an ADA compliant locker, modifications to an existing locker can be made to accommodate the student. Consult with the student's occupational therapist for assistance with opening mechanism modifications). Comparable facilities must be available to male and female students.

Ramps: If a ramp is necessary to move from one level to another, the slope cannot exceed 1 in 12. It should have a non-skid surface, and if more than six feet in length, should provide a handrail along one side, 32 inches high.

Stairs: If stairs are present, an alternative, such as a lift, must be provided. If the stairs lead to an area that is used exclusively for storage, the area should be closed off to deny access to all students (so as not to discriminate against the disabled student).

Restrooms: If they are included in the classroom or locker room, they should be accessible. All above standards concerning doors, sinks, and accessible aisles apply. Mirror heights should not exceed 40 inches from the floor. Grab bars must be installed on the side and back of the stall. Stall dimensions should allow for egress and transfer and fixtures should conform to height and placement requirements. (See ADAAG guidelines at <http://www.access-board.gov/adaag/html/adaag.htm>).

If you have questions about your particular classrooms, or the requirements that apply based on date of construction, contact N. Tims, OCR Coordinator, Office of Career and Technical Preparation at timsn@michigan.gov or 517 241-2091.