



NH Governor's Commission on Disability

ACCESSIBILITY SPECIALIST UPDATE 9.7.18

Architectural Barriers Act (ABA) celebrates 50th

Concord, NH —The Architectural Barriers Act (ABA) just turned 50. As one of the first federal laws to address accessibility for people with disabilities, it requires buildings or facilities funded by the federal government to be accessible. At the signing of the law, President Lyndon Johnson characterized barriers to access as a failure on the part of government that “perpetuated cruel discrimination”.

Whenever you go into a post office, a federal court house, or even federally funded public housing, you have just encountered what the Architectural Barriers Act is all about. Accessible parking, code conforming doors and elevators, even the height of the toilet are all subject to the standards and guidelines of the ABA.

According to Colleen Durkin-Blackburn, Accessibility Specialist of the Governor's Commission on Disability, when the state leases space in a building she does a review of the building with an eye towards barrier free code compliance. Part of her responsibility is to review the site and then make recommendations to ensure accessibility.

“Everything from the width of the doorway, to the style of doorknob is reviewed,” said Durkin-Blackburn.

“While the ABA is not the only law focused on accessibility, this anniversary is a great time to remember how far we have come towards the goal of access for all.” said Durkin-Blackburn.

If you have accessibility building questions, contact colleen.durkin-blackburn@gcd.nh.gov at the GCD or call 603.271.2773.