RAMP Information Sheet for EMS Assessors

The following information provides design/technical points, relevant aspects of Ministry of Health EMS funding and clinical considerations to think about during the assessment and modification process.

The EMS Assessor's role is to ensure that the person, family/whanau and caregivers are fully informed. This can be done either by providing the information yourself, or by directing the equipment supplier and/or List Contractor/Builder to assist with technical or installation details.

Types of Ramps:

A Timber/Wooden Ramp:

1. Is strong and solid so can take heavier loads, and is therefore usually more suitable for a power wheelchair
2. Is a permanent fixture, and becomes the home owner's property.
3. Is the responsibility of the home owner to repair, maintain, replace or remove.

A Modular Ramp:

1. Is usually made from sections of slip resistant aluminum that fit together to form a ramp
2. Is less stable and is able to flex so may not be the best option for a power wheelchair.
3. Can reflect the sun off the metal and cause glare
4. To install requires concrete pavers/ landings and/or may need changes to paths.
5. Needs to be protected from tampering and vandalism, and have the recommended regular maintenance program provided by the supplier/installer.
6. Is easily removable when it is no longer needed and may be a better option if the home is rented or the situation is likely to be longer than 6 months but is unlikely to be permanent

Care and Maintenance

1. A ramp requires regular cleaning to keep its slip resistant surface
2. Ramps exposed to weather conditions may need extra maintenance and cleaning to ensure safety.

3. Day to day care and maintenance of a ramp is the responsibility of the person and/or home owner. A maintenance checklist will be provided by the ramp Supplier/Installer

Design/Technical Points about a Ramp

1. Is constructed of a non-slip surface, 1200mm wide with a 75mm up-stand on both edges, a handrail on one side (or both sides if the ramp is open on both sides) and a flat/level landing at the top and bottom (1200mm x 1200mm minimum) to enter and exit the ramp so the person can turn and stop safely

2. Is generally no steeper than 1:12 gradient, but a more gentle slope is ideal and could be 1:14.

3. Can be made from timber or aluminum, and have a concrete landings to lead to a path etc

4. The bottom landing must be able to be seen clearly for safe entry and exit and must not end on public or shared land (e.g.) the landing should not finish directly onto a driveway which is dangerous

5. Must be clear of any areas that may be dangerous for people using the ramp, (e.g.) an opening window, water tap, gully trap, drains or pipes etc.

6. A ramp or landing that is over 1 metre from the ground will require a building consent. The cost of this is included in the total cost of the ramp.

Note: Threshold / wedge / kerb ramp (maximum 450mm long): the gradient will not be steeper than 1:8 where the threshold has a change in level more than 20mm. If the length is longer than 450mm, it is considered a ramp, rather than a threshold ramp.

When Considering Installing a Ramp think about:

1. Which entrance is the most practical and cost effective entrance to modify, things like:

    - the least number of or design of the steps
    - the total height and space required to fit the modification
    - the most commonly used entrance to where a vehicle can be parked
    - any environmental features such as the slope of the land.

2. Consider the most cost effectiveness option to meet the person's needs – Rails vs. Easy Steps vs. Ramp vs. Low Rise Lift

3. Is the disability progressive/deteriorating i.e. will they have the ability to propel themselves up/down the ramp in the future? Is there likely to be a change from manual to power

wheelchair?

4. The most appropriate gradient that is safe and easy to use for both the person and any other people using the ramp? Consider the person's safety: activity tolerance, ability to propel themselves and to control the wheelchair on a slope. The 'rule of thumb' is to go no steeper than 1:12. A gradient of 1:8 only relates to threshold ramps.

5. Generally where a home has about two - three steps and the surrounding land is flat, then a ramp would be about 7 – 8 metres long to achieve a 1:12 gradient. Example: three steps 570mm total height: 12 x 570mm = 6.8 metres, therefore this is how long the ramp would need to be to achieve a 1:12 gradient.

6. Be careful where the slope of the surrounding land or number of steps means the ramp would need to be over 9 metres in length to achieve the required gradient. Landings are required every 9 metres for resting, and in a domestic situation they will likely not be able to be in one long length but require returns. In these circumstances you will need to think about viability and cost effectiveness, and consider alternatives, ie a low rise lift might be a more cost effective and viable option.

7. Consider if the person requires a handrail on both sides of the ramp – refer Rails, Steps & Stairs Information Sheet

8. Safety for children, the gaps in the railings will need to be safe for children, especially if the ramp is over 1m off the ground.

Ministry of Health EMS Funding Considerations

1. Funding is only available once for the same type of modification, therefore the modification recommended needs to meet the person's needs now and in the long term.

2. Funding can only cover one entrance to the home.

3. Funding is not available to provide covered protection from the weather. The cost of this will be the responsibility of the home owner.

4. It is helpful to understand the difference between a housing modification vs. equipment vs. equipment included in a housing modification vs. housing equipment:

    - A housing modification is a permanent / fixed alteration to the home. The housing modification becomes the home owner's property.

    - Equipment which is portable (able to be easily picked up and moved) and is not fixed to the home (and is applied for via an Equipment Application) and is owned by the Ministry of Health.

    - Equipment included in a housing modification is an item that is fixed to the home.

- Housing equipment is equipment that is included in a housing modification that is removable and able to be refurbished for reissue to another person. The use of reissue housing equipment provides considerable savings to the Ministry of Health EMS budget.

  Note: Generally housing equipment includes: 1m low rise platform lifts and modular ramps. The EMS Provider identifies if the equipment included in the housing modification application is considered as 'housing equipment' and will remain the property of the Ministry of Health or becomes the property of the home owner. Check with the EMS Provider for equipment such as stair chair lifts, stair platform lifts, 1.5m lifts, multi-floor lifts, ceiling track hoists, bidets, shower beds etc.

5. Housing equipment options (i.e. low rise lift or modular ramp) should only be considered where:

   - the situation does not appear to be sustainable long term or
   - the housing equipment option is more cost effective than a permanent (non-complex) ramp (i.e. the whole cost of the equipment item plus installation costs) or
   - the person is unable to propel themselves up a ramp (and is not a candidate for a power wheelchair which would allow them to get up the ramp) and/or is unable to be pushed up a ramp e.g. by an elderly spouse.

6. In cases where a permanent (non-complex) wooden ramp will be more cost effective than a low rise lift, this option should be considered first.

7. A wooden ramp may be a better option for a Housing New Zealand (HNZ) home, as it becomes a permanent fixture and increases HNZ accessible housing stock. Where a HNZ home is to be (or has been) modified to meet a disability related need (i.e. door widening, bathroom and/or kitchen modifications) a permanent (non-complex) ramp should be considered over equipment options. A wooden ramp becomes the property of HNZ, and all repairs, maintenance, replacement or removal becomes their responsibility.

8. A timber ramp is a permanent fixture and becomes the home owner's property. The full cost of the ramp will be included in the amount that is forwarded to Work and Income for an Income and Asset test.

9. A modular ramp is owned by the Ministry of Health and on long term loan to the person for as long as needed. When it is no longer needed the person needs to tell Accessable or Enable New Zealand and it will be removed and refurbished for another person to use.

10. All repairs, servicing, or removal of the modular ramp is the responsibility of Accessable or Enable New Zealand. The modular ramp must not be moved or removed without approval from Accessable or Enable New Zealand.

11. A modular ramp is owned by the Ministry of Health:

- the cost of the ramp will not be included in the amount that will be forwarded for an income and asset test.
- the cost of installation and any non re-issuable parts will be forwarded for an income and asset test.

12. When the modular ramp needs repairs or servicing the person needs to notify Accessable or Enable New Zealand.
13. When a modular ramp is removed any changes that were made to paths or any concrete areas will remain in place, and be the home owner's responsibility to remove should they wish.