

ACCESSIBILITY FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES AT HOTELS AND PLACES OF LODGING

Places of Lodging

U.S. Department of Justice implemented revised regulations that have impacted the hospitality industry. These regulations reference the *2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design*, which mandate a higher level of accessibility than the 1994 Standards, and which include a number of new elements and numerous changes to existing elements.

Examples of New Requirements for Alteration and New Construction

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

Revised ADA Requirements

The *2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design* went into effect on **March 15, 2012**. By that date, all new construction, alterations and barrier removal must be in compliance with the 2010 Standards. Covered entities that should have complied with the 1991 Standards during any previous construction or alteration, but had 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, are 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 pools) must make those elements accessible, to an extent that is readily achievable.

Swimming Pools, Wading Pools, and Spas

The Department of Justice extended the date for compliance for the requirements related to the provision of accessible entry and exit to existing swimming pools, wading pools, and spas to **January 31, 2013**. The 2010 Standards require that newly constructed or altered swimming pools, wading pools, and spas have an accessible way for people with disabilities to enter and exit the pool. The Standards also provide technical specifications for when a means of entry is accessible. If it is not readily achievable to install a fixed lift, installation may not be necessary. A business may use other means to achieve compliance, such as using a non-fixed lift.

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 revised regulations require that places of lodging will have updated 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 their needs.
- Accessible guest rooms must be held back until all other rooms of that type have been reserved.
- Reserved accessible 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 are examples of ways to make your guests' stay more accessible:

- Place hangers, iron, and extra pillows and blankets on the lowered closet bar, shelf, or counter in accessible rooms.
- Shower amenities can be marked with tape or a rubber band 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.
- 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.
- 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.

About Our Organization

Northwest ADA Center provides technical assistance, information, and training regarding the Americans with Disabilities Act. Information is

provided from the regional office in Washington State and state anchors in Alaska, Idaho, and Oregon. Specialists are available to answer specific questions pertaining to all titles of the ADA and accessibility of the built environment. Training staff offer presentations to businesses, organizations, schools, people with disabilities, and the general public.

Northwest ADA Center

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