

Sidewalk

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A **sidewalk** (chiefly North American English), **pavement** (British English and Philadelphia dialect), **footpath** (Australian English, Irish English, Indian English and New Zealand English) or **footway** (Engineering term) is a path for pedestrians that is situated alongside a road or formed like sidewalks that are alongside roads (such as a cement footpath through a park). They are usually constructed of concrete (particularly in the United States and Canada), asphalt, brick (particularly in Europe), stone or (increasingly) rubber[1] (http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2006-09-19-sidewalks_x.htm), are designed for pedestrian traffic and are often found running alongside a road. In the 19th century and early 20th century, sidewalks of wood were also common in some locations. They may still be found at historic beach locations and in conservation areas to protect the land beneath and around, called boardwalks. Stone slabs called *flagstones* or *flags* are often used where an attractive appearance is required, as in historic town centres. In other places, pre-cast concrete slabs (called *paving slabs* or, less correctly, *paving stones*) are used. These may be coloured or textured to resemble stone.



A pavement (UK), sidewalk (US), or footpath (AU, IE, IN).

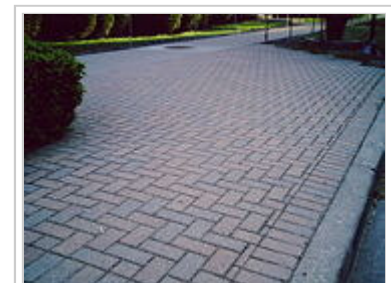
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Geography and history of sidewalks

Sidewalks are more common in modern urban areas, where they may abut the road, than in suburban areas, where they are sometimes separated from the road by a tree lawn (depending on available spaces and prior urban planning). Sidewalks are rare in rural areas. In some countries, such as the United States, sidewalks are sometimes constructed on private land that the government has obtained an easement to use. Ordinary responsibility for maintaining safe passage of the public, such as snow and ice removal, remains with the property owner.

In some jurisdictions, shared use facilities specifically designed to serve both pedestrian and bicycle traffic have been installed in place of sidewalks.



Brick pavers sidewalk in Chicago, IL (USA)

Sidewalks vary in width, depending on traffic in the area, though are generally wider than 4 ft (1.3 m). Often that is too narrow however, particularly when obstructions are placed on the sidewalk (street lights, traffic signal poles, news stands, road signs, fire hydrants etc.), or if bicycles use the facility.

Most western countries have a policy about the removal of so-called "architectural barriers" in order to reduce the difficulties for disabled people, and these policies usually reserve a great attention to sidewalks. The Americans with Disabilities Act, like other rules in other countries, requires sidewalks to have curb cuts at intersections so that sidewalks can be used by persons in wheelchairs.

See also: tactile paving

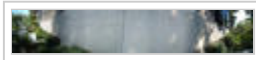
There is usually a gutter between the sidewalk and the road, and the sidewalk surface is slightly tilted to let the water flow into the gutter.

Construction of sidewalks

Sidewalks are most often made of concrete, tarmac, asphalt, brick, stone or slab. Multi-use paths are often made of asphalt or other materials that are softer than cement. While sidewalks can be made of gravel, wood, rubber, and other materials, such paths are usually not called sidewalks.

In the United States, the most common type of sidewalk (pictured) consists of a poured concrete ribbon with cross-lying strain relief grooves at intervals of ~1 m; this is intended to minimize visible damage from tectonic and temperature fluctuations, both of which can crack longer segments. However, freeze-thaw cycles in cold-weather regions, as well as tree root growth, may eventually result in damage requiring repair. Brick sidewalks are found in some urban areas, usually for aesthetic purposes.

In the United Kingdom suburban pavements are most commonly constructed of tarmac similar to a typical roadway surface. In urban or inner-city areas pavements are most commonly constructed of slabs, stone, or brick depending upon the surrounding street architecture and furniture



Panoramic shot of a concrete sidewalk in Agoura Hills, California



a rendition of Venus on a sidewalk in NYC



a sidewalk leads to Mater Dei High School in New Jersey.

See also

- Café
- Curb, Curb ramp
- Desire lines
- Public space
- Sidewalk chalk
- Portuguese pavement

External links

- Contractor Stamp Gallery (<http://www.sidewalkstamps.com/>)
- <http://www.lawalks.org>
- <http://www.peds.org>

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