

Access To Private Houses

There are a variety of access options available to private homes to improve accessibility. These range from simple, cost effective options such as ramps to more costly but useful options such as waterlifts. The Australian Standards have been created to improve access for people with a disability in public areas. Application of these standards are not required in private housing, however they are a useful reference to ensure that people with a disability can easily access their homes.



STAIRLIFTS AND STAIRLIFTS WITH PLATFORMS

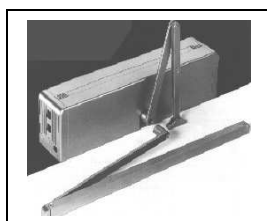
Stairlifts can be built to fit all sorts of staircases whether they are curved or straight. Some can only be used indoors. Many offer a "Call/Send" control that will send the stairlift upstairs if it is downstairs and vice versa. Stairlifts can be operated by a remote control or by pressing a control on the armrest of the lift.

Stairlifts come with safety options such as footplates, armrests and backrests. Many stairlifts have sensors that will detect if the user's body (eg. Their foot) is in the way of the device and stop the stair lift moving.



It is also important to assess the potential load capacity. Many stair lifts have a relatively small load capacity of only around 120kg.

Platform lifts are useful for wheelchair users as they have a larger load capacity and can enable wheelchair users to climb a small number of steps. It is important to note that these lifts are wide (approximately 1200mm) so the stairs need to be able to accommodate this.



OPENING DOORS, GATES, LOCKS

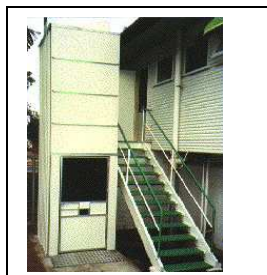
Automatic doors can be operated by a range of activation methods such as sensors, keyrings, push button and bump and go. Automatic doors can also be set to open/close after a set amount of time.

A pivot door reduces the amount of space required to open the door and electromagnetic doors lock the door magnetically.



Lift off hinges are useful to allow quick access to rooms. It allows someone to lift the door off it's hinges and get to the room without breaking down the door in

Door knobs can come in a large variety of sizes and shapes to suit the user. For example, "D" levers provide a larger area for people to grasp onto and are suitable for those with limited hand use. Glow-in-the-dark knobs may be useful for people with vision impairment.



DOMESTIC LIFTS

Domestic lifts are available at varying expense. They come in a variety of sizes to suit individual needs.

Some lifts rely on water mains pressure to operate, others operate on an oil hydraulic or electro-hydraulic mechanism. If purchasing a lift, it is important to check that the cost of

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installation is included in the price and how often maintenance is required. Most suppliers include installation in the price. Annual servicing usually is recommended.

Step/platform lifts are used to lift wheelchairs up to 1000mm. Lifts suitable for internal or external installation are available. Important points to consider:

- Cost
- Load Capacity (i.e. Able to lift the wheelchair and the person)
- Overall Height
- Maintenance (check with suppliers)



Dumb waiters are also available. These are basically small lifts used to carry items, such as a food tray, between levels of a home.

RAMP

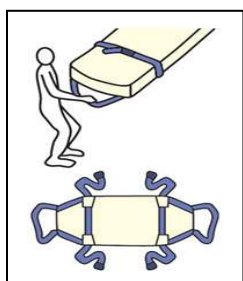
Ramps can be custom made, or purchased/hired already pre-fabricated. Portable ramps are useful if people are travelling. Permanent ramps are useful when a larger ramp is required or when consistent use is required. Threshold ramps may be useful for getting a wheelchair over small hobs or kerbs.



According to the Australian Standards, ramps should ideally be of a gradient of 1:14 (around 4 degrees). This gradient however may still be difficult for a self-propelling wheelchair user to negotiate.

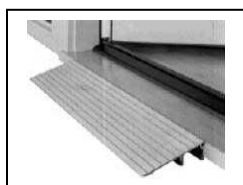
EMERGENCY EVACUATION

Emergency evacuation devices are useful for evacuating people who are either wheelchair bound or bed bound from the home. They range from folding chairs that can be stored away to sheets that sit under the mattress of a bed. Both the chairs and the sheets have straps that are used to secure the person whilst descending/ascending stairs.



FUNDING

There are sources of funding for both major and minor home modifications. Home Assist Secure, HACC Home Modifications Services and the Department of Veterans Affairs may contribute some funding towards modifications for eligible clients. Some disability specific organisations and charities may also assist with fundraising.



NEED TO KNOW MORE?

Telephone, fax or e-mail your enquiry to obtain further information from one of the therapists about products. Alternatively, you can make an appointment to trial the equipment at our display centres or through our outreach service. Please phone LifeTec Queensland for further details.

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