

Modifying your Home:

Outdoor ramps

December 2015

Is it difficult for you to get in and out of your home because of your disability? Maybe there are some modifications that could be made to your home to make it easier for you to move around. The Ministry of Health might be able to help fund these modifications.

The type of modifications the Ministry of Health can help fund for your home will depend on your disability related needs and situation. They could include:

- hand rails
- a platform lift
- a ramp.

You may also want to think about using another entrance or moving to a home that is more suited to your needs.

What is a ramp?

A ramp is a sloped walkway that makes it easier to move up to an entrance. There are two types of ramps: permanent and removable. Both can be used by people who use walkers or manual or power wheelchairs.

- **Permanent ramps** are usually made of wood or concrete. They are built on site by a building contractor.
- **Removable ramps** are usually made of aluminium. They can be installed in sections. They are specifically designed to be set up and used in one location for a long period of time then taken apart and set up to fit another location when they are no longer needed in the first location.
- A ramp needs to be at least 1 metre wide. It must have a level landing area (a minimum of 1.2 metres x 1.2 metres) at the top and bottom so you can stop and turn safely.



- A ramp needs to slope gently (meaning it has a slope of no more than 1 metre rise to every 12 metres of length) to make it safe and easy to use. A longer ramp with a gentler slope is best for someone who needs to be pushed in a wheelchair.
- Most ramps will need a small barrier along the edges to stop users slipping off. The ramp may also need a handrail, especially if it is more than 1 metre above the ground.

Is a ramp the best option for you?

To get an entrance to your home that works well for you, think about how you get around, what your disability needs are and what your home is like.

The main things to think about

- Do you push yourself around in a wheelchair or use a power wheelchair?
- Do you use a walking frame?
- Is it possible that your needs could change in the future? Will you be living in your present home for at least two years?
- Will it be easy to install a ramp in your home? The number of steps or slope of the land may mean it is not possible or is very expensive to install a ramp, and a platform lift may be a better option.
- Which side of the house would the ramp be built on? It could become slippery on the shady side of your home if that area is damp.
- Does the ramp or landing need to be over 1.5 metres above ground level? If so, it will need a building consent.
- Which entrance is the best for you to use? Are you able to get to that entrance easily from the most reasonable place to park your car?

Getting a ramp

Contact a Ministry of Health Equipment and Modification Service (EMS) qualified housing assessor to help you work out what type of ramp best suits your needs. They will help you work out the most cost-effective option for your needs and if you can get funding help from the Ministry of Health.

EMS qualified housing assessors are occupational therapists. You can contact them through your:

- local district health board
- Needs Assessment Service Coordination (NASC) organisation
- GP

- www.otnz.co.nz/public/find-an-occupational-therapist/
- Enable Information on phone: 0800 17 1981.

You may also choose to organise and pay for the ramp yourself.

Ministry of Health funding

- If you have already paid for any modifications to your home yourself, generally you cannot claim back the cost from the Ministry of Health.
- The Ministry of Health has a limited amount of funding available for housing modifications to support disabled people. They use a **prioritisation tool** to make sure this funding is used as fairly as possible. The prioritisation tool compares your current needs and how much you will benefit from the home modifications with other disabled people's needs.
- Generally you can only get Ministry of Health funding once for a particular type of modification.
- Funding up to a maximum of \$15,334 (including GST) is available for modifications to get into, out of and between levels of your home, including installing an outdoor ramp.
- Ramps do not need to be covered in order to be effective. You (or the home-owner if it is not you) will need to pay the cost of covering your ramp from the weather.
- If the total cost of the modifications to your home is more than \$8,076 (including GST), you will have to have an **income and cash asset test** to work out whether you need to pay any of the cost yourself. The total cost includes the cost of any other modifications that the Ministry of Health has already funded for you since you turned 16 years of age.

A ramp for a child aged 15 years or younger does not need an income and cash asset test. (Find out more about the income and cash asset tests process in our factsheet *Modifying Your Home: Income and Cash Asset Tests*.)

Repairs and maintenance

- Ramps need regular maintenance and cleaning to keep them slip resistant and safe.
- Removable ramps are available on long-term loan from the Ministry of Health. You must return the ramp when it is no longer needed.
- The Ministry of Health covers the costs of all repairs, maintenance and installation or removal of any borrowed modular ramp. Such work is completed by the Ministry of Health's equipment providers, either:
 - Accessable (for people living in Auckland or Northland)
 - Enable New Zealand (for people living in the rest of New Zealand).

- The home-owner is responsible for all costs associated with maintaining a permanent ramp, including any repairs, replacement or removal when the ramp is no longer needed. This type of ramp is part of the home-owner's property.

For more information about outdoor ramps

If you live:

- **in Auckland or Northland:**
contact **Accessible**
Freephone 0508 001 002
Email info@accessible.co.nz
- **anywhere else in New Zealand:**
contact **Enable New Zealand**
Freephone 0800 17 1981
Email: enable@enable.co.nz



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