Massachusetts DCR Universal Access Program's
SUMMARY OF GUIDELINES FOR ACCESSIBLE TRAILS
(Based on Forest Service Trail Accessibility Guidelines, May, 2006)
This chart should be used as a guide only. Contact DCR's Universal Access Program for assistance in evaluating, designing and developing new or altered trails.

ACCESSIBLE TRAIL STANDARDS

Trail Grade (max) (*1)	**w/ resting intervals** (*2)	**Cross Slope (max)**	**Obstacle Height (max)**	**Trail Tread**
• 5% max. for any distance • 8.3% for 200 'max. • 10% for 30' max. • 12.5% for 10' max.	N/A, not required @ 200' max. @30' max. @ 10' max.	5% (*2)	2" height max.	Firm & stable

Clear Width	**Openings**	**Passing Space Interval**	**Edge Protection**	**Protruding Objects**	**Signs**
36" (*3)	½" max. diameter	Every 1000' when clear width less than 60". 60"x60" min. or T-shape min. 48"	3" min. height (where edge protection provided)	80" min. clear head space (or provide barrier to warn blind)	At trailhead; identify total length of trail & first point of departure

*1 No more than 30% of the trail shall exceed 8.3%
*2 Resting interval: 60" minimum in length by minimum width of trail width, 3% max. grade. For routes: 5% max. cross slope allowed for proper drainage.
*3 May be reduced to 32" or less with allowable exceptions.
*4 May be no less than 32" for a distance of 24" max. with one of four conditions

There are several "Conditions for Departure," "Limiting Factors" and "Exceptions" that will affect the degree to which these standards are applicable.

Conditions for Departure:
The following four conditions for departure allow deviation from the standards where exceptions apply.

1. Where compliance would cause substantial harm to cultural, historic, religious, or significant natural features or characteristics.
2. Where compliance would substantially change the physical or recreation setting or the trail class, designed use, or managed uses of the trail or trail segment, or would not be consistent with the applicable land management plan.
3. Where compliance would require construction methods or materials that are prohibited by federal, state, or local law, other than state or local law whose sole purpose is to prohibit use by persons with disabilities.
4. Where compliance would be impractical due to terrain or prevailing construction practices.

Exceptions and Limiting Factors:
Where one or more limiting factor exists and one or more conditions for departure exist, then there may be exceptions from following the guidelines. Limiting factors include:

a) The combination of trail grade and cross slope exceeds 20% for over 40 feet (6100 mm).
b) The surface is not firm and stable for a distance of 45 feet or more.
c) The minimum tread width is 18 inches or less for a distance of at least 20 feet.
d) A trail obstacle of at least 30 inches (770 mm) in height extends across the full width of the trail.