

WOOD vs. ALUMINUM

For years, homes depended on ramps made of wood to provide equal access for all. These ramps allowed mobility devices to tackle porches, stairs, and uneven thresholds with ease. However, innovations in ramp technology have ushered in new materials and systems, exposing the cracks in wood ramps. The benefits of wood pale in comparison to their detriments, a list that seems to grow over time. Some key points to consider when comparing wood and aluminum ramps are:

Wood

Maintenance:

- Wood ramps are a lot like wood decks—they need regular maintenance and upkeep in order to maintain their appearance and not deteriorate. If you're not in the position to do this sort of maintenance on your home, you will need to hire someone to take care of it.

Limitations:

- Wood ramps require permits and permission from your utility provider before digging posts.
- May require a hired, professional contractor familiar with ADA guidelines and that has experience building ramps.
- Wood ramps take longer to install. The construction process typically lasts two to three days, depending on the size and layout.
- Quality lumber will need to be purchased, in addition to staining or waterproofing materials.
- May require poured concrete footings and posts, which are permanent.
- Once built, a wood ramp cannot be relocated and is difficult to remove, expand, or reconfigure.
- Susceptible to warping and rotting due to moisture from humidity, rain, and snow, as well as cracking and splintering from sun exposure.
- Wood can become very slippery in wet weather conditions. Must apply grip tape to surface to prevent slips.
- Expected life span of three to five years, which means purchasing more materials to build a new ramp or modify the existing.
- Wood ramps do not have resale value, in fact, they can be expensive to dispose of.

Aluminum

Advantages:

- Aluminum ramps are easy to install and typically don't require permits.
- They offer quick set-up and can be installed in a matter of hours, using minimal tools and hardware.
- Traditionally a more affordable option in the long run with a lower cost to install and resale value.
- A special metallic blend protects the material from the elements for a long-lasting solution.
- Optional powder coating provides additional protection and offers the ability for the ramp to match the aesthetics of your home.
- Can be installed during any season and will not be compromised by weather conditions.
- Can be easily modified, expanded, or reconfigured as your needs change. The ramp system can be transported in the event of a house relocation.
- Customizable; change, add, and subtract ramps, stairs, platforms, and handrails as needed. Can conform to fit virtually any doorway or entrance.
- Interchangeable handrails for added safety or if code compliance is an issue.
- Solid surface aluminum ramps have an extruded tread for great traction; expanded metal aluminum ramps and platforms have diamond shaped openings to allow the pass through of small debris and offer superior traction; and solid surface aluminum platforms have an extruded, knurled surface for multidirectional traction.

Maintenance:

- Low maintenance, simply needing an occasional sweep or spray washing for cleanliness.



EZ-ACCESS[®]

Wood ramp after several years



Aluminum ramp after several years



The PATHWAY® 3G Modular Access System provides complete home accessibility to fit your needs and is made of durable aluminum, offering advantages that wood ramps can't match.