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Accessible Areas of Assembly

Among other things, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) ensures access to the built environment for people with disabilities. The ADA Standards establish design requirements for the construction and alteration of facilities subject to the law. These enforceable standards apply to places of public accommodation, commercial facilities, and state and local government facilities. Areas of assembly include, but are not limited to, convention centers, museums, theaters, concert halls, arts and performing arts centers, stadiums, lecture halls, galleries, other places of exhibition or entertainment.

This document highlights the two specific areas where the standards changed from the 1991 to the update of the 2010 standards. To review the entire revised regulations in their entirety with guidance, please see these two definitive resources:

U.S. Department of Justice at www.ada.gov/regs2010/ADAREgs2010.htm

U.S. Access Board at www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/ada-standards-doj.cfm

I. Policies, Procedures, and Practices:

A. Policy – Definitions

- a) Service animal – is any dog individually trained to do work or perform tasks for an individual with a disability, and that disability may be physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability. (miniature horses are also permitted)
- b) Mobility devices – includes not only traditional devices such as wheelchairs and scooters, but also any power-driven mobility device used by a person with a mobility disability including, but not limited to, Segways.

B. Procedure – mobility device

All such mobility devices must be permitted in any area that pedestrians use unless:

- It would result in a fundamental alteration (head clearance for a Segway user),
- It is a direct threat,
- It creates a safety hazard.

C. Practices – Ticketing

- 1) Tickets for accessible seating must be available for purchase during the same times and in the same ways as the purchase of other tickets;
- 2) Accessible seating must be identified to the same level of specificity as other seats on maps, seating charts, and brochures, and, if asked, the location of all available accessible seating must be identified;
- 3) Tickets for accessible seating must be available at all price levels;
- 4) A wheelchair user may purchase up to three companion seats that are contiguous and in the same row so long as such seats are available and all patrons may purchase that number of seats;
- 5) Accessible seating may only be released when all other tickets are sold out or all other tickets in a specific price range or area are sold out;

- 6) Individuals with disabilities must be able to transfer their tickets to others under the same terms and conditions as other ticket holders;
- 7) Venues must honor tickets for non-accessible locations purchased on the secondary market (i.e. tickets that are re-sold by the original purchaser) by a wheelchair user so long as comparable accessible seats are available at the time the ticket is presented;
- 8) Venues may not ask for proof of disability or ask what the individual’s specific disability is, but may ask if the individual is purchasing tickets for someone with a mobility disability. The venue may investigate if it has reason to believe fraud has been committed.

These are the highlights of the revised standard. Please visit [this ADA.GOV Ticket Sales](#) for the complete description and explanation.

II. Physical Access and Barrier Removal:

A. Physical Access –

- a) 2010 Standards of Accessible Design became effective on March 12, 2012 and must be applied to all new construction, renovation, modifications, alterations, and barrier removal.
- b) Assembly Area Standards specifically:
 - 1) dimension of single wheelchair space must be 36 inches wide, and two adjacent wheelchair spaces need only be 33 inches wide.
 - 2) Wheelchair spaces must be on an accessible route but may not overlap another wheelchair space or the circulation path (cannot stick out into aisle).
 - 3) Wheelchair spaces must be dispersed vertically, horizontally, to all levels, and around the performance area (if seating encircles the stage.)
 - 4) Wheelchair spaces must provide spectators with choices of seating locations and viewing angles that are equivalent to, or better than, seating for others.
 - 5) In stadium-style movie theaters, wheelchair spaces must be located within the rear 60% of seats in the auditorium.
 - 6) Wheelchair spaces should not be on temporary or moveable platforms.
- c) Box Seats – Not fewer than 20% have wheelchair spaces.
- d) Lawn seating – A wheelchair accessible path of travel provided to the lawn seating and any exterior overflow seating.
- e) Companion Seats – at least one provided for each wheelchair space that is equivalent in size quality, and comfort to the other seats in the area.
- f) Designated aisle seats – 5% of all aisle seats must be a designated aisle seat, identified as such, located close to accessible routes, and have either a folding or retractable arm rest.
- g) Please refer to chart to calculate how many wheelchair spaces must be provided:

Table 221.2.1.1 Number of Wheelchair Spaces in Assembly Areas

Number of Seats	Minimum Number of Required Wheelchair Spaces
4 to 25	1
26 to 50	2
51 to 150	4
151 to 300	5
301 to 500	6
501 to 5000	6, plus 1 for each 150, or fraction thereof, between 501 through 5000
5001 and over	36, plus 1 for each 200, or fraction thereof, over 5000

B. Barrier Removal:

A. Assistive Listening Devices –

- a) ALS is required where audible communication is integral to the use of the space, but are not required where audio amplification is not provided.
- b) Hearing Aid Compatibility – the ALS receiver must be compatible with an induction neck loop that interfaces with the telecoil in an individual’s personal hearing aid or cochlear implant to the ratio of 25% of the receivers.
- c) Technical Requirements – standard monojack receivers must be 1/8 inch.
- d) Sound – 110 dB minimum sound pressure level. 118 dB maximum with a dynamic volume control range of 50 dB. 18 dB minimum for signal to noise ratio for internally generated noise. Peak clipping must not exceed 18 dB of clipping relative to peaks of speech.
- e) Please refer to chart for required number of receivers.

Capacity of Seating in Assembly Area	Minimum Number of Required Receivers	Minimum Number of Required Receivers Required to be Hearing-aid Compatible
50 or less	2	2
51 to 200	2, plus 1 per 25 seats over 50 seats or fraction thereof	2
201 to 500	2, plus 1 per 25 seats over 50 seats or fraction thereof	1 per 4 receivers or fraction thereof
501 to 1000	20, plus 1 per 33 seats over 500 seats or fraction thereof	1 per 4 receivers or fraction thereof
1001 to 2000	35, plus 1 per 50 seats over 1000 seat or fraction thereof	1 per 4 receivers or fraction thereof
2001 and over	55 plus 1 per 100 seats over 2000 seats or fraction thereof	1 per 4 receivers or fraction thereof

Reduction of Accessible Elements:

The revised 2010 regulations allow for the reduction of accessible elements in a facility.

If the 2010 Standards reduce the technical requirements or the number of required accessible elements below the number required by the 1991 Standards, the technical requirements or the number of accessible elements in a facility subject to this part may be reduced in accordance with the requirements of the 2010 Standards. (CFR 35.133)



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