



Handicap-Access Ramps: Aluminum vs. Wood

Price

When assessing cost, it's important to take into consideration the lifetime cost of the product. Initial purchase cost doesn't take into consideration things such as periodic maintenance that may be required for some products, or expenses such as periodic sealing or staining, such as the case for wooden ramps. Aluminum ramps require no or very little care. Aluminum ramps will last much longer than wood, and can be repurposed after no longer needed allowing you to get back some of the cost. And as material costs continue to increase in price for things like lumber, and the permit time and expense for a permanent wooden ramp, wood ramps can be more costly.

Ramp Length & Building Permit Requirements

Wood ramps are classified as permanent structures, and as such require you to apply for and wait for a building permit to construct in most cases. If you need the ramp quickly this may not be the case. Aluminum ramps are considered portable and do not require a building permit. Wood ramps will also be required to adhere to a length-to-height ratio of 1:12, or 1-foot of ramp for each 1-inch rise in elevation. This can equate to a very long ramp. If you have an elevation of 24 inches, a 24 foot long ramp is required. You may not have the space for such a structure, which often-times requires a platform structure to make a turn, or come back in the original direction. Aluminum ramps can be supplied at a length that best suits *your* unique need and use, and can be obtained more quickly in most cases..

Longevity

When we're talking longevity we're talking about how long the ramp is going to last you in the long run, provided you're doing your part to keep it in shape with routine maintenance.

- Roll-A-Ramp® aluminum ramps are built to last the longest; and will not rust or corrode. On the other hand, wooden ramps require constant maintenance as they need to be regularly treated with a wood sealer to protect the surface and prevent painful splinters. Wood has the potential to last a long time, but you have to consider whether or not it is worth the maintenance process you'll have to go through on a regular basis.

What happens if you move?

Another thing a lot of ramp buyers don't consider is: what if you want to move to a new home in a few years? Is your ramp going to be able to travel with you? Wooden ramps must be torn down and disposal fees incurred. You do not recoup any investment with a wooden ramp.

- One of the greatest benefits of Roll-A-Ramp® aluminum ramps is that if you move, you can take all or part of your ramp with you. You can also easily add to it or shorten it as necessary for the new height. Wooden ramps cannot be adjusted or modified once built typically, making them extra difficult to travel with if you move locations.
- You may also sell, donate or repurpose your ramp; there is a good market for used Roll-A-Ramp® aluminum ramps. There is no market for used wooden ramps. Or you may choose to recycle the ramp. You can recoup some of your investment with an aluminum ramp no matter what you choose to do with it. While making it a more environmentally-friendly option!

Safety When it comes to access ramps there is perhaps nothing more important than safety. So how does wood fare versus aluminum in this category?

- One of the greatest dangers with wooden ramps is the fact that *wood rots*. Also, during the winter months moisture accumulates on top of the wooden ramp and can seep into, causing freezing and become a slip hazard.
- Roll-A-Ramp® aluminum ramps are susceptible to accumulating snow and ice as well, but because of the built-in traction and safety design with integrated raised ridges that will never wear out providing confidence. Unlike skid tape on other ramps that must be replaced each year, the aluminum retains traction. The open-pattern slotted design also prevents rain and debris from pooling on the ramp.
- Finally, if there's a fire in the home you have to keep in mind that a wooden ramp will catch fire in no time. While aluminum isn't built to withstand high long-term heat, it would be more reliable than wood in a fire event.