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ODOT survey: 97 percent of curb ramps across state violate ADA standards

In rural Oregon, whole counties don't have any fully-compliant, accessible curb ramps

Portland, Oregon—Today, the state's leading statewide disability rights organization pointed to new data collected by the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) that shows at least 97 percent of more than 26,000 curb ramps on state roads and highways fail to comply with the ADA. In rural Oregon, entire counties—including Coos, Curry, and Grant Counties—don't have a single fully-compliant ramp. The data, which emerged from a statewide survey that ODOT completed in December, show far worse compliance rates than its previous estimates. A 2008 ODOT survey showed 15,000 locations had missing or noncompliant curb ramps.

The new data paint a dire picture of past neglect of the needs of people with disabilities and ODOT's obligations under the law. It further illustrates the need for prompt and continuing action to ensure people with disabilities can fully access local courthouses, libraries, supermarkets, post offices, churches, and their communities.

More than 20 years ago, the ADA put into law requirements that states must provide accessible curb ramps where pedestrian walkways cross curbs and provide accessible pedestrian crossing signals at curb ramps with traffic lights. In March 2017, a federal judge approved a landmark settlement agreement —the largest commitment to accessible transportation in state history—between ODOT and disability rights advocates to improve curb ramps and crossing signals across Oregon.

"From Benton County to Umatilla, these numbers paint a picture of ODOT overlooking or ignoring countless barriers to people being able to access some of the most important streets in their cities and towns. Libraries, grocery stores, doctor's offices and friends should not be out of reach to someone because they use a wheelchair or experience low or limited vision," said Tom Stenson, litigation attorney with Disability Rights Oregon. "Missing or noncompliant curb ramps pose a serious safety risk, can lead to devastating injuries or even fatalities, and represent a daily stressor for people with physical limitations."

"As Oregon communities strive to make their streets and sidewalks open to all, it's important to remember that a lack of safe curb cuts sends the message that people with disabilities are not welcome," said Ted Wenk, managing attorney with Disability Rights Oregon. "We hope that by shining a light on these problems, we will encourage Oregonians with disabilities to use ODOT's complaint process to report missing or badly constructed ramps and audible signals in their communities and request improvements."

To request curb ramp improvements and audible signals, or report problems with access, Oregonians can use the "ADA Accessibility Requests" complaint form on ODOT's website.

Settlement Agreement Highlights
o   ODOT will:
  o   Complete curb ramp upgrades at 30 percent of the locations identified in the audit (by December 31, 2022)
  o   Complete upgrades at 75 percent of locations (by December 31, 2027)

o Fix all of the curb ramp locations identified (by December 31, 2032)
o The parties will soon negotiate a timeline for making improvements to the crossing signals identified

Additional Resources:
FAQ
Settlement Agreement
Complaint

About Disability Rights Oregon
Disability Rights Oregon upholds the civil rights of people with disabilities to live, work, and engage in the community. The nonprofit works to transform systems, policies, and practices to give more people the opportunity to reach their full potential. For 40 years, the organization has served as Oregon's Protection & Advocacy system.

Data Highlights		
Locale	**County**	**Lack of Compliance**
Rural counties without any compliant ramps	Coos Curry Gilliam Grant Hood River Lake Sherman Wallowa Wasco Wheeler	— None of these counties has a single, fully compliant and accessible ramp.
Rural counties with few compliant ramps	Baker (4) Clatsop(3) Columbia (3) Crook (3) Josephine (3) Klamath (2) Linn (2) Morrow (1) Tillamook (5)	— These rural counties have few ramps that meet legal standards. The number of compliant ramps in the county is shown in parentheses.
Tillamook	Tillamook	— Along both Highway 101 and Highway 6 inaccessibility interferes with access to services, including at sites immediately adjoining the county courthouse on Highway 6. — In the downtown, access to Highway 101 is poor. — Access along Highway 6 headed east out of town is almost impossible in many places.
Pendleton	Umatilla	— Very poor accessibility on state roads throughout town — Much of OR 30/OR 11 (Court Avenue) is inaccessible, directly opposite St. Anthony's Hospital. — SE Emigrant Avenue (Pendleton-John Day Highway) is generally inaccessible, including across from a state office building at SE 7th and Emigrant Avenue.
Portland	Multnomah	— 30 Bypass (North Lombard Street) from Interstate into St. Johns has numerous missing ramps. — In particular, missing ramps make it very challenging to cross Lombard Street, near LaSalle High School and to access other community services in St. John and North Portland.
Halsey	Linn	— Multiple routes on 99E and 228 are completely inaccessible—no ramps at all in many places.

Albany	Linn	— All poor or missing curb ramps on 99e, including at 24th Avenue near an elementary school and Queen Avenue.
Scio	Linn	— Highly inaccessible town on Highway 226
Sweet Home	Linn	— Highly inaccessible along Highway 228
Yamhill	Yamhill	— Most sidewalks adjoining Route 47 and Route 240 wholly inaccessible.
Newberg	Yamhill	— Most sidewalks adjoining Route 240 going north out of town have inaccessible or missing curb ramps.
Coos Bay	Coos	— Much of the sidewalk adjoining Highway 101 north of downtown completely inaccessible

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