

## ACCESSIBILITY FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES AT HOTELS AND PLACES OF LODGING

### Places of Lodging

In conjunction with the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the U.S. Department of Justice has implemented new regulations that impact the hospitality industry. These regulations reference the new 2010 Standards which mandate a higher level of accessibility than the 1994 Standards and cover a number of new elements and numerous changes to existing elements.

### Examples of New Requirements for Alteration and New Construction

- Swimming pools will require lifts or sloped entry.
- Saunas and steam rooms will require accessible doors, turning space and benches.
- Playgrounds will require accessible routes and playground equipment.
- Accessible single user toilet rooms will require more space for transfers.
- Exercise machines will need to be on an accessible route surrounded by clear floor space.
- The dispersion of accessible guest rooms will change the number of rooms requiring mobility and communication features.
- Assembly areas will require dispersion of accessible seating with lines of sight over standing spectators.
- Clothes washers and dryers, kitchens and vending machines will need to be accessible.



### When to Implement the New ADA Requirements

The new 2010 Standards go into effect **March 15, 2012**. On that date, all new construction, alterations and barrier removal must comply with the 2010 Standards. In the period between September 15, 2010 and March 15, 2012, covered entities may choose between the 1991 Standards and the 2010 Standards. Covered entities that should have complied with the 1991 Standards during any previous construction or alteration, but have not done so by March 15, 2012, must comply with the 2010 Standards. Elements in existing facilities that comply with the 1991 Standards as of March 15, 2012, will be protected by a “**safe harbor**.” These elements will not need to be changed until they are altered. Public accommodations that have existing elements that are covered for the first time under the 2010 Standards (like swimming pools) will have to comply with the 2010 Standards for those elements to the extent it is readily achievable.

### Hospitality Initiative & BluePath

The Mid-Atlantic ADA Center and the Northwest ADA Center, together with the National Network of ADA Centers, have recently developed two online resources to promote accessibility and opportunity for people with disabilities within the hospitality industry. Visit [www.adahospitality.org](http://www.adahospitality.org) for training materials, industry updates on the ADA, market research, customer service and disability etiquette, and information on how to reach out to the disability market. Visit [www.blue-path.com](http://www.blue-path.com) to download an updated accessibility checklist for hotels, watch instructive videos, and learn how the BluePath business directory provides a marketing opportunity for places of lodging.

## New Online Reservation Requirements for Places of Lodging

To ensure that people with disabilities are able to reserve specific accessible guest rooms that match their individual needs, the new regulations require that places of lodging update their existing reservations systems and have them in place by March 15, 2012.

- Persons with disabilities must be able to reserve accessible guest rooms during the same hours and in the same method as other guests.
- Places of lodging must identify and describe accessible features of the hotel and guest rooms in enough detail that a person with a disability can independently assess whether the facility will meet his or her needs.
- Accessible guest rooms must be held back until all other rooms of that type have been reserved.
- Reserved accessible guest rooms must be removed from the reservation system to eliminate double booking.
- Specific rooms reserved by individuals with disabilities must be guaranteed and held, regardless of whether rooms are held for others.

## Distribution and Category of Accessible Rooms

Guests with disabilities must be provided a range of options equivalent to the options available to other guests. Hotels are required to provide an accessible room within each category, such as Standard King, Double Suite, etc.

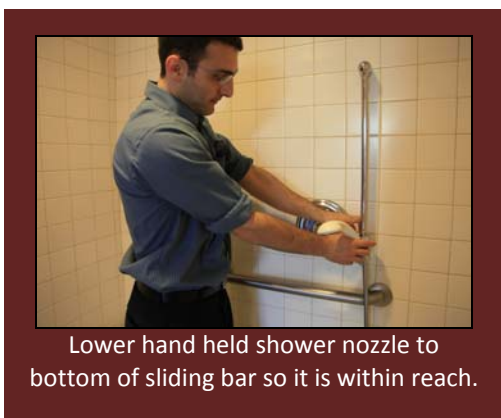
## Hospitality Tips

There are many hotel services that need to be accessed by guests. The following examples for hospitality may be areas where your hotel needs to develop resources or train staff:

- Place hangers, iron, and extra pillows and blankets on the lowered closet bar, shelf, or counter in accessible rooms.
- Arrange furniture so it does not block access to power outlets, temperature controls or curtain handles.
- Offer room service menu, hotel directory and TV channel guide in accessible formats.
- Provide a tour and orientation of lobby and guest room for guests who are blind or have low vision.



Shower amenities can be marked with tape or a rubberband so that guests with vision impairments have a tactile way to differentiate between the shampoo, conditioner or lotion.



Lower hand held shower nozzle to bottom of sliding bar so it is within reach.

- Keep the lowered check-in counter clear and available for use. Do not use for brochures, computer, etc.
- Train staff to know the location of ADA room kits and how to operate the devices.
- Ensure hotel policy welcomes service dogs, without charges or conditions, to all areas of the hotel.



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*Alternate formats available upon request.*