



Appendix 6.10

*Physical
Structures New
Construction
Guidance*

New Construction

It is significantly easier to achieve an “accessible” facility when you are building a new facility or a new suite build-out in a leased facility (commonly referred to as “tenant improvements”). Almost universally, state and local building codes include federal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Standards. Thus, new construction projects (for the most part) will be designed and built to have accessible parking lots, accessible entry doors, accessible toilet rooms, and accessible exam and treatment rooms.

Because accessibility standards are built into building codes, most questions of access come down to two issues:

1. **Construction quality assurance**
2. **Specific needs that exceed code minimums**

Success requires a deliberate process in which facilities are planned, constructed, and ultimately assessed by access specialists to confirm that the finished product indeed meets the accessibility standards as intended.

Example Project

In 2025, a healthcare organization constructs a new three-story medical office building. They intend to house the following services in this building:

- Urgent Care Clinic
- Outpatient Radiology
- Laboratory Services
- Pediatrics
- Adult Medicine
- Cardiac Care
- Dermatology
- Outpatient Surgery

During the design phase, the architect meets with leadership from each group to understand their needs. The architect recognizes that the outpatient radiology and surgery offices often see patients with accessibility needs that exceed building code minimums. The architect designs the radiology and surgery floors accordingly.

During the permitting phase, several accessibility issues are identified as non-compliant. After the architect makes the appropriate corrections in the building plan, construction is approved and the permit is issued.

During the construction phase, the architect and building inspectors are both responsible for periodically “walking” the project to confirm that the construction indeed matches the paper version of the permitted building.

- This phase requires excellent attention to detail on the part of the architect and inspectors. It’s during this time that external pressures, such as a scheduled grand opening, may result in overlooking “minor” issues that may result in

unequal access for your patients with disabilities, patient safety issues, legal challenges, and more.

Once the project is complete, an access consultant is hired to conduct a thorough evaluation of the facility for compliance with ADA Standards.