

Temporary Exemptions to the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport (DSAPT) and Disability (Access to Premises — Buildings) Standards Condition Report

DSAPT Part 2.6 Access Paths – Conveyances

DSAPT Part 2.8 Extent of Path

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Purpose

Background and context

As per the conditions of the exemptions granted to Australasian Railway Association (ARA) members on 09/06/2022 by the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) pursuant to s 55 of the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Cth) (DDA), s 33A.1 of the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002 (Cth) (Transport Standards) and s 5.1 of the *Disability (Access to Premises – Buildings) Standards 2010* (Cth) (Premises Standards), V/Line provides the following report. The information in this report is correct at the date of publishing however network conditions, operational procedures and staff training are subject to change.

The contents of this report addresses:

2.6 Access paths — conveyances, Temporary exemption: existing rail conveyances

Within 3 months of the grant of this exemption, the ARA member utilising this exemption provides a management plan to the Commission detailing:

- (a) the management controls set out by the ARA member on how staff manage passengers with disability who require an alternative boarding point
- (b) the methods used to educate passengers on the availability of the alternative boarding point and staff assistance, and
- (c) the safety procedures and staff training in place for the safe and timely evacuation of people with disability who require assisted access from conveyances in the event that evacuation is required, including in the event of an emergency

2.8 Extent of path, Temporary exemption: existing rail conveyances

Within 3 months of the grant of this exemption, the ARA member utilising this exemption provides a management plan to the Commission detailing:

- (a) the management controls set out by the ARA member on how staff manage passengers with disability who require an alternative boarding point
- (b) the methods used to educate passengers on the availability of the alternative boarding point and staff assistance, and
- (c) the safety procedures and staff training in place for the safe and timely evacuation of people with disability who require assisted access from conveyances in the event that evacuation is required, including in the event of an emergency

DSAPT Part 2.6 Access Paths – Conveyances

DSAPT Part 2.8 ‘Access paths – Conveyances’ and Part 2.8 ‘Extent of Path’

Controls for staff management of customers with disability who require an alternative boarding point

Operational procedures

- V/Line maintains multiple internal operational procedures to support staff management of customers with accessibility requirements. These procedures formalise processes that are underpinned by the principle that staff are to ask customers what assistance they require and provide as appropriate. This includes:
 - ‘Assisting Customers with Accessibility Needs’ applies to all frontline V/Line Staff for the safe practice of assisting customers with accessibility needs across the entire V/Line network.
 - ‘Deployment of the Boarding Ramp’ ensures safety and accessibility when assisting customers with accessibility needs to board train services via the train boarding ramp.
 - ‘Accessibility Booking Requests for Front Line Staff’ and ‘Accessibility Booking Requests - Customer Relations’ outlines the process for actioning Accessibility Bookings for customers with accessibility needs to ensure customers are provided with appropriate support on the day of travel.
- Staff are provided training on all operational procedures at induction.

Boarding Assistance Zones

- Boarding Assistance Zones (see Figure 1) are line marked areas on V/Line platforms where customers can wait to ensure that they will receive Direct Assistance from staff. All frontline staff are trained and informed via operational procedures on how to assist all customers, and to additionally pay explicit attention to those waiting in the Boarding Assistance Zone.



Figure 1 - Boarding Assistance Zone on V/Line platform

Methods used to educate customers on the availability of the alternative boarding points and staff assistance

Direct Assistance on the network

- **Conductors:**
Conductors are on-board staff who provide customer service, including boarding assistance, on every V/Line rail service.
- **Boarding Assistance Zones:**
All intending customers can receive Direct Assistance from staff when required. They may also choose to wait at the Boarding Assistance Zone to explicitly indicate to the Conductor that they would like assistance.
- **Customer Information Desks at staffed stations:**
At staffed stations, customers can receive assistance and education from V/Line staff at the Customer Information Desk. This may include directing customers to the Boarding Assistance Zone so that the Conductor on board can provide additional support or boarding assistance or organising alternative transport if required.

Direct Assistance through call centre and bookings

- **Accessibility booking process:**
When a booking is made, customers may choose to inform V/Line of an accessibility requirement. If this information is disclosed, Customer Relations Staff provide education on how to receive boarding assistance and the accessibility of the service provided, and the availability of alternative options.
- **Information provided through Customer Relations Team:**
Feedback cases that are processed by the Customer Relations Team provide V/Line with the opportunity to further educate customers on the accessibility assistance available and how to request this.

Customer Information

- **Website** <https://www.vline.com.au/Fares-general-info/Accessibility>
The V/Line website provides information to customers stating that “Customers who require assistance to board a V/Line service can approach V/Line staff or wait in the Boarding Assistance Zone for help”.

Safety procedures and staff training to ensure safe and timely evacuation of customers with disability who require assisted access from conveyances in the event that evacuation is required, including in the event of an emergency

Safety Procedures

- V/Line maintains internal emergency management procedures to support staff in the management of a variety of safety events.
- There is a procedure for detrainning when not at platforms. The principles of this procedure include not detrainning customers unless the incident is life-threatening and waiting for emergency services where a safe evacuation cannot be negotiated.
- There are Emergency Response Plans for each V/Line site.

Staff training

- Local incident response procedures are explicitly trained at induction. These include evacuating stations, evacuating trains, and assessing emergencies.
- In the event of an incident on a train, except when the train is at a platform, customers will not be detrained, unless there is a life-threatening situation or when directed by emergency services.
- Where staff are unable to negotiate a safe evacuation, staff – where possible – are to wait for emergency services to assist.