

Facilitator — October/November 2015



From the Inside Out

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Ensuring Accessibility Are your restaurants ADA compliant?

Ever since The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, restaurants have been constantly under pressure to ensure they are ADA compliant. The act was long overdue and was designed to make all public facilities accessible to everyone. It cost our industry a ton of capital for all the required changes and updates, but it was well worth it. Before ADA, potential customers who wished to spend their dollars at our establishments were unable due to accessibility.

The details of the entire ADA act are obviously too great to list in this article, and it would take dozens of Facilitator issues to cover it all. I'll cover four main areas in this article: parking, entrances, dining areas and restrooms. The fall seems to be the time of the year when facility managers tour their restaurants for capital and repair and maintenance requirements for the following year. This may be a good time to quickly check each facility for ADA compliance.

Parking

- There must be one accessible parking space for every 25 spots.
- Accessible spaces must be at least 8 feet wide.
- Spaces must be as level as possible with a slope of less than 2 percent.
- One in eight accessible spaces needs an access aisle of at least 8 feet wide for van accessibility.
- All accessibility signage must be installed.
- At least one travel route must be available that is accessible for the parking spot(s), public street or transportation stop.
- The route of travel must be at least 36 inches wide, smooth with no bumps and/or holes and breaks.
- If curbs are present, there must be a ramp constructed that is at least 36 inches wide, not counting the sloped sides.
- Ramp construction must have a 1:12 slope (less the 2 percent) and a landing area of at least 60 inches.
- If the ramp is longer than 6 feet, it must have handrails on each side that are 34 to 36 inches in height.

Entrances

- If stairs are present to the entrance, a ramp, lift or other accessible entrance must be provided.
- Single door entrances require a minimum open door width of 32 inches between the frames.
- Double door entrances must have at least one door with the 32 inches minimum width.
- Beveled edges on the bottom of the door frame must be $\frac{3}{4}$ inches or less.
- All door mats must have a maximum height of $\frac{1}{2}$ inch.
- Door handle maximum height is 48 inches.
- At least 18 inches of clear wall space must be present when a person pulls on the door to enter or exit.
- All persons should be able to open the door with a closed fist.
- If doors have closers, they must take three seconds to close, at a minimum.

Dining Areas

- All protruding objects (signs, phones, coat hooks, etc.) must have a minimum headroom clearance of 80 inches.
- For wheelchair frontal approach to shelves, the lowest shelf must be at least 15 inches off the floor for proper toe space. The top shelf cannot be higher than 48 inches above finished floor (AFF). All shelves must be mounted between 15 and 48 inches.
- For side approach on utensil/condiment counters, the maximum height is 34 inches AFF and maximum reach is 24 inches.
- Cabinetry for trash containers and/or dirty tray racks for placing dirty dishes can be no higher than 34 inches AFF.

- Checkout counters can be no higher than 36 inches or, at a minimum, have a portion of the counter length that is no higher.
- Dining room aisles have to maintain a minimum width of 36 inches.
- Tabletop height is to be between 28 to 34 inches AFF.
- At least 5 percent of total seats (or at least one), at a minimum, require knee space of at least 27 inches AFF, by 30 inches wide and 19 inches deep.
- For non—fixed seating, the tendency is to move the tables and chairs, which sometimes creates a problem for wheelchairs. Due to this, some state ADA codes require aisle widths up to 66 inches between tables.
- For accessible seats, ensure the lighting levels are adequate for proper visual requirements.

Restrooms

- Ensure there is proper accessibility signage for restrooms.
- Accessible toilet stalls must have a clear floor space (CFS) of 48 by 56 inches minimum for wheelchairs to make a 180- degree turn. A 60-inch diameter CFS is preferred.
- Height of accessible toilet must be 17 to 19 inches.
- Grab bars behind the water closet must be 33 to 36 inches AFF with a minimum 36 inches width.
- Side grab bars must be 33 to 36 inches AFF with a minimum width of 42 inches.
- The flush mechanism maximum height is 44 inches AFF.
- At least one urinal must be accessible with a maximum height of 17 inches.
- CFS of 30 inches wide by 48 inches deep is required in front of accessible urinals.
- Sinks and countertops maximum height is 34 inches AFF.
- AFF height of 29 inches required to underside of cabinet.
- Minimum depth of 8 inches required from front edge of sink to beginning edge of any plumbing.
- Minimum depth of 17 inches needed underneath plumbing for wheelchairs.
- All plumbing underneath sink(s) must be insulated or protected.
- All faucets and/or other controls must be operable using one hand.

Obviously, there are numerous additional compliance specifications, but this provides a quick overview of the large impact items to look for when checking restaurants for compliance. The ADA has played a crucial role in enabling everyone to enjoy a meal away from home, and it's up to us to ensure compliance.

I'm always looking for feedback. Feel free to contact me at jeff@rfmaonline.com or call at (972) 805-0905, ext. 3.

Jeff Dover's facilities career started in 1985. He has been employed by several major chains (Ponderosa, Steak & Ale, Bennigan's, TGI Friday's, Fuddrucker's and recently Five Guys Burgers and Fries). His technical education enabled him to take the lead as Energy Manager, Facilities Manager and Director of Facilities at the various brands.