

# Universal Design Café and Restaurant Checklist

Cafés and restaurants are important locations for establishing and maintaining social connections, enhancing feelings of wellbeing and sense of belonging within the community. Cafés and restaurants have been significantly impacted during COVID-19 with social distancing becoming a major driver for redesigning how we use the space these establishments provide. Rethinking the café and restaurant environment for COVID-19 also provides the opportunity to offer greater accessibility. Creating an environment that can be used by all, regardless of their age or ability, is essential to providing people safe and enjoyable experiences.

This checklist suggests better practice in achieving universal design in cafés and restaurants. Universal design is not just about good intentions, it is also good business, as cafes and restaurants that consider the needs of all users and provide good access will attract more customers to their establishment.

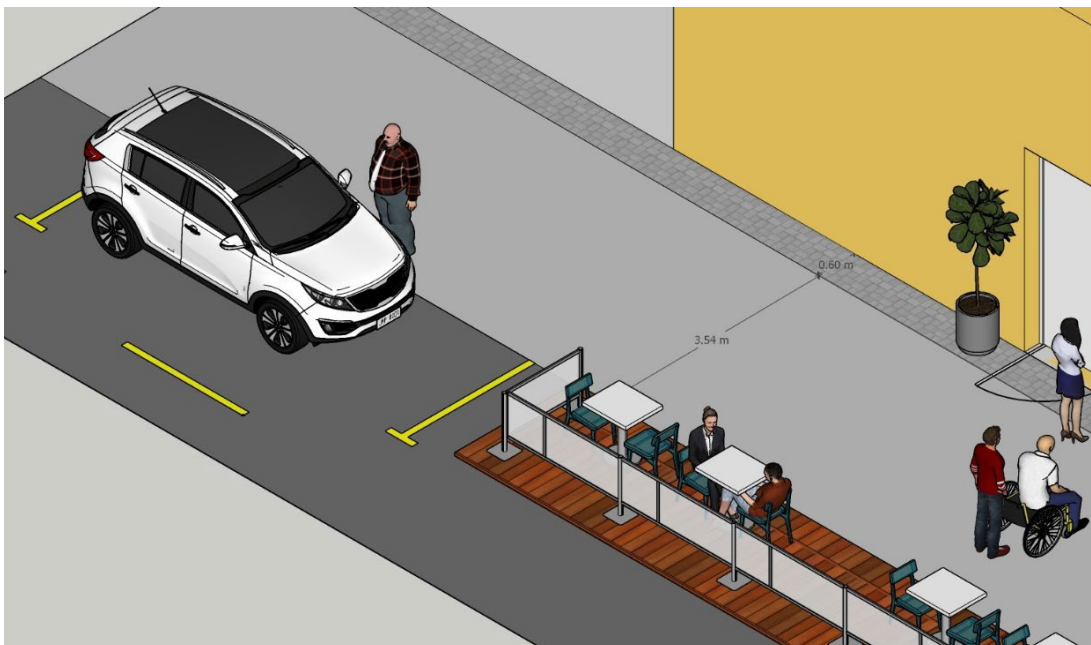
## Accessible Route

1. There is a continuous accessible path of travel (CAPT) inside and outside the building. The CAPT for outside should be a minimum of 1800mm, this enables two wheelchairs/people with prams/people with assistance animals to pass each other. Refer to [Accessible Space Dimensions](#) for additional guidance. Accessible carparking, drop off and public transport should be located on the accessible route to the café/restaurant. Refer to [NZS 4121](#) for additional guidance on accessible path of travel, for example regarding minor obstructions.
2. The CAPT for inside the café/restaurant should be a minimum of 1200mm for short segments and 1500mm for longer segments. Toilets and customer service counter should be located on the accessible route.
3. There are no steps or lips on the accessible route; level access is preferred. If a ramp is provided, it has a maximum gradient of 1:14, with 1:20 preferred. Refer to [Ramp Checklist](#) for additional guidance.
4. Outdoor dining can be reached from an accessible route.
5. Slip resistant floor markings/change in floor coverings are included to create a pathway and provides a visual marker for customers.

6. Entry to building is easily identifiable with the name, street address and hours clearly visible. The street number is large and legible so people can easily identify the building. Refer to [Accessible Signage and Buildings](#) for additional guidance.

**TIP** - Lighting, colour contrast, signage, and tactile features can be used to help identify an entrance.

7. Ensure that the entrance is wide and kept clear of obstructions. Ensure that the path for servers to access outdoor dining is clearly indicated, markings at ground level can be used to help keep this path clear. For example, for people who are deaf or have hearing impairment, they may not hear instructions to stand clear/move out of the way.
8. If parking is provided, it is located close to the café/restaurant with accessible and cycle parking provided. Refer to the [Parking Checklist](#) for additional guidance.



9. If parking is not provided, provide information on closest accessible pick up/drop off locations to your café/restaurant. This is helpful for a variety of customers including people with mobility impairment, older adults and people who are blind or have low vision.

## Fixtures and Furniture

1. Furniture (indoor and outdoor) does not intrude into the accessible route. It is preferred that outdoor furniture is away from the building edge. This enables people, particularly people who are blind or have low vision, older adults and caregivers with prams, the ability to shoreline using the buildings edge for both wayfinding and sense of safety away from vehicle traffic.

Refer to images below on possible configurations.

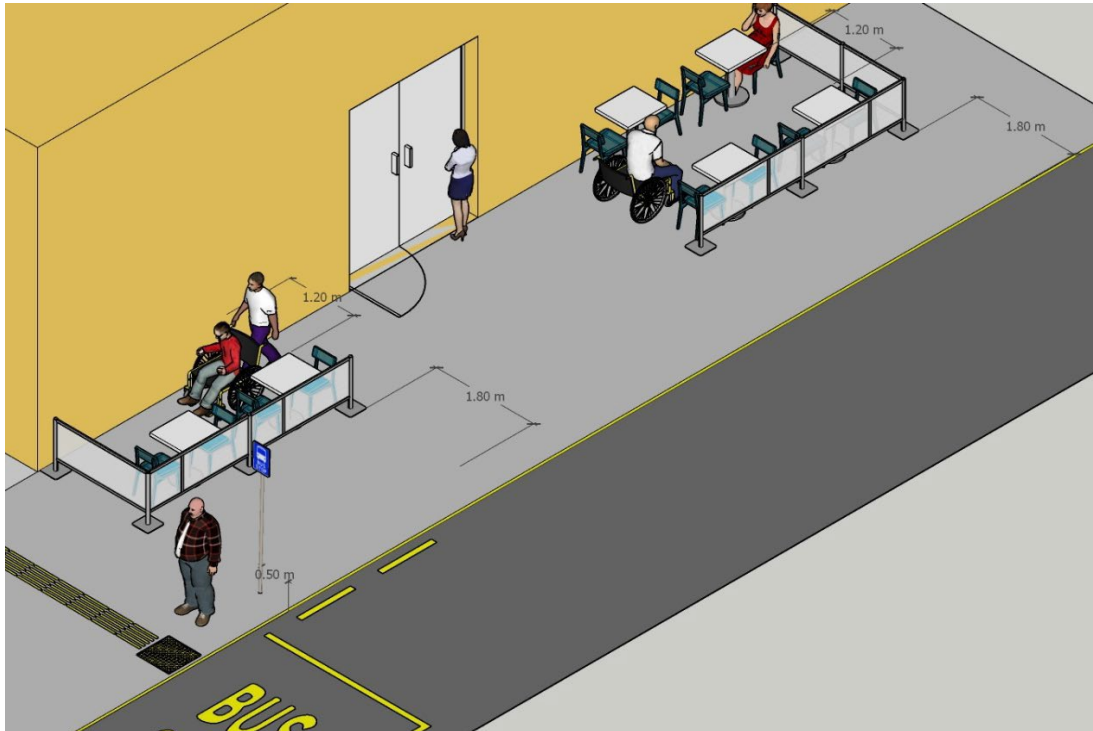
### Option 1

The outdoor dining is located away from the building edge with a 1.8m wide CAPT. In this configuration, the edge nearest the road/cycleway should be demarcated. This could be done through visibility markings such as safety yellow paint or furniture – for example planters/sturdy balustrade. A buffer of 600mm between the building edge and CAPT is delineated with different materiality and planters could be placed if there are potential hazards such as outward swinging doors. No planters recommended if doors are sliding or swing inwards.



## Option 2

If option 1 is not possible and is compliant with relevant bylaws, for example licensed premises. In this option the outdoor dining area is located against the building edge. There is a 1.8m wide CAPT between the dining area and the road. The diagram also shows the 1.8m width begins where there is street furniture, not the edge of the road.



If the outdoor dining is against the building edge, street furniture such as planters can be used as barriers to separate the footpath from the outdoor dining area. Street furniture and other fixed objects should have a feature no more than 150mm from ground to be detectable by cane. Street furniture should be colour contrasted to their surrounds.

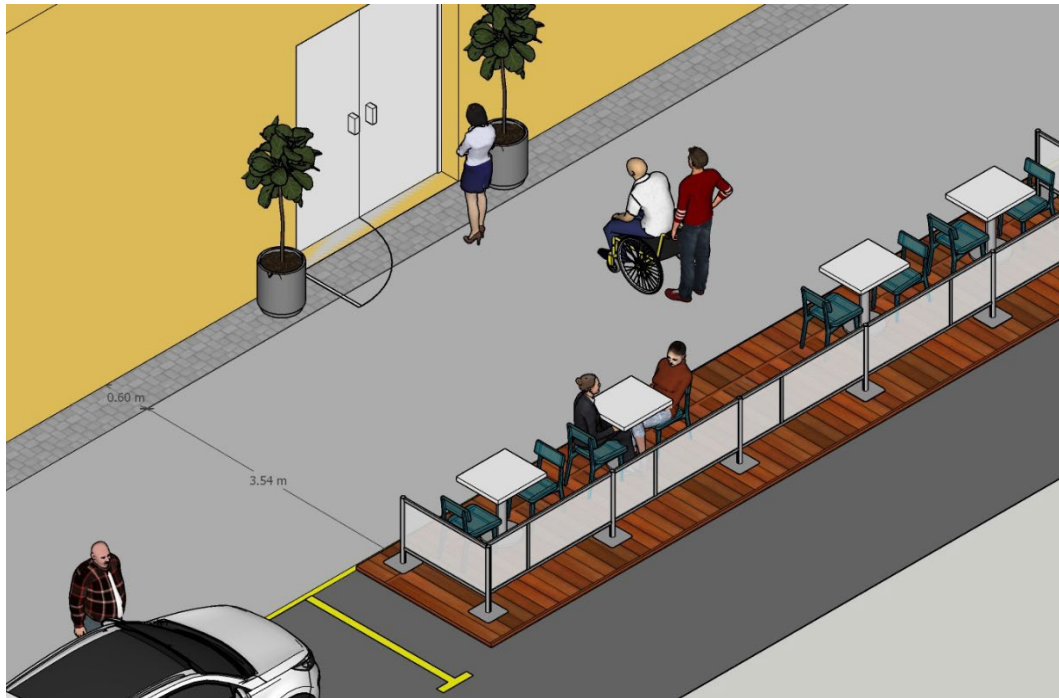


**Tip** - This image shows robust planter boxes that enables shore lining. The planters are on lockable wheels and can be easily moved when needed.

## Option 3

Another option is locating the outdoor dining as a parklet on the road reserve. Note: appropriate permissions must be sought in advance from the relevant authority such as Auckland Transport. In this option the parklet is located adjacent to a parking space and must not hinder the path for vehicular travel.

This enables a wide CAPT between the outdoor dining and the building edge. Ensure that the parklet is at the same level as the footpath to reduce trip/fall hazards and increase accessibility for all users.



1. Any overhanging feature, such as trees, umbrella, signage is at least 2100mm (2400mm preferred) from the ground.
2. Tables and chairs of appropriate and different heights are provided, and of contrasting colour to surrounding area. Variety of seating provided including some seating with backs, armrests, and padding.  
**Tip** – The top surface of some tables should be between 810mm to 865mm above the ground.
3. Doors are not too heavy or narrow for a range of people and users can establish what is on the other side of a door. All doorways should provide a minimum clear opening width of 810mm, with 860mm preferred.  
**Tip** – A simple way to determine if a door is too heavy - can the door be opened easily with one hand/elbow? If not, consider installing a door closer or adjust the existing one.
4. Ensure handles on doors can be operated with a closed fist, wrist or elbow.
5. Tables have hooks where bags can be hung.
6. Highchairs are available.

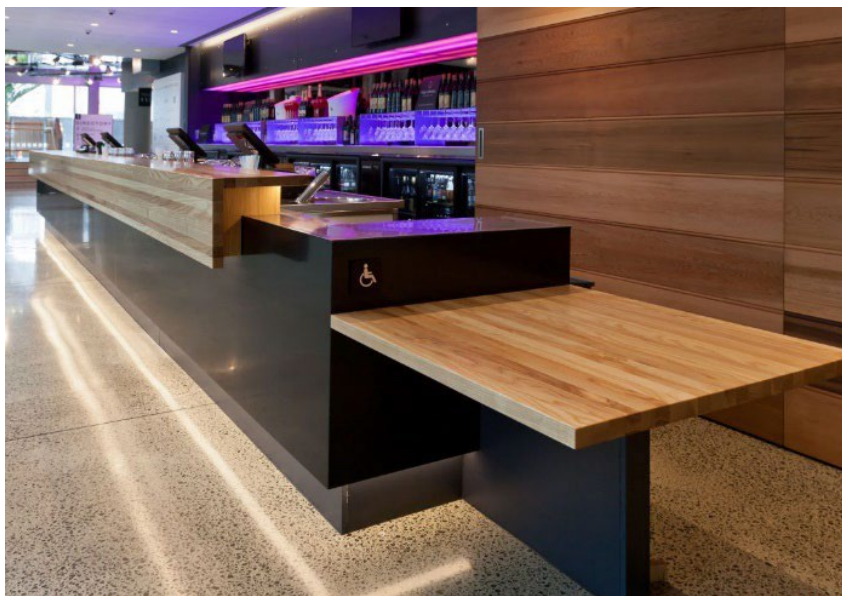


## Dining Environment

1. The environment is uncluttered with a simple layout.
2. Provide a good acoustic environment for communication: music is at acceptable level; coffee grinder and coffee machine are located away from where customers converse with staff and one another. Sound absorbing materials can be used to reduce ricocheting of sound.

**Tip** - A comfortable listening environment is 75db. However, a café/restaurant with tiles or hard walls can decrease intelligibility as sound ricochets around the space. A café/restaurant with softer accents may be just as loud, but have more intelligibility because sound is not ricocheting. Consider installing sound absorbing materials to increase intelligibility.

3. Provide a good visual environment for communication: keep dining tables uncluttered, with a maximum height of 10cm for flowers/candles/centrepieces. For the Deaf community, this enables use of sign language across the table. Many people who have mild or moderate hearing impairment also use lip reading to augment their understanding, especially with background noise.
4. Lighting is a good balance of artificial light, has no dark spots or glare, and is at least 50 lux.
5. Good temperature with ventilation or blankets provided.



6. Provide a customer service counter that is clearly identifiable and with clear knee space of 810mm wide by 480mm high.
7. Accessible signage in the café/restaurant makes it clear if people are to order at the counter.

## Service and Customer Experience

1. Café or restaurant is kept clean and tidy.
2. Service is friendly and assistance is offered.

**Tip** – There are a variety of organisations that provide training on meeting the needs of access customers. Well trained staff assist in providing an excellent customer experience for people of varying ages and abilities.

3. A variety of food and drink is available.
4. Gold card discount or loyalty card is available.
5. Menu card has readable font (at least 12 point) and is of appropriate size and colour. Alternative menu options are available such as online, large print, Braille, and other languages. Include other visual menu aids such as cabinet food with clear labels, and pictures of food and drink. Avoid laminated menus as these can be subject to glare making them harder to read. Find out more about accessible documents on the [Blindlowvision.org.nz](http://Blindlowvision.org.nz) website.

**Tip** - For online menus, ensure they are up to date. Many people with access needs use an online menu both in advance and when at the café/restaurant to assist in selecting their food and drink independently.

6. The café or restaurant is family friendly and includes a children's menu, colouring pencils, changing table.
7. If items are to be collected at a counter, provide a device or signboard which is both visual and audible. This is particularly helpful for people who are deaf or have hearing impairment to know that their order is ready. This is also beneficial for people who have English as an additional language.
8. There is water and space available for assistance animals.

## Safety

1. At all times there is a staff member available that is trained in first aid.

**Tip** – Consider providing an Automated External Defibrillators (AED) in your café/restaurant. AEDs keep your staff and customers safe in case of a sudden cardiac emergency. If you do obtain an AED for your café/restaurant, please register it on <https://www.stjohn.org.nz/first-aid/about-aeds/aed-registration>

2. Emergency exits are kept clear at all times and there is a continuous accessible path of travel to the exits.
3. Exit doors are accessible and not overly heavy to open.
4. Fire alarm is both visual and audible. A visual alarm alerts people who are deaf or hard of hearing that they need to evacuate.
5. Spills are dealt with quickly and appropriate signage is placed.
6. Exposed edges have edge protection such as edge curbs and contrasting colours.

## Toilets

1. Available on the entry level of the café/restaurant on an accessible route and includes an accessible toilet, gender-neutral toilet and baby change facilities. Refer to the [Toilet Checklist](#) for additional guidance.
2. Bathroom is cleaned regularly, and supplies are stocked (toilet paper, soap, towels).



**Disclaimer:**

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