TIPS FOR IMPROVING OFFICE ACCESSIBILITY FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

This publication aids staff in identifying common barriers to access in office spaces open to the public.

OFFICE AND ROOM ENTRANCES

All doors must have an opening that is at least 32" wide (at the narrowest point below the opening hardware) when opened to 90 degrees.

If any door must be opened by visitors, ensure that:

- maneuvering clearance is available on each side of the door for wheelchairs and other mobility devices;
- the space on each side of the door is clear of movable objects such as chairs, trash cans, plants, etc.;
- the door opening hardware can be operated without grasping, pinching, or twisting of the wrist;
- the doors should not close too quickly (it should take no less than five seconds for the door to close); and
- the interior doors require less than 5 pounds of pressure to open.

ACCESSIBLE PATH OF TRAVEL

The accessible path of travel, i.e. the route that a visitor would take to access public spaces in the office, such as the path from the reception area to the meeting room, should be at least 36" wide.

RECEPTION / WAITING AREA

Sign-in sheets must be positioned at an accessible height for persons using a wheelchair or other mobility device. If visitors sign in at a counter, then a portion of the counter surface must be at least 36" long and no higher than 36" above the floor. Alternatively, sign-in sheets can be placed on clipboards that wheelchair users can move and sign from their laps.

Floor mat and rug edges must be secured to the floor or sturdy enough that the edges will not be lifted by wheelchair wheels or other mobility devices.

VISITOR-OPERATED CONTROLS

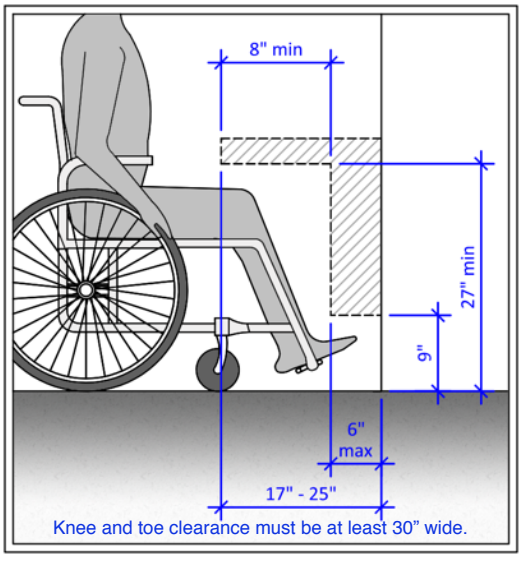
Visitor-operated controls are furnishings that require personal operation such as literature racks, hand sanitizers, and water coolers. Offices with these items must ensure that:

- visitor-operated controls are placed no lower than 15" above the floor and no higher than 48" above the floor;
- there is a 30" wide by 48" long clear floor space in front of visitor-operated controls; and
- visitor-operated controls can be operated with one hand without grasping, pinching, or twisting of the wrist.

KNEE AND TOE CLEARANCE UNDER DESKS AND MEETING TABLES

There must be appropriate knee and toe clearance for wheelchair users under meeting tables and desks that are designed with slide-under space for chairs.

This diagram indicates some of the required measurements. For all requirements, see: https://www.ada.gov/regs2010/2010ADAStandards/2010ADAstandards.htm#pgfId-1006220



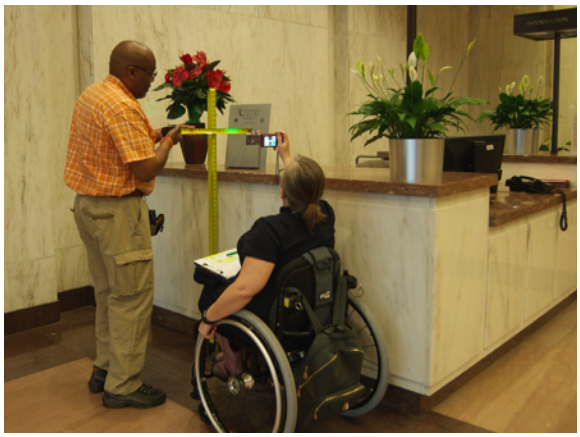
For questions about accommodations, such as wheelchairs, contact the Office of Congressional Accessibility Services (OCAS) at 202.224.4048 TTY: 202.224.4049

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Communication with the public must be equally effective for persons with communications disabilities as it is for persons without such disabilities. Accordingly, offices must provide auxiliary aids and services to an individual with a disability when such measures are needed to provide effective communication. The appropriate type of aid or service will be determined on a case by case basis. Some examples of such aids and services include:

- Providing sign-language interpreting and/or assisted listening devices during meetings with persons with hearing impairments, or when delivering a speech or other public presentation.
- Ensuring that office documents, including any required forms like intake questionnaires or releases, are available in alternative formats for persons with visual impairments, such as large print or braille. Electronic forms can be made accessible by providing screen-reading or speech recognition software.
- Captioning videos or other audio material on Member websites. Websites should also provide an audio option for the visually-impaired.
- Ensuring that devices provided for in-office constituent use such as telephones, computers, and tablets are accessible for persons with disabilities. Different forms of hardware and software may be used to make these devices accessible, such as TTY machines for telephones, screen magnification software, and equipment for alternative modes of operation like trackballs or joysticks.

For more information, see the OOC's publication Compliance@Work: Accommodating constituents with disabilities



pictured left: sign-in sheets and literature racks are within reach of a wheelchair

pictured below: literature rack placed at an accessible height

Photo credits: Anne Knife Photography, U.S. Department of Labor

Compliance with the standards referenced in this publication does not necessarily ensure compliance with all standards established under the Americans with Disabilities Act.