



Wide Access Aisles Versus Narrow Access Aisles

The photo above shows a van-accessible space, which is next to a wide (eight foot) access aisle. The wheelchair user needs this much space, at a minimum, to safely lower the ramp and exit or enter the van.

In the photo below, the van is parked in a standard accessible spot next to a narrow (five foot) aisle. This does not allow enough space for the wheelchair user to safely exit and enter without possible damage to her wheelchair – or to the car parked nearby.



You can help by keeping the access aisles completely open.

Even if you only parked over the aisle a small amount, you could restrict a wheelchair user's ability to enter and exit a ramp- or lift-equipped vehicle.

It might seem like access aisles cover a large area, but people with disabilities need *all of the space* to deploy their ramps or lifts. The wide aisle provides room to safely maneuver on and off the ramp or lift.

So please stay within the lines and honor the aisles!

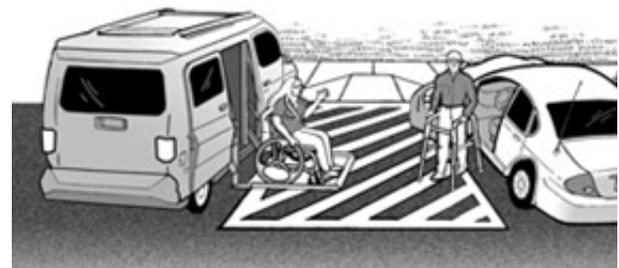
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Graphic: http://www.ada.gov/business/retail_access.htm

Access Aisles: Why They Exist

For many people with disabilities, access aisles serve a critical purpose. These yellow or blue striped aisles next to accessible (or handi-capped) parking spaces provide extra room so wheelchair users or other people with disabilities can exit or enter their vehicles.

The access aisle provides room for people to:

- Lower their van's ramp or lift
- Navigate with wheelchairs, scooters, walkers, canes or unsteady gait

If this area is blocked even a small amount, a person with a disability who requires the extra space may not be able get out of or into his/her vehicle.

Or, if a person with a disability returns to the vehicle and finds a car parked over the access aisle, the person may have to wait hours until the violator moves the illegally parked vehicle.



Access aisles are not intended for emergency parking, as shown in the violation above.

Accessible Parking Etiquette: Dos and Don'ts

Do display your accessible parking permit.

It is required by law that you display your accessible parking permit, including accessible parking placards or license plates, when you park. You may have a permit that legally entitles you to use the space, but if you don't display it, you could receive a ticket.

Do leave van accessible parking spaces open for ramp- or lift-equipped vehicles.



Van-accessible parking spaces have a wider access aisle than standard accessible spots. The **eight-foot wide aisle** provides enough space for a wheelchair user who has a ramp- or lift-equipped vehicle to lower the ramp or lift, and have room between vehicles to exit/enter the van.

A sign with the words "Van Accessible" and the international symbol of accessibility means the parking space is designed for ramp- or lift-equipped vehicles (RLEVs).

In contrast, access aisles next to regular accessible parking spaces are only **five feet wide**, which is not enough room for wheelchair users to safely exit or re-enter a van that has a lift or ramp. In addition, there are fewer van accessible parking spaces than regular accessible parking spaces in most parking lots.

Although you may park in van-accessible spaces with an accessible parking permit, you are encouraged to reserve van-accessible spaces for RLEV users unless there are no regular accessible parking spaces. Otherwise, RLEV users might not be able to find a parking space at all.

Do not use an accessible parking permit once it's expired.

Accessible parking permits have expiration dates. Please be mindful of the expiration date of your placard or license plate, and do not use it after it's expired. It's against the law.

If you still need to use it after expiration, apply for a new one or renew your permit.

Do not let others use your accessible parking permit when you are not present.

The owner of an accessible parking permit must be present when using the permit. Do not lend your permit to your family members or friends so that they can use the accessible parking spaces.

There can be legal consequences both to you and to the person who borrowed your permit, including a fine and your permit being revoked.

RLEV = Ramp- or lift-equipped vehicle