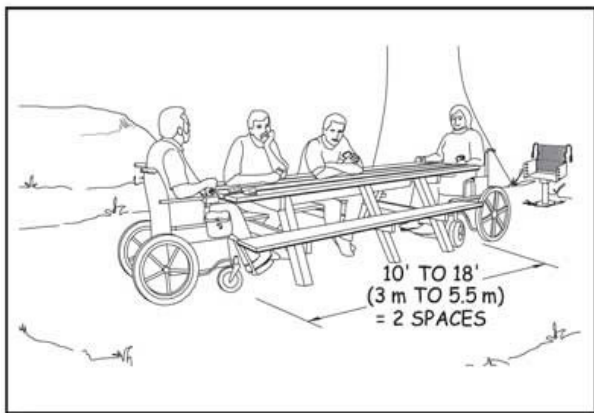


Equal Access Includes Access to Amenities

For many people, outdoor recreation trips involve picnics. A picnic table provides a space that friends and family can gather around and socialize. Inaccessible picnic tables at recreation sites not only violate the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), but also send an exclusionary message to visitors with disabilities. This can be easily avoided.

Below are the key features of accessible picnic tables to keep in mind in order to both comply with the ADA and support inclusion at your recreation site:

- A minimum of 5%, or at least one, of each type of table must be accessible. This applies to each distinct area where picnic tables are located.
- The accessible picnic tables must be located on an accessible route with a minimum of 36 inches of clearance surrounding the table for maneuverability.
- The Architectural Barriers Act (ABA) Outdoor Developed Areas Standards (mandatory for federal parks and recommended for other recreation sites in order to achieve program accessibility) require that at least one wheelchair seating space that is a minimum of 30 inches wide by 48 inches minimum in depth, is provided for each 24 feet of usable space around the tabletop. In practice, this means that one space is usually required for picnic tables up to 9 feet long. Tables between 10 and 20 feet long usually require two wheelchair spaces. A minimum of 36 inches of clearance is required for wheelchair spaces located between other seating spaces or confined on both sides. The ground surface at the wheelchair seating space must be firm and stable.



Source: U.S. Access Board, picnic table with two wheelchair seating spaces.



None of the picnic tables at this pavilion are accessible to visitors who use wheelchairs.

“A disability doesn’t have to be a social barrier. Good etiquette begins with inclusion...”

- Robert M. Hensel

- Knee and toe clearance is needed to ensure that a person using a mobility device, such as a wheelchair or scooter, can sit close to a tabletop regardless of the table’s design. Knee clearance must be at least 30 inches wide and 8 inches deep at 27 inches above the ground surface. Toe clearance must be at least 9 inches high, 30 inches wide, and 17 inches deep.
- The top of the accessible picnic table must be 28 inches minimum and 34 inches maximum above the finish floor or ground.
- Beware of catalogs advertising picnic tables as “ADA Compliant”. Always confirm that the table dimensions and features comply with the ADA Standards.

Want to know more about how the ADA applies to community recreation?

Contact the Northeast ADA Center at: www.NortheastADA.org | 1.800.949.4232 | NortheastADA@Cornell.edu

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