

To: ALL H.Q. DIRECTORS: Prof. Services, Planning & Major Projects  
ALL REGIONAL MANAGERS: Prof. Services, Planning & Operations  
ALL DISTRICT HIGHWAYS MANAGERS

**SUBJECT:** Pedestrian Bridges

**REFERENCE:** Clause B.1.11 of the Manual of Bridge Standards and Procedures

**PURPOSE:**

- (i) To provide a level of safety and comfort for persons with disabilities and in unmotorized wheelchairs
- (ii) To satisfy the needs of the unmotorized wheelchair users as well as all other users (e.g. non-wheelchair and motorized wheelchair users)
- (iii) To keep the construction cost and land usage to a reasonably acceptable level

**BACKGROUND:**

The Premier's Advisory Council for Persons with Disabilities (PAC) has recommended that the standards contained in the British Columbia Building Code with respect to gradients, landings and handrails be adopted for the design of pedestrian overpasses.

The PAC has agreed that a gradient of 1:12 could be adopted as a standard provided a maximum interval of 9m between landings was used. However, the Ministry of Transportation and Highways has the following concerns regarding a change from the conventional 1:8 ramp gradient to a 1:12 ramp gradient with landings every 9m:

- (i) The length of a typical pedestrian structure would increase by approximately 60% and the construction cost would increase by more than 60%.
- (ii) The amount of land usage would be increased.
- (iii) The increased length would discourage the non-wheelchair users from using the overpass structure.

Handrails for wheelchair users will not be provided on the pedestrian bridge railing. The closely spaced vertical rails can be utilized by wheelchair users to pull themselves up the ramps or to grasp onto when resting.

PROCEDURE:

The Ministry of Transportation has adopted the following policy for Pedestrian Bridges unless a site specific investigation is undertaken which shows that other criteria are acceptable:

- (1) The maximum gradient on ramps will be 1:12.
- (2) No landings will be provided on ramps.
- (3) No wheelchair handrails will be provided on the rail system.

When a site specific evaluation is done the following options may be considered:

- use of stairs in combination with elevators instead of ramps
- if no unmotorized wheelchair users are expected, then the maximum ramp gradient could be revised to 1:8

The Manual of Bridge Standards and Procedures will be revised to reflect this policy.

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