

Measurement Standards for Wheelchairs and Scooters on Public Transit

The ability to travel and get around is as important to people using wheelchairs and scooters as it is to those who do not have disabilities. Wheelchairs and scooters have become increasingly diverse in size, design and functional capabilities allowing persons with disabilities more mobility options. However, for people who use these mobility aids and depend on public transit, it is important to understand that these devices must meet certain design standards.

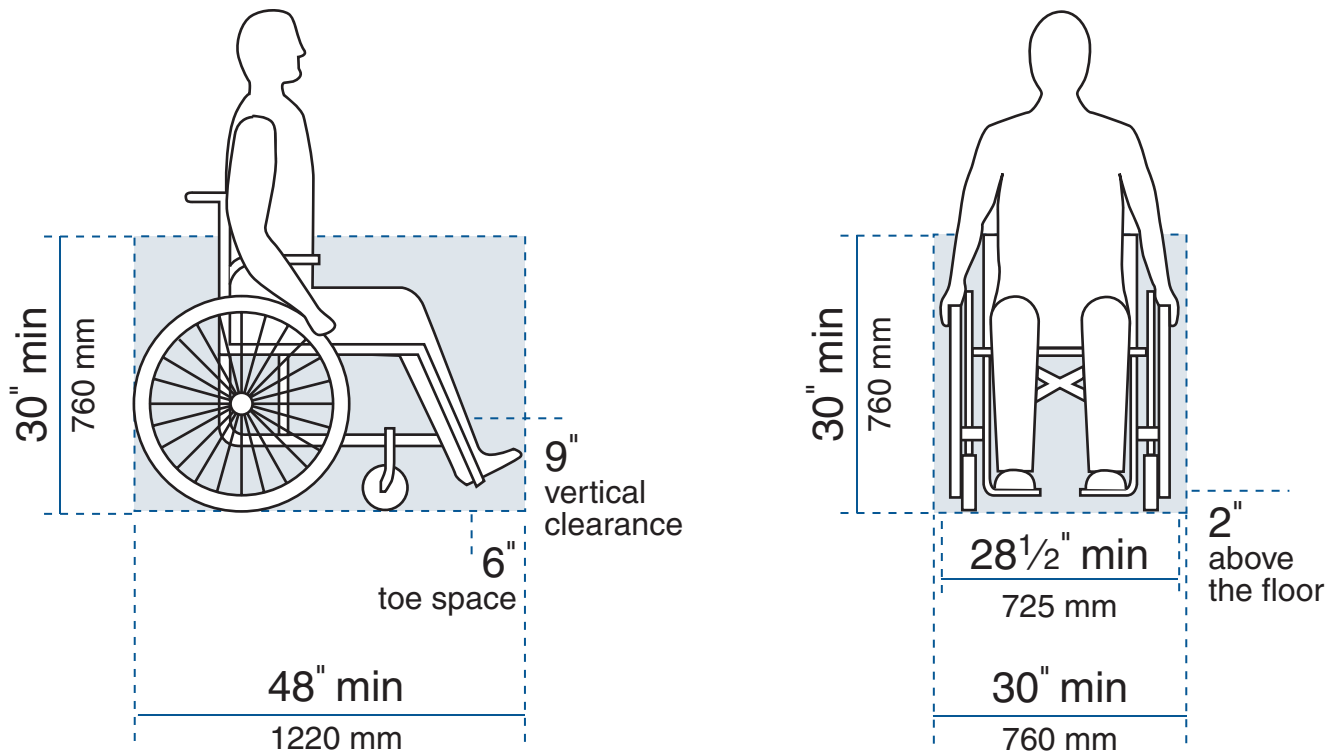
The U.S. Access Board, an independent federal agency, is responsible for developing and maintaining accessibility requirements for “common” wheelchair measurements and how these requirements are applied to transit vehicles. The Access Board guidelines use the geometries of modern transit vehicles and the majority of wheelchairs and scooters currently in use. This brochure is designed to explain these guidelines.

Why Is This Important?

While many fixed route buses and trains meet these accessibility guidelines, some wheelchairs and scooters do not. Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), public transit providers are not mandated to accommodate “non-common” wheelchairs on accessible fixed route or ADA paratransit services. Therefore, it is necessary to use wheelchairs and scooters that meet these standards to access bus and train lifts and maneuver to the vehicle’s wheelchair securement area.

Accessible Vehicle Guidelines

Buses that meet the ADA accessibility guidelines are required to have a platform lift that is 28½ inches wide by 48 inches long. There must also be sufficient maneuvering space to allow a “common” wheelchair to reach the securement area. Commuter rail cars also have similar accessibility guidelines.



Definition of a “Common” Wheelchair

Under the standards established by the U.S. Access Board, a “common” wheelchair:

- Is a three or four wheeled device that can be used indoors and is designed for and used by persons with mobility disabilities.
- Measures 30 inches wide (wheel rim to wheel rim) by 48 inches long (measured 2 inches off the ground from the widest part of the wheel to the footrest).

- Does not weigh more than 600 pounds when occupied.
- The 30 x 48 inch clear space extends from the floor to a height of 30 inches. If a backrest of a wheelchair or scooter extends outside this “box,” it would not be considered a “common” wheelchair.

If you use or want to use accessible fixed route or ADA Paratransit services, it is important to know these measurements and ask questions when shopping for a wheelchair or scooter.

The CTA, Metra and Pace will allow persons with disabilities to test a wheelchair or scooter on fixed route buses and trains at one of their garages or train yards.

If you have questions, or you would like to set up a test drive with a prospective wheelchair, please contact any one of the transit representatives listed below.



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