



Overview Chart of the FSTAG Implementation Process

The FSTAG must be applied before initiating new construction or altering any National Forest System trail with a designed use of hiker/pedestrian. Table 4 distills the implementation process into a flow chart that provides easy reference as you work through the process. Before applying the FSTAG, you'll need to:

- Analyze existing conditions, including potential opportunities and constraints (National Environmental Policy Act analysis).
- Identify and verify the desired trail class for the trail or trail segment.
- Identify and verify the designed use of the trail or trail segment.

Table 4—Overview of the FSTAG implementation process: key steps and sequence.

Step 1: Determine applicability of the FSTAG.	Designed use ¹ = hiker/pedestrian? YES ↓	NO →	FSTAG does not apply.
	New construction or alteration? YES ↓	NO →	FSTAG does not apply.
	Trail connects to a trailhead or accessible trail? YES ↓	NO →	FSTAG does not apply.
	Proceed to step 2 (Identify presence of limiting factors)		



Because of the large format of table 4, please turn the page. ↗

Table 4—(Continued.)

<p>Step 2: Identify presence of limiting factors</p> <p>General Exception 1 (7.2.1)</p> <p>Note: Sequence for identifying limiting factors may vary and does not need to occur in the order illustrated here.</p>	<p>TRAIL GRADE exceeds 20% for 40 feet (12 meters) or more?</p>	<p>NO →</p>		<p>NO →</p>	
		<p>YES → Document length of trail that exceeds 20% and data source.</p>	<p>Does condition for departure exist?</p>	<p>YES →</p>	
	<p>SURFACE <i>not</i> firm and stable for 45 feet (14 meters) or more?</p>	<p>NO (The surface <i>is</i> firm and stable.) →</p>		<p>NO →</p>	
		<p>YES → (The surface is not firm and stable.) Document surface firm- ness and data source.</p>	<p>Does condition for departure exist?</p>	<p>YES →</p>	
	<p>MINIMUM TRAIL WIDTH less than 18 inches (457 millimeters) for 20 feet (6 meters) or more?</p>	<p>NO →</p>		<p>NO →</p>	
		<p>YES → Document minimum trail width and data source.</p>	<p>Does condition for departure exist?</p>	<p>YES →</p>	
	<p>TRAIL OBSTACLE 30 inches (762 millimeters) or higher across width of trail?</p>	<p>NO →</p>		<p>NO →</p>	
		<p>YES → Document obstacle type, dimen- sions, and data source.</p>	<p>Does condition for departure exist?</p>	<p>YES →</p>	

					FSTAG may still apply. Proceed to limiting factor for surface .
Is limiting factor more than 500 feet (152 meters) from trail terminus?	YES →				FSTAG applies between terminus and this limiting factor or prominent feature. Proceed to Step 3 (Apply Technical Provisions).
	NO →	Prominent feature present?	YES →		FSTAG applies between terminus and this limiting factor or prominent feature. Proceed to Step 3 (Apply Technical Provisions).
					FSTAG does not apply. Document applicable condition for departure.
					FSTAG may still apply. Proceed to limiting factor for minimum trail width .
Is limiting factor more than 500 feet (152 meters) from trail terminus?	YES →				FSTAG applies between terminus and this limiting factor or prominent feature. Proceed to Step 3 (Apply Technical Provisions).
	NO →	Prominent feature present?	YES →		FSTAG applies between terminus and this limiting factor or prominent feature. Proceed to Step 3 (Apply Technical Provisions).
					FSTAG does not apply. Document applicable condition for departure.
					FSTAG may still apply. Proceed to limiting factor for trail obstacle .
Is limiting factor more than 500 feet (152 meters) from trail terminus?	YES →				FSTAG applies between terminus and this limiting factor or prominent feature. Proceed to Step 3 (Apply Technical Provisions).
	NO →	Prominent feature present?	YES →		FSTAG applies between terminus and this limiting factor or prominent feature. Proceed to Step 3 (Apply Technical Provisions).
					FSTAG does not apply. Document applicable conditions for departure.
					FSTAG may still apply. Proceed to Step 3 (Apply Technical Provisions).
Is limiting factor more than 500 feet (152 meters) from trail terminus?	YES →			YES →	FSTAG applies between terminus and this limiting factor or prominent feature. Proceed to Step 3 (Apply Technical Provisions).
	NO →	Prominent feature present?			FSTAG applies between terminus and this limiting factor or prominent feature. Proceed to Step 3 (Apply Technical Provisions).
					FSTAG does not apply. Document applicable conditions for departure.

Table 4—(Continued.)

<p>Step 3: Apply technical provisions</p> <p>Technical Provisions (7.3.1 to 7.3.8)</p>	TRAIL GRADE complies with 7.3.1.1?	YES →					
		NO →	Does condition for departure exist?	YES	Deviation permitted. Measure and record length of deviation.	→	
					NO	Deviation not permitted.	→
	TRAIL CROSS SLOPE complies with 7.3.1.2?	YES →					
		NO →	Does condition for departure exist?	YES	Deviation permitted. ² Measure and record length of deviation.	→	
					NO	Deviation not permitted.	→
	RESTING INTERVAL complies with 7.3.2?	YES →					
		NO →	Does condition for departure exist?	YES	Deviation permitted. ² Measure and record length of deviation.	→	
					NO	Deviation not permitted.	→
	SURFACE complies with 7.3.3?	YES →					
		NO →	Does condition for departure exist?	YES	Deviation permitted. ² Measure and record length of deviation.	→	
					NO	Deviation not permitted.	→
	CLEAR TREAD WIDTH complies with 7.3.4?	YES →					
		NO →	Does condition for departure exist?	YES	Deviation permitted. ² Measure and record length of deviation.	→	
				NO	Deviation not permitted.	→	
PASSING SPACE complies with 7.3.5?	YES →						
	NO →	Does condition for departure exist?	YES	Deviation permitted. ² Measure and record length of deviation.	→		
				NO	Deviation not permitted.	→	

	Comply with trail grade technical provision 7.3.1.1.	
		Proceed to Step 4: calculate cumulative deviation percentage.
	Comply with trail grade technical provision 7.3.1.1.	
	Comply with trail grade technical provision 7.3.1.2.	
		Proceed to Step 4: calculate cumulative deviation percentage.
	Comply with trail grade technical provision 7.3.1.2.	
	Comply with trail grade technical provision 7.3.2.	
		Proceed to Step 4: calculate cumulative deviation percentage.
	Comply with trail grade technical provision 7.3.2.	
	Comply with trail grade technical provision 7.3.3.	
		Proceed to Step 4: calculate cumulative deviation percentage.
	Comply with trail grade technical provision 7.3.4.	
	Comply with trail grade technical provision 7.3.4.	
		Proceed to Step 4: calculate cumulative deviation percentage.
	Comply with trail grade technical provision 7.3.4.	
	Comply with trail grade technical provision 7.3.5.	
		Proceed to Step 4: calculate cumulative deviation percentage.
	Comply with trail grade technical provision 7.3.5.	
		<i>Step 3 continued</i> ↗

Table 4—(Continued.)

Step 3: Apply technical provisions Technical Provisions (7.3.1 to 7.3.8)	TREAD OBSTACLES comply with 7.3.6?	YES →					
		NO →	Does condition for departure exist?	YES	Deviation permitted. ² Measure and record length of deviation.	→	
	PROTRUDING OBJECTS comply with 7.3.7?	YES					
		NO →	Does condition for departure exist?	YES	Deviation permitted. ² Measure and record length of deviation.	→	
	OPENINGS comply with 7.3.8?	YES →					
		NO →	Does condition for departure exist?	YES	Deviation permitted. ² Measure and record length of deviation.	→	
			NO	Deviation not permitted.	→		

Step 4: Calculate cumulative deviation percentage General Exception 2 (7.1.2.2)	CUMULATIVE DEVIATION PERCENTAGE Do permitted deviations occur on less than 15% of total trail length?	YES →				Apply FSTAG technical provisions to entire trail. ³
		NO →	Is first deviation more than 152 meters (500 feet) from trail terminus?	YES →		Apply FSTAG technical provisions to segment of trail between terminus and first point of deviation. ³
				NO →	Does prominent feature exist?	YES →
		NO →			FSTAG does not apply. Document cumulative deviation percentage.	

If you have questions about applying any of the above information, please contact your region's recreation accessibility coordinator. Current contact information

is available on the Forest Service's internal computer network at: <http://fsweb.mtdc.wo.fs.fed.us/toolbox/acc/documents/coord.htm>.

Comply with trail grade technical provision 7.3.6.		
		Proceed to Step 4: calculate cumulative deviation percentage.
Comply with trail grade technical provision 7.3.6.		
Comply with trail grade technical provision 7.3.7.		
		Proceed to Step 4: calculate cumulative deviation percentage.
Comply with trail grade technical provision 7.3.7.		
Comply with trail grade technical provision 7.3.8.		
		Proceed to Step 4: calculate cumulative deviation percentage.
Comply with trail grade technical provision 7.3.8.		

¹Excerpt from *Forest Service Trail Fundamentals* (www.fs.fed.us/r3/measures/Inventory/Trails.htm). Definition of designed use: “The intended use that *controls* the desired geometric design of the trail, and determines the subsequent maintenance parameters for the trail.... Of the actively Managed Uses that the trail is developed and managed for, the Designed Use is the *single design driver* that determines the technical specifications for the trail.”

Excerpt from Access Board *Recommendations for Accessibility Guidelines: Outdoor Developed Areas, Final Report* (page 11): “*The accessibility guidelines for trails apply to those which are designed and constructed for pedestrian use.* These guidelines are not applicable to trails primarily designed and constructed for recreational use by equestrians, mountain bicyclists, snowmobile users, or off-highway vehicle users, even if pedestrians may occasionally use the same trails. People use these categories of trails by means of transportation other than foot travel or personal mobility device. Design and constructed requirements for equestrians, mountain bikes, OHVs, and snowmobiles are based on the specific requirements for the intended mode of transportation. For the safety of trail users, pedestrian use may not always be permitted on these trails in order to minimize conflicts between motorized and non-motorized recreation. These trails do not preclude use by a person with a disability since it is planned that all trail users would be using the one or more alternative means of transportation for which the trail is designed and constructed. The design and construction of pedestrian trails without consideration of these proposed guidelines, by contrast, could present barriers to some trail users because the intended use is by foot or personal mobility device. For these reasons, the committee intentionally limited the application of the proposed guidelines to pedestrian use trails.

It should be noted that the definition used in these proposed guidelines is not the only definition used by trail designers and manager. Rather, it was developed to specifically define the scope of these guidelines.”

²If at any point during Step 3 the occurrence of one or more conditions of departure result in permitted deviations from technical provisions on more than 15 percent of the trail length, proceed to Step 4.

³Refer to the FSTAG for detailed instructions, definitions, and technical provisions 7.0 through 7.3.