



Access for All: Ensuring Dive Hotel Accessibility for those with Mobility Impairments

More than 54 millions Americans have a disability. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was enacted in 1990 with the goal of integrating people with disabilities into all aspects of life. Many of those with disabilities have physical impairments that impede their mobility. Creating accessible environments allows those with mobility impairments to go beyond physical barriers and become fully integrated into all areas of life. Shriners Hospital for Children, Chicago and the Diveheart Foundation have collaborated to offer youth with physical disabilities the opportunity to “fly without wings” and learn the adventurous sport of scuba diving. Adventure travel trips for these youth with disabilities are an invaluable part of their rehabilitation, teaching them to scuba dive while learning many important life lessons. In order for these youth as well as others with disabilities to enjoy the sport of scuba, an accessible environment is necessary. Creating such an environment does not have to be expensive. The following are some basic guidelines for ensuring accessibility and some resources that can assist in the process of becoming fully accessible. Creating an environment that is universally useable to all, benefits you and your customers with disabilities. Join us as we work together to make the world a more accessible place!

Parking:

1. Accessible parking close to entrance
2. Visible and easily understood signage (post or wall mounted sign with symbol of accessibility)
3. Each accessible space has an adjacent access aisle to allow for transfers
4. Curb less walkway to main entrance

Exterior Route & Building Entrance/Lobby:

1. Walkways are a minimum of 36 inches wide
2. Ramps at least 36 inches wide and are graded for each 1 inch of rise, 1 foot of ramp length
3. Lobby doors allow at least a 32 inch clear passage width
4. Door hardware (if not fully automated doors) is usable with one hand
5. Registration counters have a lowered portion no more than 36 inches high

Interior Routes:

1. Hallways and corridors are free of any steps or abrupt vertical level changes
2. Doors allow 32 inch clear passage width
3. Door hardware is usable with one hand (various options including lever handles)
4. There are no protruding objects in interior hallways or other pedestrian routes
5. If more than 2 stories, a full size passenger elevator serves each level



Guestrooms & Bathrooms:

1. Entry doors, connecting doors, and all interior doors allow 32 inch clear passage width
2. Door hardware is usable with one hand (various options including lever handles)
3. The pull side of each door has 18 inches of clear floor space on the latch side
4. The security latch or bolt is mounted no higher than 48 inches above the floor
5. There is a 36 inch wide route between and around beds
6. Drapery wands, controls for HVAC, lamps are placed within 54 inches of the floor (side approach)
7. Toilet is centered 18 inches from adjacent side wall
8. Toilet has a horizontal grab bar along adjacent side wall at least 42 inches long, mounted 33-36 inches from floor
9. Wash basin is no more than 34 inches high with 29 inch or greater clearance under front edge
10. Hot water pipes are insulated to protect against contact with skin
11. Clear floor space in bathroom allows 60 inch diameter circle
12. Towel rack are placed within 54 inches of the floor (side approach)
13. Tub/shower faucet controls are positioned for access prior to transferring and easily operable
14. Tub transfer bench is available for guest or roll-in shower
15. Horizontal grab bars exist at foot of tub (24+ inches long) and head of tub (12+ inches long)
16. There is an adjustable height shower wand with 60 inch long hose

Creating a barrier free environment is an ongoing process. Involving experts, particularly individuals with disabilities, is essential. There are numerous resources available and many local disability organizations are excellent sources for information. Here are a few resources to get you started:

- ADA Checklist for New Lodging Facilities available at www.ada.gov
- The Center for Universal Design at www.design.ncsu.edu
- Disability Etiquette (booklet) at www.unitedspinal.org
- Accessibility Guides: Disability and Health at www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/dh/accessibilityguides.htm
- For further information about Shriners Hospital for Children, Chicago and their collaboration with the Diveheart Foundation contact Sara J. Klaas, Director; Spinal Cord Injury Service at sklaas@shrinenet.org