

INTRODUCTION TO DETECTABLE WARNINGS AND THE ADAAG REQUIREMENTS

Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines

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For more relevant information, please visit the Armor Tile website. This website is an excellent resource on ADA solutions, ADA regulations and requirements, truncated domes, detectable warning surface tiles and more.

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A Detectable Warning Surface is defined by ADAAG as “a standardized surface feature built in or applied to walking surfaces or other elements to warn visually impaired people of hazards on a circulation path”. Detectable Warnings incorporating truncated domes are the best indicator to alert pedestrians there is a hazard approaching in their way of travel. Due to their distinctive design, truncated domes can be identified under foot and by sound on cane contact. Color contrast is another beneficial aspect of the truncated dome, making the tile visually detectable from the surrounding surface.

The requirements outlined in ADAAG regarding Detectable Warnings to be used at hazardous vehicular ways, curb ramps and transit platform edges were enacted in 1991. Soon after in 1994, the requirements under the curb ramp section 4.7.7 and hazardous vehicular areas section 4.29.5 were suspended. The purpose of the suspension was to allow further research on the performance and detectability of various detectable warning surfaces. The suspension excluded Detectable Warnings on Transit Platform Edges.

On July 26, 2001, the Department of Justice allowed the suspension to expire. As of this date Detectable Warning Surfaces were once again a requirement on curb ramps and at hazardous vehicular ways by ADAAG. Ten years of extensive research would attest that using surfaces such as grooves, striations and exposed aggregate would not meet ADA standards because they were too similar to the surrounding surface to be properly detected. Therefore, Detectable Warnings incorporating truncated domes are the only option to make hazardous vehicular ways, curb ramps and transit platform edges truly detectable and ADA compliant.

The following information contains excerpts from both ADAAG and Public Rights of Way, all pertaining to Detectable Warnings. Also included are: US DOT Memorandum, US Synthesis, Accessible Design for the Blind and an ADAAG checklist. All outline the law requirements and specifications for Detectable Warnings and can be used as reference to meet ADA Standards.

Definitions:

ADAAG: Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines