

Accessibility Check Seiser Alm

29.08. – 31.08.2025



Presentation

My name is Hans-Peter Schraffl. I have been using a wheelchair since 2017 and am paralyzed from the chest down. In 2020, I completed training as an Accessibility Scout to help eliminate architectural barriers in society.



Accessibility Assessment – Seiser Alm (August 29 – August 31, 2025)

In the Dolomites Region Seiser Alm, selected attractions were checked for accessibility, with a particular focus on wheelchair users. The assessment primarily considered access points, the availability of restrooms for people with disabilities, and parking options in the immediate vicinity.

Day 1 – Kastelruth & Surroundings

The first visit was to the experiential farm “Rund ums Schaf” at Gunzhof. Parking is easily available. Over slightly uneven ground, visitors can reach the sheep barn, where experienced wheelchair users can observe the animals independently. Participating in wool-related activities is also possible from a wheelchair. However, there is no wheelchair-accessible restroom.



Next, the Marinzen Lift was tested. There is a designated wheelchair parking space in front of the valley station. The wheelchair-accessible restroom is located in the basement; however, the elevator is currently out of service, so access is only possible via a ramp. Unfortunately, there are no signs, grab bars, or coat hooks.

Boarding the gondola, however, is easy, and the lift staff proved to be extremely helpful. At the Marinzen Alm, there is also a restroom in the basement, as well as a ground-level restroom opposite the mountain station. The latter is not marked as accessible. Moreover, the restroom is not very wheelchair-friendly due to a narrow, heavy door and a threshold. Grab bars are missing, and the emergency pull cord has been shortened so much that it is practically unusable. On the positive side, the area can be easily explored with a wheelchair using a handbike attachment.



In the center of Kastelruth, strolling without a handbike attachment is easy, as the pavement is largely wheelchair-friendly. A public wheelchair-accessible restroom is located at the kindergarten behind the church square. The church is easily accessible via a ramp. The Costume Museum and Tourist Information can be reached by elevator; however, the electric door opener is out of service. Apart from that, the museum itself is well accessible for wheelchair users.



Day 2 – Lake Völser Weiher & Seiser Alm Nature Park Center

At Lake Völser Weiher, wheelchair users have access to free parking. The circuit around Huber Weiher and Lake Völser Weiher can be navigated using a handbike attachment. The paths are in good condition.



A wheelchair-accessible restroom is located in the swimming hut, with the key available at the bar. Access to the water is via a pool lift, which was locked at the time of the visit. It is unclear whether the seat is swivelable, which would make transfers easier. Since the seat is positioned directly over the lake, there is a risk of slipping when transferring into the water, requiring assistance from accompanying persons. The lift may be more suitable for seniors who have difficulty using the steps to enter or exit the lake.



The information center at the Nature Park House is easily accessible, and the information boards are clearly readable from a wheelchair.



The Schlern-Rosengarten Nature Park House has a wheelchair parking space directly in front of the entrance. Access is via a ramp, and the exhibition is located on the lower floor, reachable by elevator. Some exhibits are less easily visible, but the majority are very accessible. The wheelchair-accessible restroom is particularly noteworthy, being excellently equipped. For optimal accessibility, the emergency pull cord should reach the floor; as it stands, a person lying on the ground would not be able to reach it.



Day 3 – Seiser Alm & Sanon Hut

The cable car ride to Seiser Alm is straightforward. The parking garage has designated spaces, and wheelchair users can ride the cable car free of charge. The wheelchair-accessible restroom in the basement is very well equipped, and the lift staff were extremely helpful.



Once at the top, there are numerous opportunities for hiking. Wide forest paths allow for easy mobility, and with a handbike attachment, there are no restrictions. The Sanon Hut has a wheelchair-accessible restroom, accessible via a basement ramp. The bus ride on Seiser Alm also went smoothly: boarding is via a ramp, and the driver provided active assistance.



Conclusion

Seiser Alm offers numerous opportunities for wheelchair users. The wide variety of hikes allows visitors to choose routes according to their ability and preference. In Kastelruth, Seis, and Völs, wheelchair users can also move around relatively freely. However, there is room for improvement in the equipment and signage of restrooms, as well as in the functionality of certain accessibility aids.