U.S. Department of Justice

Civil Rights Division

Disability Rights Section

Accessible Stadiums

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires new stadiums to be accessible to

people with disabilities so they, their families, and friends can enjoy equal access to

entertainment, recreation, and leisure.

This document highlights key accessibility requirements of the ADA that apply to new

stadiums. Other accessibility requirements, such as those for parking lots, entrances,

and rest rooms, also apply but these are the same as for other buildings. Compliance

with all the accessibility requirements is essential to provide a basic level of access

for people with disabilities.

To obtain a copy of the requirements for new stadiums and other facilities, contact the

Department of Justice ADA Information Line at (800) 514-0301 voice or (800)

514-0383 TDD.

Key Features of Accessible Stadiums

Seating

Wheelchair accessible seating is required. At least one percent of the seating must

be wheelchair seating locations. Each wheelchair seating location is an open, level

space that accommodates one person using a wheelchair and has a smooth, stable, and

slip-resistant surface.

Accessible seating must be an integral part of the seating plan so that people using

wheelchairs are not isolated from other spectators or their friends or family.

A companion seat must be provided next to each wheelchair seating location. The

companion seat is a conventional seat that accommodates a friend or companion.

Wheelchair seating locations must be provided in all areas including sky boxes and

specialty areas.

Removable or folding seats can be provided in wheelchair seating locations for use

by persons who do not use wheelchairs so the facility does not lose revenue when not

all wheelchair seating locations are ticketed to persons who use wheelchairs.

Whenever more than 300 seats are provided, wheelchair seating locations must be

provided in more than one location. This is known as dispersed seating. Wheelchair

seating locations must be dispersed throughout all seating areas and provide a choice of

admission prices and views comparable to those for the general public.

Wheelchair seating locations must be on an accessible route that provides access

from parking and transportation areas and that connects to all public areas, including

concessions, restaurants, rest rooms, public telephones, and exits.

Wheelchair seating locations must provide lines of sight comparable to those

provided to other spectators. In stadiums where spectators can be expected to stand

during the show or event (for example, football, baseball, basketball games, or rock

concerts), all or substantially all of the wheelchair seating locations must provide a line

of sight over standing spectators. A comparable line of sight, as illustrated in the figure

below, allows a person using a wheelchair to see the playing surface between the heads

and over the shoulders of the persons standing in the row immediately in front and over

the heads of the persons standing two rows in front.

Line drawing showing a side view of people seated in assembly-type seating

and a person using a wheelchair seated in a wheelchair seating location behind

the spectators. A dashed line illustrates that line of sight for the spectator

using the wheelchair and other lines show the line of sight for seated and

standing spectators. All spectators can see between the heads of the person in

the row directly in front of them and over the heads of the people two rows in

front.

Figure Showing Comparable Line of Sight for Wheelchair Seating Location

In addition to wheelchair seating locations, at least one percent of all fixed seats in

all seating areas must be aisle seats with no armrest, or with a removable or folding

armrest, on the aisle side. These seats accommodate people who have a mobility

disability but who wish to use a seat that is not a wheelchair seating location.

An accessible route must connect the wheelchair seating locations with the

stage(s), performing areas, arena or stadium floor, dressing or locker rooms, and

other spaces used by performers.

Concessions

All concessions, including food service areas, restaurants, and souvenir stands, must

be accessible. For example, lowered counters must be provided where goods are

provided and where cash registers are located. Condiments and self-serve food items

must be provided within reach of a person using a wheelchair.

Access to playing fields, lockers, and spaces used by players and performers

An accessible route must provide access to all public and common use areas

including the playing field, locker rooms, dugouts, stages, swimming pools, and

warm-up areas. The accessible route provides access for the public, employees, and

athletes using the facility.

Assistive Listening Systems

When audible communications are integral to the use of a stadium, assistive listening

systems are required for people who are hard of hearing. These systems amplify

sound and deliver it to a special receiver that is worn by the spectator, or to the

spectators hearing aid, depending on the type of system that is used.

The stadium must provide receivers for the assistive listening system. The

number of available receivers must equal four percent of the total number of seats.

Signs must be provided to notify spectators of the availability of receivers for the

assistive listening system.

Other Accessible Features

Accessible Parking Spaces

When parking spaces are provided, accessible parking spaces for cars and

accessible parking spaces for vans are required. Accessible parking spaces must be

the closest parking spaces to the accessible entrances and must be on an accessible route

to the entrances.

Accessible Drop-Off and Pick-Up Areas

If passenger drop-off areas are provided, they must be accessible and an accessible

route must connect each accessible drop-off area with the accessible entrance(s). Curb

ramps must be provided if the drop-off area is next to a curb.

Accessible Entrances

At least fifty percent of the entrances must be accessible. Those that are not

accessible must have signs that direct the public to the nearest accessible entrance.

Accessible entrances that have turnstiles must provide an accessible gate or door.

Rest Rooms

Each public and common use (including employee) rest room must be accessible.

This includes rest rooms in work areas and rest rooms located in sky boxes and suites.

Public Telephones

Each bank of public telephones must have one or more wheelchair accessible

telephones and these and other public telephones must have the ability to amplify

the volume at the handset. A sign must identify telephones equipped with

amplification.

At least one public TDD (telecommunications device for persons who are deaf or

who have speech impairments) must be provided. Signs must identify the location of

the TDD and provide direction from other telephone banks.

For each bank of public telephones with three or more units, at least one telephone

must be equipped with a shelf and electrical outlet to permit a person to use a

portable TDD.

Water Coolers or Drinking Fountains

Drinking fountains must accommodate people who use wheelchairs and people

who stand but have difficulty bending or stooping. Half of the units must be

wheelchair accessible and the others must accommodate standing users.

Visual Alarms

Where audible fire alarms or emergency notification is provided, flashing lights are

required in public and common use areas, including toilet and bath rooms, locker

rooms, and along public corridors.

Signs

Signs that identify permanent rooms and spaces, such as those identifying rest rooms,

exits or room numbers, must have Braille and raised letters or numbers so that they may

be read visually or tactually (by feeling the characters with oneþs fingers). They must

also meet specific requirements for mounting location, color contrast, and non-glare

surface. Signs that provide direction to, or information, about functional spaces must

only comply with requirements for character proportion, character height, and finish and

contrast between the characters and background.

ADA Information Line

For more information about the ADAþs design and construction requirements, contact

the Department of Justiceþs toll-free ADA Information Line at 800-514-0301 (Voice)

and 800- 514-0383 (TDD). Detailed requirements can be found in the ADA

Standards for Accessible Design. The ADA Standards and other useful technical

assistance documents are available from the ADA Information Li