Improving Building Design for Persons with Low Vision

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF BUILDING SCIENCES

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Low Vision Workshop

Interior Design Panel

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Low vision makes us more dependent on our environment.

Aging does the same as we compensate for increasing frailty and sensory loss.
Low Vision Characteristics

- Need more light
- More sensitive to glare
- Slower to adapt to different light levels
- Function better with high contrast on surfaces and tasks
Good Lighting

Light levels adequate for the visual task

Fixture design to promote glare reduction or elimination

Fixtures placement to avoid direct & reflected glare, and shadows

Light levels that are fairly uniform while still providing areas of interest
Materials

Matte finishes are better than specular surfaces such as polished granite.

Light values on walls & ceilings (LRV)

Glass doors, counter tops and free standing display cases when used should be well defined.
New entrance ○ Brooklyn Museum
Museum Interior
Value Contrast

Where vertical & horizontal surfaces meet
To show surface edges
To define handrails and public doorways
To make furniture in open spaces visible
Signage

Location

Size & contrast (reverse contrast)

Solid at floor level (no posts & ropes)

Not shadowed as one leans in to read

Auditory sign can be an option
Orientation

Floor plan organization constant from floor to floor

Circulation areas without curves or non-right angles

Waiting areas kept separate from circulation areas
Avoid Visual Busyness

Direct access to reception/information desk

Avoid large or busy patterns in flooring

Avoid corridors with alternating dark and light areas

Avoid over furnishing public spaces