



Accessibility Improvements for Businesses

This document outlines key accessibility improvements that tourism providers can implement, tailored specifically to the industry. It references relevant BC Building Code requirements, CSA standards, ADA standards, and recognized best practices where applicable. For the most current and authoritative requirements, users should consult the applicable standards directly.

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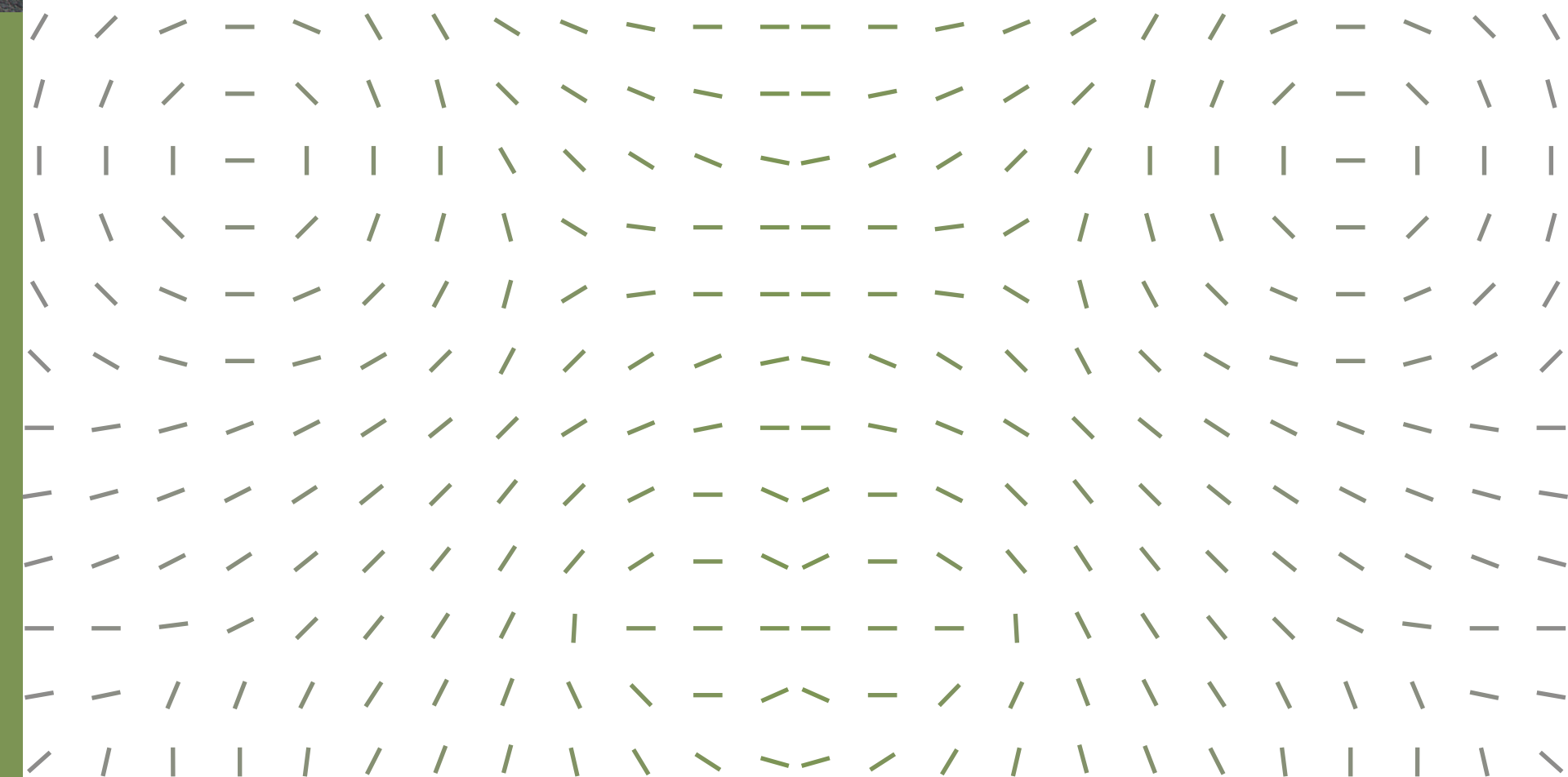
Doors & Hardware





The next several slides cover the following items related to accessibility:

- Accessible Parking Spaces
- Parking Lot Aisle
- Wheelstop
- Potholes



Parking





Accessible Parking Spaces

Providing accessible and designated parking improves access for all visitors. In BC, accessible parking is marked by a blue wheelchair sign and governed by local bylaws or BC Building Code guidelines where no bylaws exist.

BC Building Code Specifications:

- At least 1 accessible space per 100 spaces when 50+ spaces are provided.
- Stall: Minimum 2400 mm wide with a 1500 mm wide access aisle on one side.
- Firm, slip-resistant, and level surface.
- Located near an entrance.
- Clearly marked for persons with disabilities.
- Signage with the International Symbol of Access, at least 1500 mm above ground.





Parking Lot Aisle

Accessible parking aisles provide space for ramps and full door access, benefiting people with disabilities, seniors, and parents with strollers. Ensure barrier-free access by avoiding curbs or speed bumps without transitions.

BC Building Code Specifications:

- Parking space must be adjacent to access route near each accessible entrance (especially main one used by everyone)
- Regular spaces are minimum 2400 mm wide, plus clearly marked aisle minimum 1500 mm (aisle can be shared between two accessible parking spaces)





Wheel Stops

Wheel stops prevent cars from obstructing access, ensuring safe entry and exit for people with disabilities. They help keep sidewalks and spaces clear and can be installed using proper measurements and tools.

The best practices for wheel stops are:

- Limit wheel stop length to 1800 mm and height to 165 mm
- Ensure an adequate walkway of at least 900 mm between wheel stops
- Ensure that wheel stops contrast with surrounding pavement
- Ensure that wheel stops are adequately illuminated to avoid a tripping hazard





Potholes

Potholes can create barriers for a person using a wheelchair, mobility aid, or stroller. Potholes can also create barriers for anyone with low mobility or who is visually impaired. A hole can make navigation difficult to impossible and render a location, business, nature area or viewpoint “no-go” simply due to the parking lot. Surfaces should be level and even to allow direct access to pathways or buildings. Parking lot and trail conditions should be checked regularly for hazards, sink holes, potholes, etc. and repaired promptly.

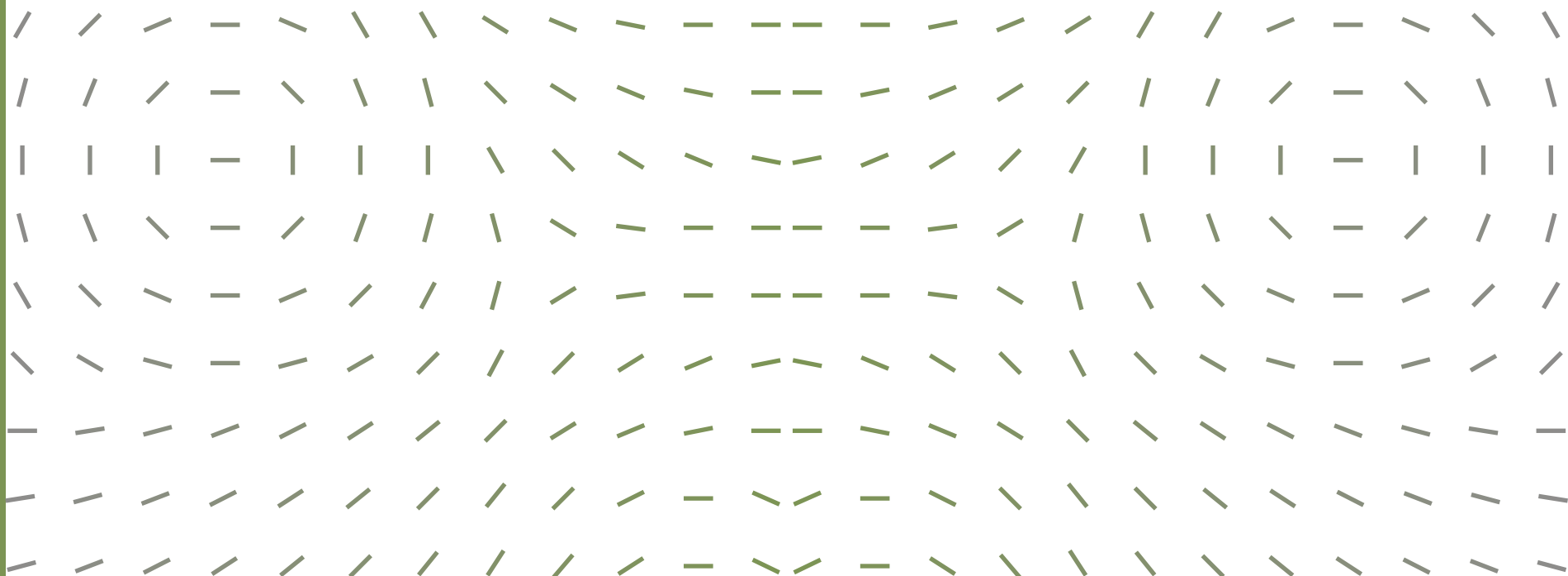
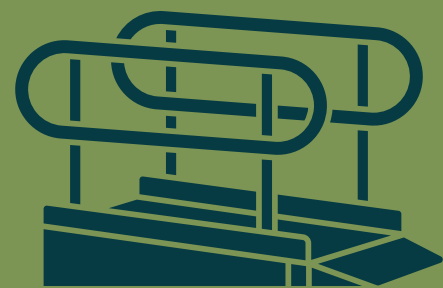




The next several slides cover the following items related to accessibility:

- Ramp Installation
- Ramp Curb / Barrier
- Guards / Handrails
- Heated Traction Mat / Radiant Heating Under Ramps
- Highlighted edges on stairs

Ramps & Stairs



Ramp Installation



Ramps provide safe, independent access for people with mobility impairments, connecting different levels in buildings. They range from large ramps between floors to small threshold ramps for doorways.

The BC Building code specifications for ramps are:

- Ramps must be at least 1500 mm wide with a firm, stable, non-slip surface.
- Slope: 1:12 (8.33%) up to 9m, ideally 3m, 1:20 (5%) recommended; cross slope max 1:50 (2%).
- Landing size: 1500 x 1500 mm; minimum 600mm beyond door latch, 300mm if door opens away from landing; include visual/textural contrast strip at top and bottom.
- Landings every 9m, with a curb/barrier if not at ground level, minimum 75mm high or raised barrier/rail max 100mm from surface.
- Handrails required.



Ramp Curb / Barrier

A ramp curb or barrier (75mm high) provides safety for users of mobility aids, preventing falls and acting as a stop for wheelchair or scooter wheels. It can be integrated or added to ramps.

The BC Building code specifications for ramp curbs and barriers are:

- If not at ground level or adjacent to wall, curb minimum 75 mm high or raised barrier or rail max 100 mm from ramp surface



Guards / Handrails

Handrails on ramps provide stability and support, reducing fall risk. They should be continuous, installed on both sides, securely mounted at a suitable height, and capable of withstanding significant pressure.

The BC Building code specifications for ramp curbs and barriers are:

- Handrail height is 865-965 mm high
- Handrail ends are a minimum 300 mm beyond ends of ramp, ends bent or rounded to prevent hazard

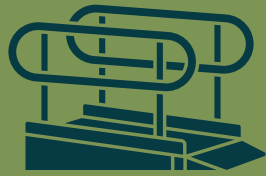


Heated Traction Mat / Radiant Heating Under Ramps

Heated traction mats melt snow and ice, improving safety and preventing falls. Ideal for high-traffic areas like ramps, stairs, and foyers, they reduce the need for snow clearing and ensure smooth access while supporting drainage for snowmelt runoff.



Highlighted Edges on Stairs



Highlighting edges with bright paint or tape improves visibility, reducing tripping hazards, especially in low-light conditions or for people with visual impairments. This applies to ramps, stairs, walkways, parking areas, and more.

The CSA specifications for highlighting edges for stairs are:

- Stripe should be 40-60 mm deep horizontal strip full width of tread, colour contrasted

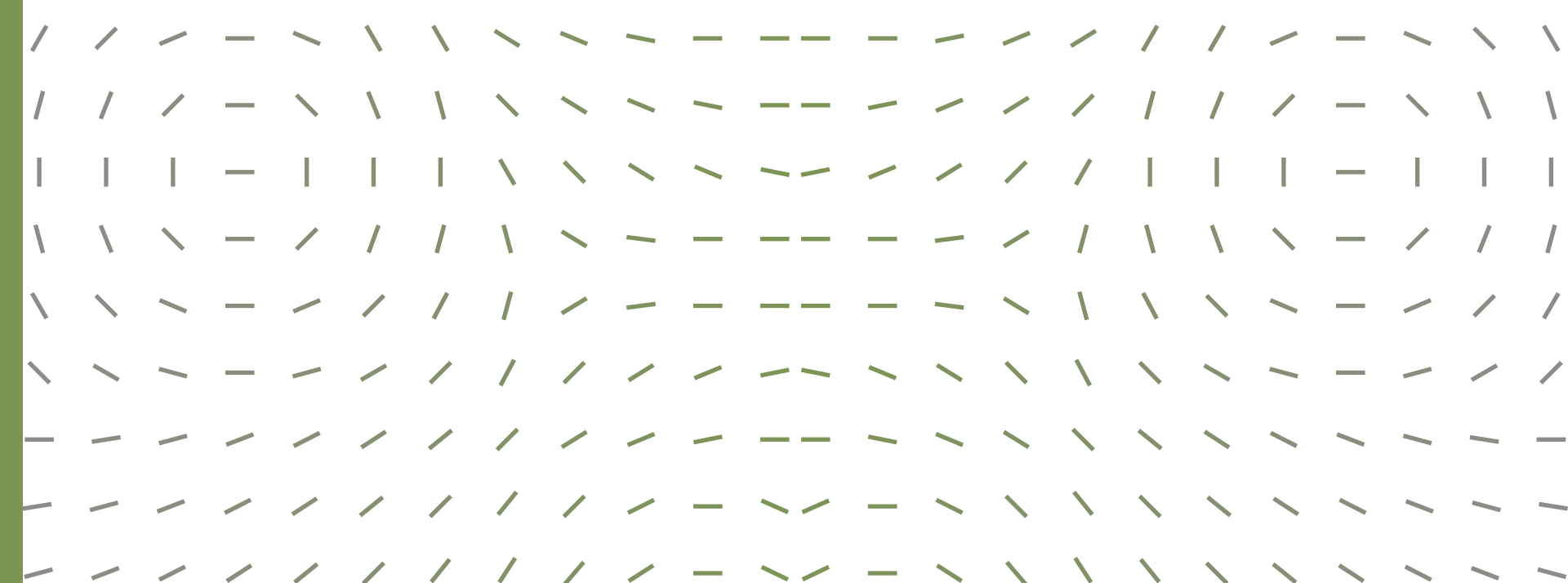
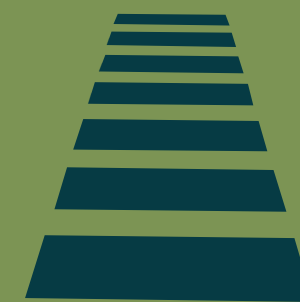




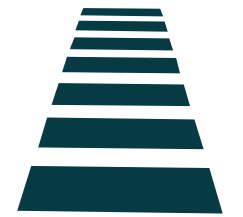
The next several slides cover the following items related to accessibility:

- Clear Indoor Walkways
- Outdoor Paving / Walkway Material
- Curb ramps / curb cuts
- Tactile warnings
- Anti-slip mats

Walkways



Clean Indoor Walkways



Maintaining clear walkways ensures safe, obstacle-free navigation for people with mobility and visual impairments. Removing debris, tables, and other obstructions prevents tripping hazards and supports independent movement for all pedestrians.

BC Building Code Walkway Specifications:

- Minimum unobstructed width: 1500 mm, except in specific cases:
 - 1100 mm in public aisles of merchandising/exhibition spaces
 - 920 mm for permanent food service lines
 - 810 mm for turnstiles, checkout lanes, or controlled passageways
- Maximum handrail projection: 100 mm on either side
- Minimum unobstructed height: 1980 mm across the full width





Outdoor Paving/Walkway Material

Entrance paths, sidewalks, trails, and parking lots should be firm, level, and non-slip. A 1600 mm minimum width allows two wheelchairs to pass. Suitable materials include hard-packed pea gravel, cement, or asphalt.

BC Building Code Specifications:

- Minimum width: 1500 mm
- Maximum running slope: 1:20 (5%); cross slopes should be avoided where possible, with a maximum of 1:50 (2%)
- Surface must be firm, stable, and slip-resistant
- Maximum obstacle height: 13 mm
- Gaps or grates must not exceed 13 mm in width and should be oriented perpendicular to the direction of travel





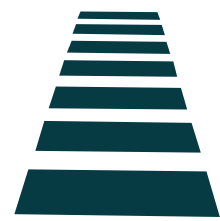
Curb Ramps / Curb Cuts

Curb cuts improve accessibility for people with disabilities, parents with strollers, and others. They provide a gradual transition between surfaces, such as roads and sidewalks. Permanent curb cuts are recommended at street corners, pedestrian pathways, and crosswalks to ensure safe navigation.

BC Building Code Specifications:

- Running slope: 1:8 to 1:10 for vertical rise under 75 mm
- 1:10 to 1:12 for vertical rise 75–200 mm
- Minimum width: 1500 mm
- Surface requirements: Slip-resistant
- Tactile walking surface indicators
- Smooth transition to adjacent surfaces





Tactile Warnings

Tactile warnings help visually impaired individuals navigate safely, especially at crossings and hazards. They include adhesive surfaces on tiles and are used in parking lots, stairs, entryways, washroom routes, and emergency exits.

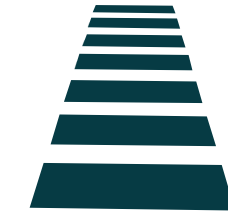
BC Building Code Specifications:

- Stairs: 600-650 mm deep, full width of the stair, placed one tread depth back from the edge at the top of each flight.
- Vehicular Routes: Required where pedestrian routes meet vehicular areas without curbs or barriers.
- Platforms: Required on unguarded edges over 250 mm above adjacent surfaces.
- Slopes: Required above slopes steeper than 1:3 gradient.





Anti-slip Mats



Anti-slip mat refers to a pad placed on the ground to prevent people from slipping, tripping, or falling on wet or dry surfaces. The anti-slip mat is commonly made of a rubber or plastic material, with an anti-slip backing so that it does not move on the floor surface. Anti-slip mats can be used for the access routes to a building, at an entrance, on stairs, in shower stalls, or kitchens.

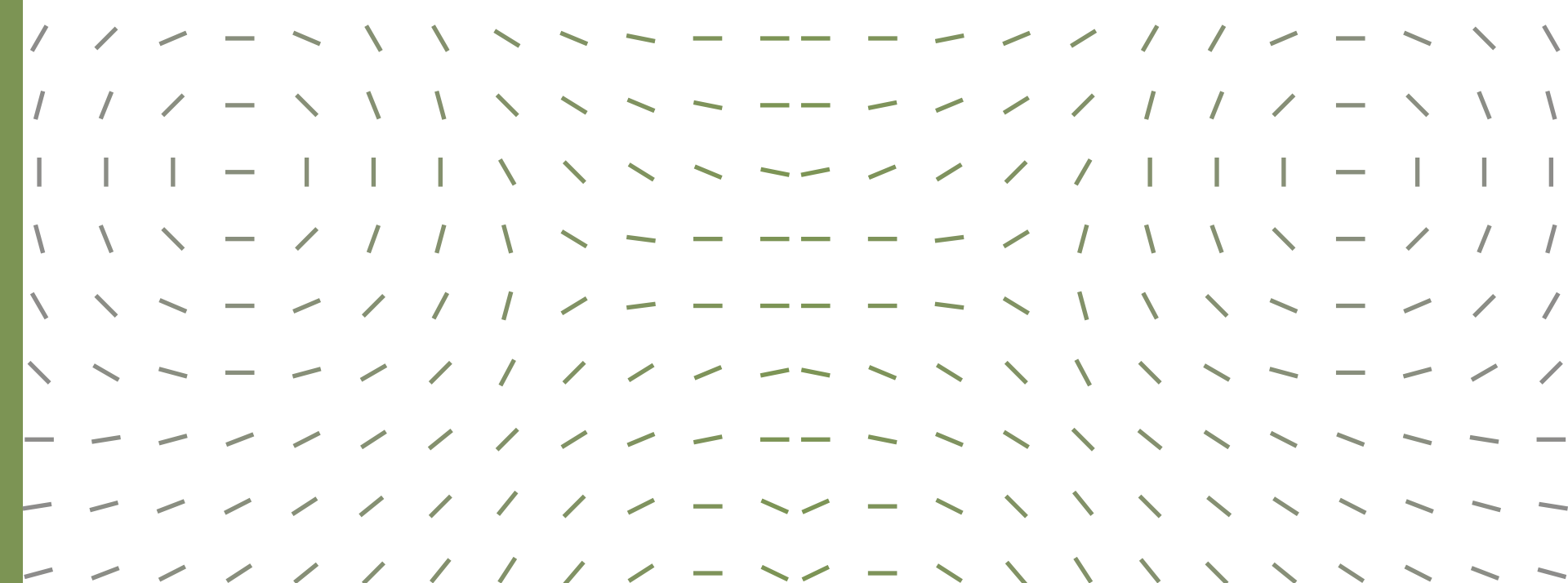




The next several slides cover the following items related to accessibility:

- Door Hardware and Handles
- User-friendly locks
- Door closer
- Automatic doors
- Entry threshold

Doors &
Hardware





Door Hardware & Handles

Improve accessibility with lightweight (max 2.5kg) or automatic doors and levered handles. Heavy doors are difficult, especially for those with mobility aids, low dexterity, or carrying items like luggage or children.

BC Building Code for door handles:

- Handles should be 900-1100 mm high
- One-hand operable lock, and can be opened from outside in case of emergency
- For outside swinging doors max force 38N





User Friendly Locks

Door hardware should be easy to use with one hand, without tight grasping or twisting. Accessible options include levers, push mechanisms, and U-shaped handles. Out-swinging washroom doors should have a pull handle near the hinge.

BC Building Code Specifications for door locks are:

- One-hand operable lock, and can be opened from outside in case of emergency
- Hardware required for accessible door passage shall be mounted no higher than 1220 mm above the floor





Door Closer

An automatic door closer is a small piece of hardware that can be installed at the top corner of a door. The doors are engineered so that the hardware does not require any electricity to function. With the automatic door closer, the user does not need to worry about closing the door or having it close on a person unexpectedly.





Automatic Doors

Automatic doors enhance accessibility and convenience, especially for those with mobility aids or heavy loads. Activated by push button or motion sensor, they open and close without manual effort. Options include single or double doors.

BC Building Code Specifications:

- Minimum 3 seconds from 70° to 75mm from closed at leading edge of latch side
- Located on an accessible path of travel
- Marked with the International Symbol of Access
- Positioned 600mm to 1500mm from door swing, clear of swing area
- Operable 150mm–300mm and 900mm–1100mm above the floor
- Operable by fist, arm, or foot, unless equipped with safety sensors
- Operators fully open doors in ≥ 3 seconds, requiring $\leq 65\text{N}$ to stop movement
- Clear, level space extending the height of the doorway, $\geq 1100\text{mm}$ long, door width





Entry Thresholds

Entry thresholds are key for accessibility, ensuring smooth transitions for those with mobility impairments. High or uneven thresholds create tripping hazards and barriers for wheelchairs or mobility aids. Low-profile or seamless thresholds improve safety and accessibility and can be permanent or temporary.

BC Building Code for entry thresholds:

- Where the threshold is not flush with the floor, the threshold shall be not more than 13 mm higher than the finished floor surface, and where it is higher than 6 mm, shall be beveled to a slope no steeper than 1 in 2.

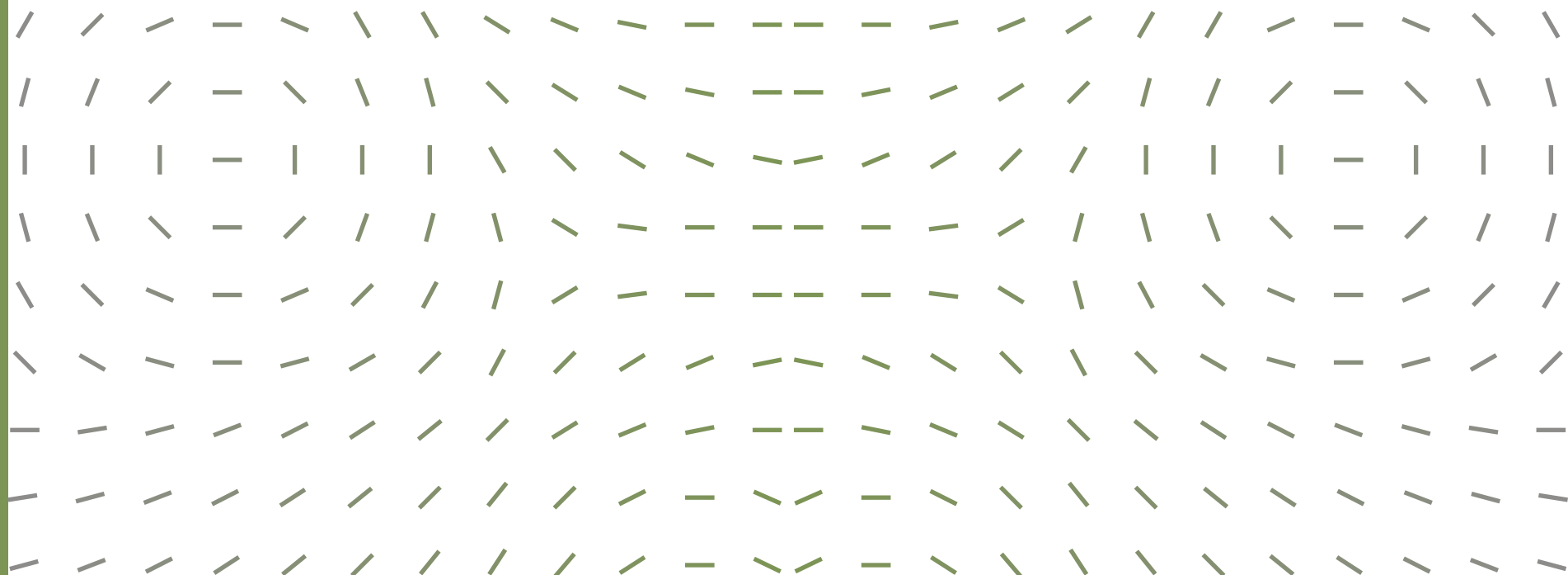




The next several slides cover the following items related to accessibility:

- Trail/Walkway Width
- Benches
- Lighting for external areas

Outdoor Accessibility



Trail/Walkway Width



The proper width of trails and walkways is important to allow room for mobility devices or service animals going both ways along a path.

The CSA specifications for Trail / Walkway width are:

- Width 1600 mm with site constraints minimum 1200 mm
- Surface should be stable, firm, slip-resistant, minimal glare, no strong visual pattern
- Passing spaces 1830 mm x 1830 mm every 50 m or less



Benches



Park benches or seating areas should be available in areas that can be readily available for children, elders, or anyone that may need a regular rest. Some picnic tables and benches should be located near accessible paths and walkways for persons using mobility aids, keeping in mind that the path from the walkway or path to the actual picnic table or bench also needs to be accessible. Parks Canada recommends benches be available every 45-60 m.

The BC Building Code Specifications for Benches are:

- Minimum 900 mm wide x 1525 mm deep for side approach, & 1350 mm deep for front or rear approach



Lighting for external areas



Environmental lighting enhances visitor safety by improving visibility, reducing trip hazards, and aiding those with visual impairments. It should be used along walkways, trails, bus stops, and parking areas. Lights must be positioned at steps and stairs to highlight treads, risers, and nosing for better accessibility.

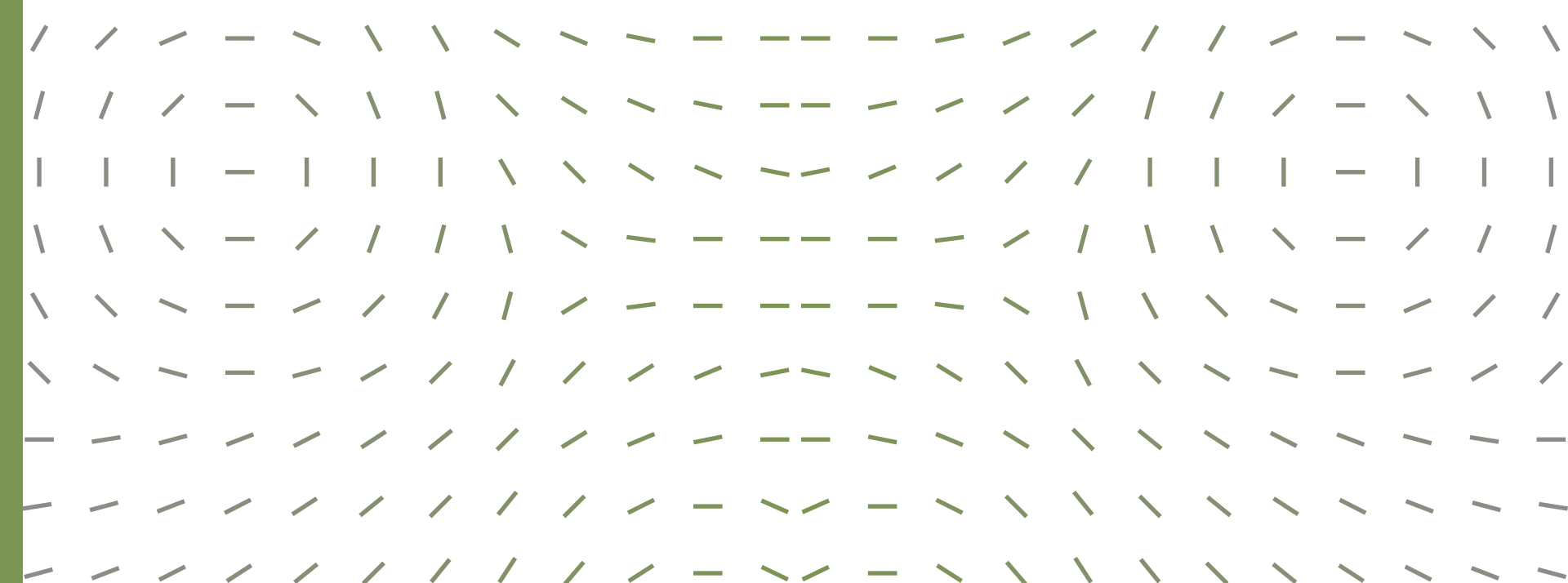




The next several slides cover the following items related to accessibility:

- Grab bars
- Automatic faucets
- Washroom fixtures
- Washroom hooks
- Shower benches
- Shower heads
- Wall hung objects

Washrooms





Grab Bars

Grab bars are typically metal bars that are placed in areas where people may need something to grab for extra stability, such as in washrooms or hallways. A grab bar should be properly fixed to the wall, so it can bear the weight of the user to pull themselves up from a seated to a standing position or leaning on it to stop themselves from falling.

BC Building Code for grab bars are:

- Surface this slip resistant, not sharp or abrasive
- Mounted to a surface with no sharp or abrasive
- Withstand minimum 1.3kN horizontally or vertically
- Bar size is 30-40 mm in diameter
- Clearance to wall is 35-45 mm





Automatic Faucets

An automatic faucet lets users easily adjust water temperature, regardless of mobility. It may also include a safety block to prevent overheating, ensuring the water never reaches a temperature that could cause burns.

BC Building Code Specifications for faucets are:

- Clear space: 1250 × 800 mm centered
- Spout & control height: 455-1200 mm
- Control operable with a closed fist
- Automatic or manual operation without continuous force; metered flow lasts ≥ 10 s





Washroom Fixtures

Proper placement of toilet paper, soap, and dispensers ensures autonomous washroom use. Maintaining correct heights and distances enhances accessibility, allowing people of all abilities to use the facility comfortably.

BC Building Code Specifications for faucets are:

- Clear space: 1250 × 800 mm centered
- Spout & control height: 455-1200 mm
- Control operable with a closed fist
- Automatic or manual operation without continuous force; metered flow lasts ≥ 10 s





Washroom Hooks

Hanging hooks in washrooms are useful for hanging clothes, purses, backpacks, coats, etc. Hooks should be placed at a universal height to be accessible to a wheelchair user or a person of short stature. Sometimes multiple hooks are placed so they can be accessed by people of varying heights.

BC Building Code Specifications:

- Coat hook location: side wall max 1200 mm high
- Coat hook additional specs: projecting max 50 mm from wall





Shower Benches

Adjustable hand-held shower heads allow people who shower in a seated position control over the stream of water. This is particularly useful for people who use shower chairs or benches and may not be able to manoeuvre as easily.

BC Building Code for shower benches are:

- Seat location: on same wall as vertical grab bar, 460-48 mm high
- Seat strength: minimum load of 1.3kN
- Seat construction: hinged without spring-loaded, or fixed with smooth, slip-resistant surface, no rough edges, impervious to water, easily cleaned
- Seat width: minimum 450 mm





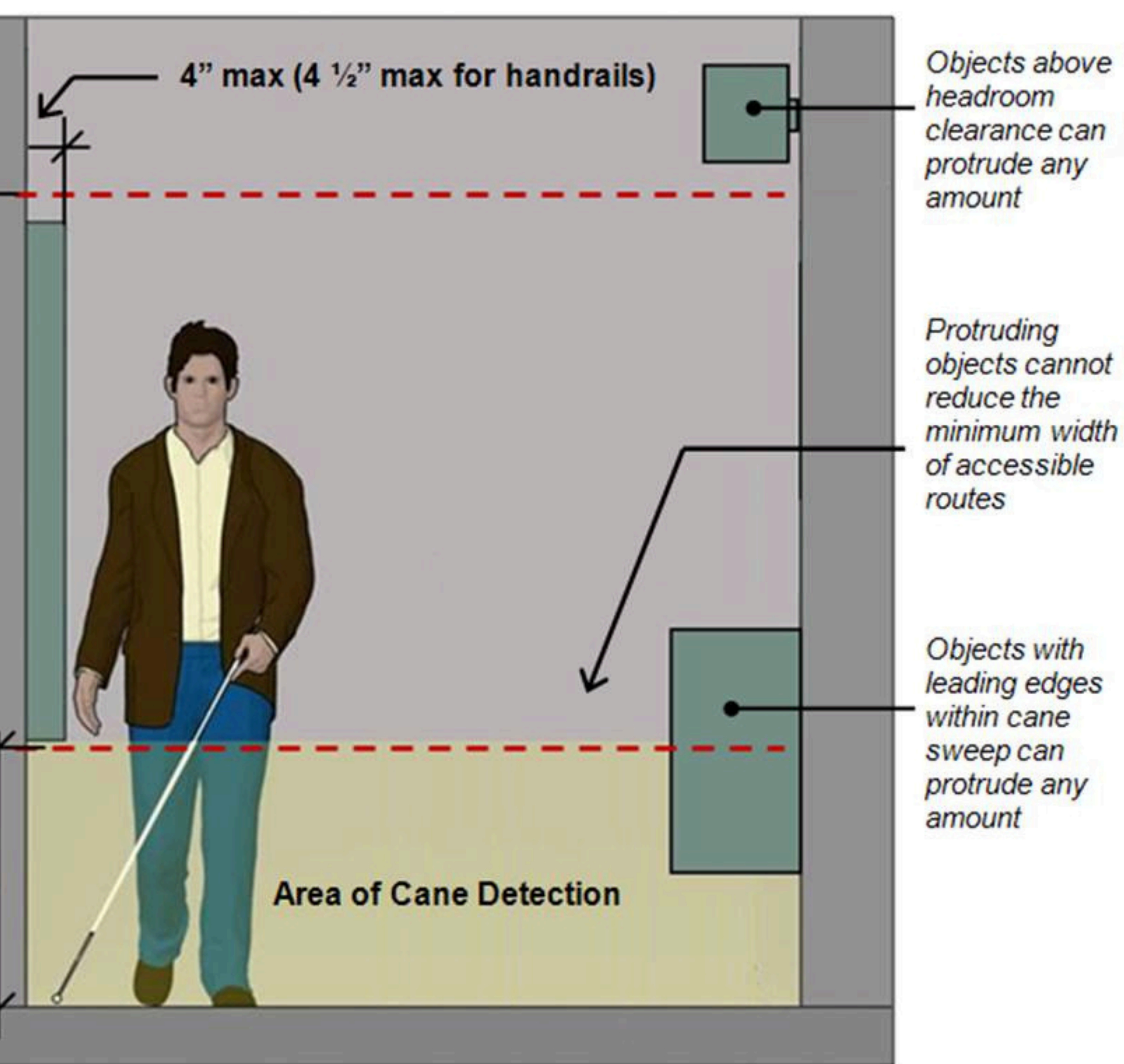
Shower Heads

Adjustable hand-held shower heads allow people who shower in a seated position control over the stream of water. This is particularly useful for people who use shower chairs or benches and may not be able to manoeuvre as easily.

BC Building Code for showerheads are:

- Shower head style should be hand-held, minimum 1800 mm flexible hose, reachable from seated position, usable in fixed position 1200-2030 mm high, does not obstruct grab bars





Wall Hung Objects

For the safety of all users, heavy objects should be placed and secured in a way that does not pose a threat of falling to visitors or workers. . They pose a safety hazard, as they may fall off the wall and injure someone. Heavy objects should be placed and secured in a way that they do not pose a threat to fall to visitors or workers.





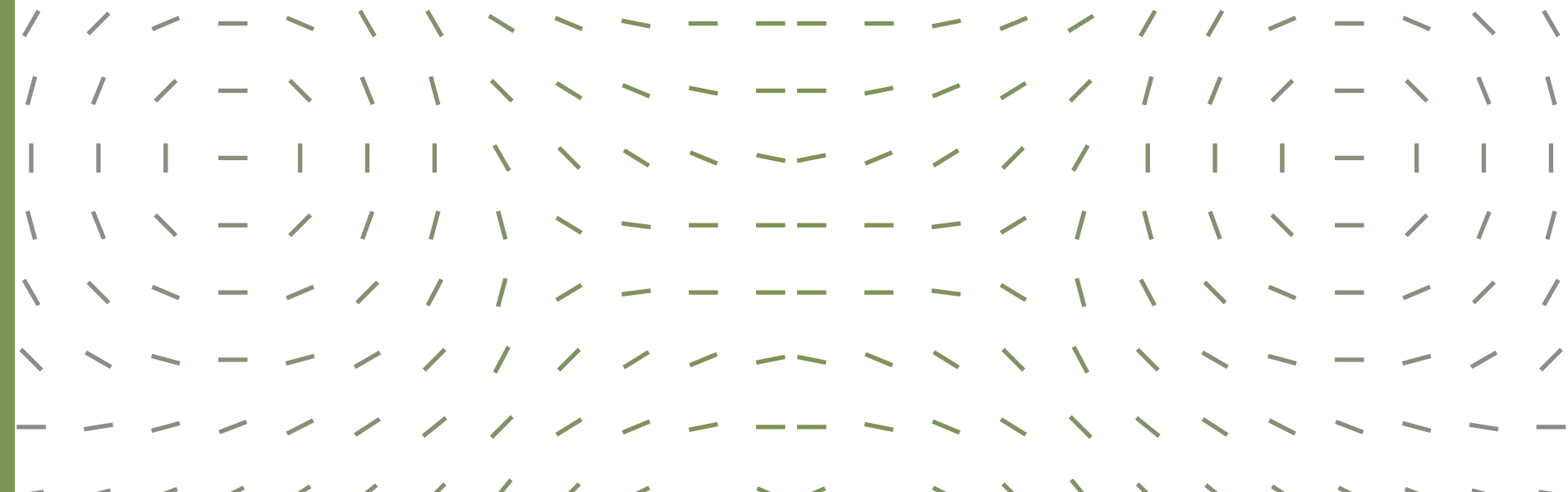
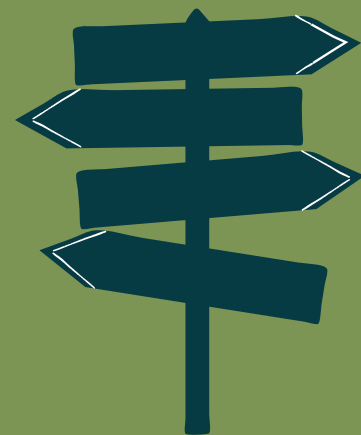
The Destination BC Learning Hub has accessibility resources related to visual communications, marketing, websites etc.

You can access these resources at the following url.

<https://www.destinationbc.ca/learning-centre/category/accessible-tourism/>



Visual Communications & Marketing

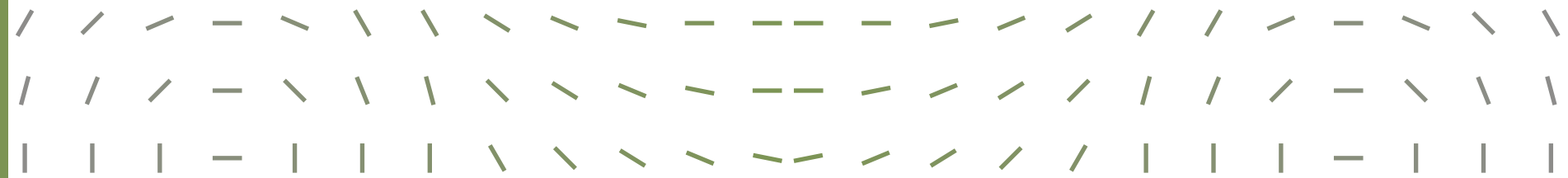




The next several slides cover the following items related to accessibility:

- Universal Wayfinding Signage
- Braille
- Enlarged Font Sizes on Websites
- Contrast Colours
- Keep it Simple
- Photos and Illustrations
- Alternative Text
- Screen Readers
- Keyboard Navigation
- Mobile Friendly
- Closed Captioning / Subtitles
- Audio Descriptions

Visual Communications & Marketing



Universal Wayfinding Signage



Universal wayfinding signage is designed to communicate with people regardless of their ability. It contains universal symbols, clear language with enlarged and bold font in text, contrast between the text and background, and could also include braille. ADA Compliant Signage Designs

The signage should be placed at least 48” and no more than 60” from the ground, proper placement of signage helps to increase a business’ accessibility.



Braille



Braille is a form of written language with patterns of raised dots that are felt with the fingertips. Braille can be used on wayfinding signage, viewpoint railings, menus, instructions such as emergency evacuation, Wi-Fi information, business cards, or anywhere written text exists.



Enlarged font size on websites



Enlarged font increases the accessibility of a website by making it more legible for people who are visually impaired or have difficulty reading small text. By increasing font size, website users will have a more pleasant experience using the site and will be able to effectively read the information they are looking for.



Contrast Colours



Contrast is when a light-coloured text is used on a dark-coloured background and vice versa. For people with impaired vision, colour contrast helps them to discern which colour belongs to the text and which belongs to the background. Signage and screens becomes easier to read.



E712

Keep it Simple



When it comes to web accessibility, simplification of content, navigation, tools and hyperlinks on websites or social media pages is key. It is all about user experience. Examples of content simplification include the use of photos or videos to replace paragraphs of text, intuitive navigation titles for webpages, and readable hyperlinks on the website.



Photos and Illustrations



A picture is worth a thousand words. In many cases, one image can replace a paragraph of text. An image can help people understand and envision the information that is being presented to them. Examples of a photo would be photos of food on menus, instructions or “how to” explanations, photos of accessibility features on a business website (e.g., universal washroom and entrance), or a visual map of a business location.



Alternative Text



Alternative text provides a description of a photo or image. For people who use screen readers and may not be able to see the image at all, the reader will pick up on the alternative text and read it aloud to the user. For those who are visually impaired, the use of alternative text may be helpful for them to understand the entire image as they may not be able to see the finer details.

Tips for writing clear alternative text include:

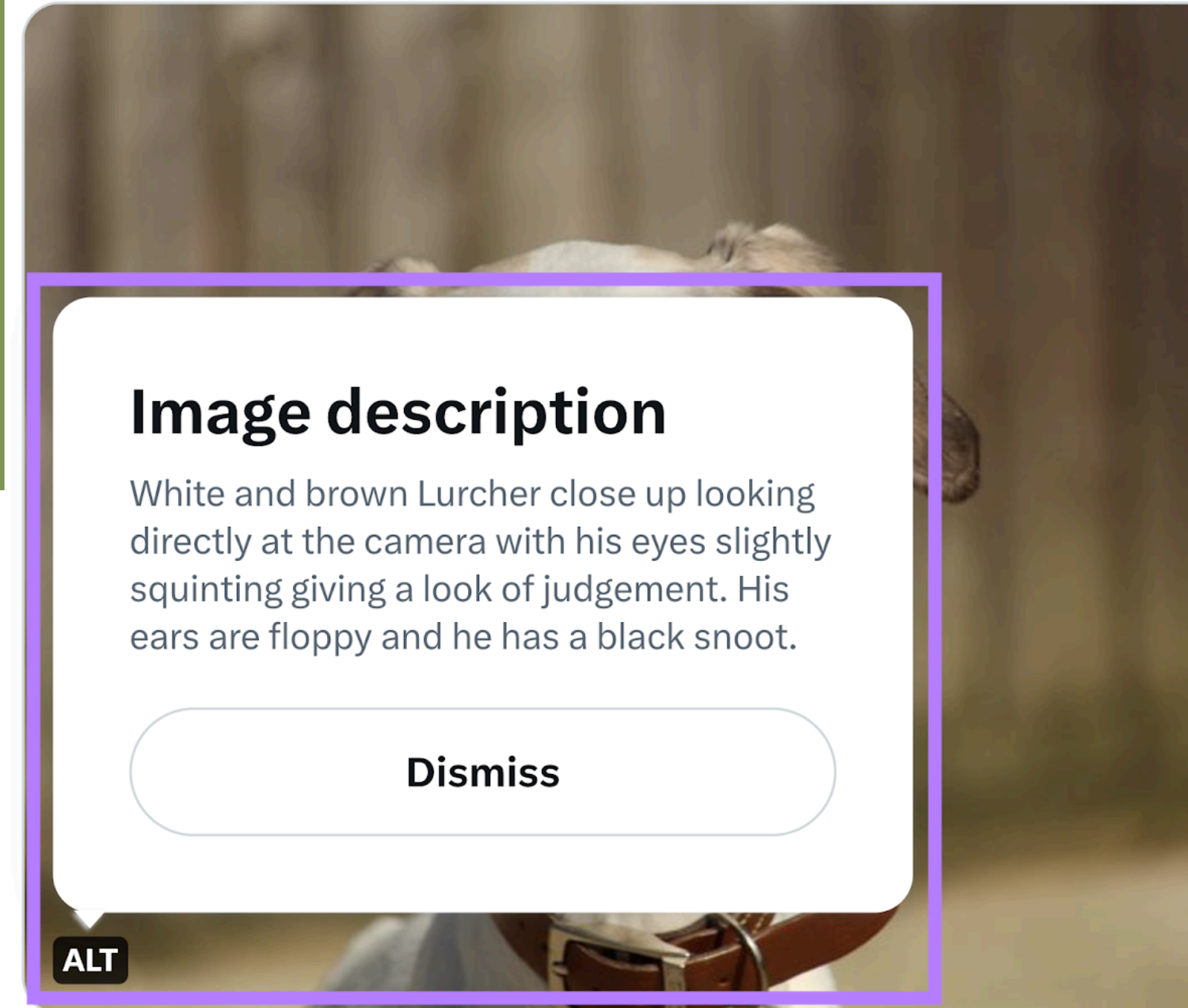
- Add alternative text all non-decorative images
- Keep it short and descriptive, like a tweet
- Don't include "image of" or "photo of"
- Leave alt text blank if the image is purely decorative



When someone says they're not a dog person 🙄

Image description:

White and brown Lurcher close up looking directly at the camera with his eyes slightly squinting giving a look of judgement. His ears are floppy and he has a black snout.



11:00 PM · Apr 13, 2023 · 8,554 Views

Screen Readers



A screen reader is an assistive technology software for people with a visual impairment. A screen reader will read the text, alternative text for the images, navigators, buttons, menus, and links. To provide an optimum experience for tourists who may require a screen reader, the screen readers should be paired with “Alternative Text”, as described above.



Keyboard Navigation



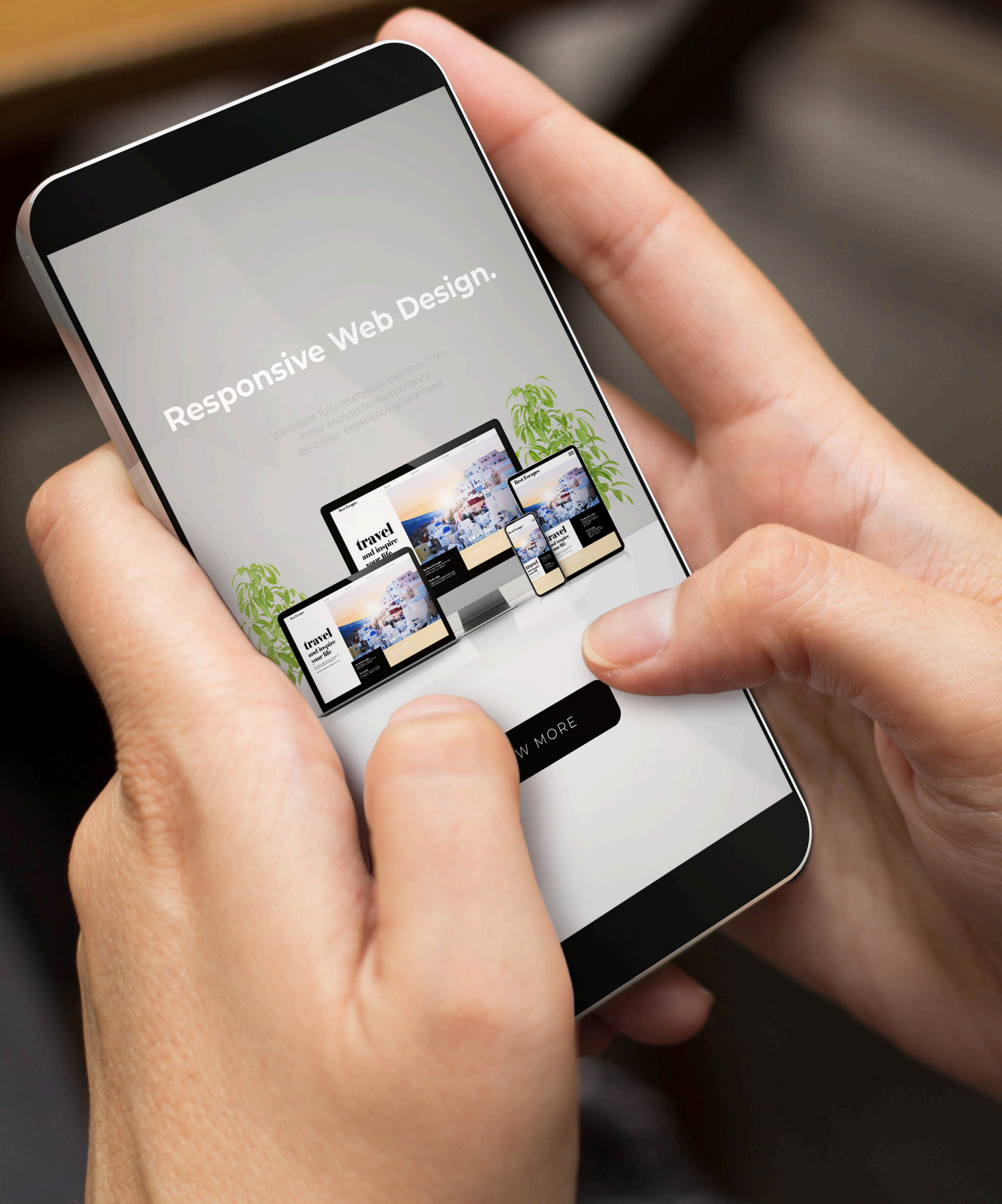
Keyboard navigation allows a visitor to use a keyboard to navigate a website, rather than using a mouse. This is helpful for people with low dexterity who may be able to use a keyboard more proficiently than a mouse.



Mobile Friendly



Mobile-friendly websites are versions of traditional websites that have been formatted to fit the smaller screen of a digital device. The text is typically easier to read because it fits in view of the screen, regardless of the size of the device. It is considered good business practice to implement a mobile-friendly website.



Closed Captioning



Closed captioning is the use of text to display what is being said in a video, movie, TV show, online webinars, etc. It is useful for people who are deaf or hard of hearing as they can read the dialogue, instead of relying on their hearing. It is important to use closed captioning on all videos as it allows the content to be accessible to most audiences.



"learn" to recognize patterns and identify



Audio Descriptions



Audio descriptions are a supportive tool for the visually impaired or illiterate to enjoy visual displays or exhibits. When structuring the audio descriptions, be consistent with the description of the exhibit. For example, start the descriptions with the title and author, then describe from the top left corner to the bottom right corner, describing what visitors are seeing and / or the exhibit narrative provided.

