

The Business of Accessible Travel: Opportunities & Benefits

Lee County VCB – June 23, 2021



WheelchairTravel.org
— OPEN YOUR WORLD —





Today's Itinerary

1. Introduction
2. Understanding the Disabled Traveler
3. Marketing Accessible Travel Products & Services
4. Key Concepts of Hotel Accessibility
5. Accessibility Beyond the ADA
6. Laying Out the Welcome Mat; Turning Disabled Visitors into Confident Tourists



Section 1



Introduction





ABOUT

JOHN MORRIS



825
Airplane Flights



1,000,000+
Miles Flown



107
Airports



ACCESS
PROFESSIONAL
TRAVEL ADDICT
BLOGGER
AVIATION GEEK



January 2014

Florida State 34, Auburn 31
Pasadena, California

A close-up photograph of a man wearing a red baseball cap and dark sunglasses, smiling at the camera. He is wearing a red jacket and a yellow lanyard with a badge. The background is a large, crowded stadium filled with spectators, many wearing red clothing. A sign in the background reads "GO NOLES".

January 2015

Florida State vs. **Oregon**
Pasadena, California



Our Mission

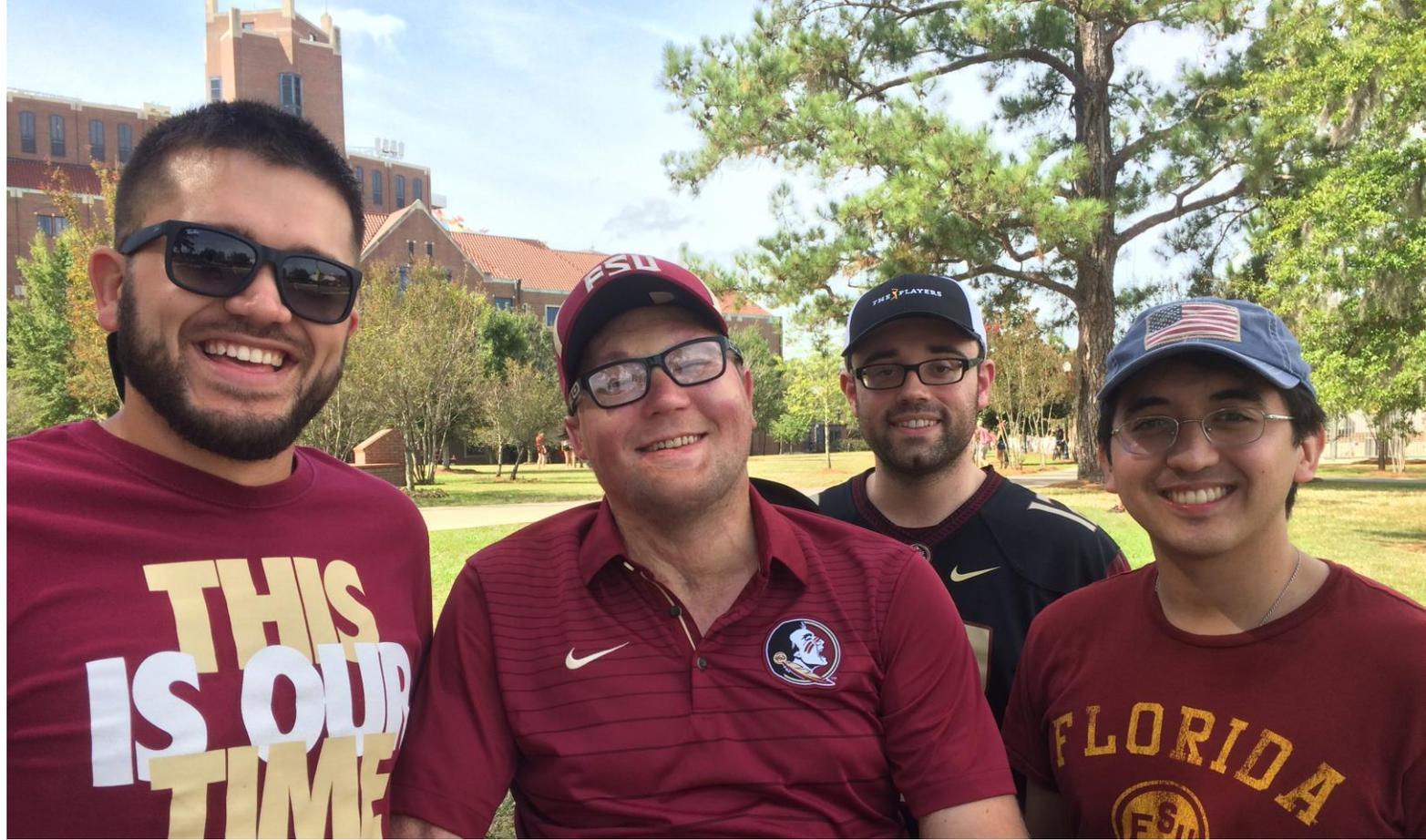
Society often tells persons with disabilities what they cannot do. *WheelchairTravel.org* will help you to do what they say you cannot do. This website gives you the information and tools to open your world. Whether you want to go to New York, Paris or Bangkok, we've got you covered. Read our destination reports for information on the wheelchair accessibility of a city's public transportation, taxis, attractions, sidewalks, airports, hotels and more.

If you are a wheelchair user or person with a disability who likes to travel, share your experiences with us! Our collective experiences, knowledge and tips contribute to making the world more accessible to all. Contact us to share what you know, or post comments on our destination reports. Let us share the world with one another!



Featured Destinations









T — TRAVEL INSPIRATION

America is Re-opening: 10 Wheelchair Accessible Places to Visit Once You're Fully Vaccinated

by John Morris

America is reopening, and travel demand is heating up. These are the 10 wheelchair accessible cities you should visit this summer.

READ MORE





Travel is one of the latest frontiers in the march toward accessibility, and more destinations are becoming wheelchair-friendly every year! I've scoured the globe to discover the **world's most wheelchair accessible cities**, and I share what I've learned in these wheelchair travel guides. As the United Nations has prioritized the development of accessible infrastructure, more destinations have opened themselves to travelers with disabilities.

Travel guides for the cities listed below include information on the accessibility of attractions & sights, adapted hotel rooms (with roll-in showers), airports and disability assistance, public transportation, wheelchair taxis (with ramps), sidewalks, footpaths, curb ramps and more. Use these guides to plan your next wheelchair accessible vacation!

- WORLD REGIONS**
- 1 [Wheelchair Accessible Cities in the United States & Canada](#)
 - 2 [Wheelchair Accessible Cities in Africa & the Middle East](#)
 - 3 [Wheelchair Accessible Cities in Asia](#)
 - 4 [Wheelchair Accessible Cities in Europe](#)
 - 5 [Wheelchair Accessible Cities in South America](#)

Wheelchair Accessible Cities in the United States & Canada



Atlanta, GA

This state capital, the birthplace of Martin Luther King, Jr., was once host to the Summer Olympics.



Baltimore, MD

Fort McHenry, where Francis Scott Key wrote "The Star-Spangled Banner," sits at the edge of the city's Inner Harbor.



Boston, MA

Home to historic sites dating to the Revolutionary War Era, Boston is improving in wheelchair accessibility.



Home > Frequently Asked Questions About Accessible Travel

Frequently Asked Questions About Accessible Travel

The following guides provide the core information you need to confidently travel with a wheelchair. Take an in-depth look at the accessibility of airplanes and trains, and learn what to expect when booking hotel rooms and traveling to another country.



Wheelchair Users' Guide to Accessible Air Travel

Everything you need to know about air travel with a wheelchair, from booking to baggage claim.



Wheelchair Users' Guide to Accessible Hotels

Learn about the ADA requirements for hotel room accessibility and be better prepared to find a hotel that meets your needs.



Wheelchair Users' Guide to Traveling Abroad

12 articles filled with information and tips to make you an international travel pro.



The WheelchairTravel.org Mission

- **Empower disabled people** with information, resources and tools to promote independence, freedom of movement and the confidence to explore
- Shine light into the darkness by revealing opportunities that exist in a world perceived to be inaccessible
- Invite destinations & travel providers to learn from the experiences of disabled visitors and customers
- Foster community among disabled travelers
- Encourage and contribute to the development of an inclusive world that is shared with everyone

Section 2



**Who are the consumers of
accessible travel?**





Two Travelers Who Experience the World in Different Ways



AGE: 22

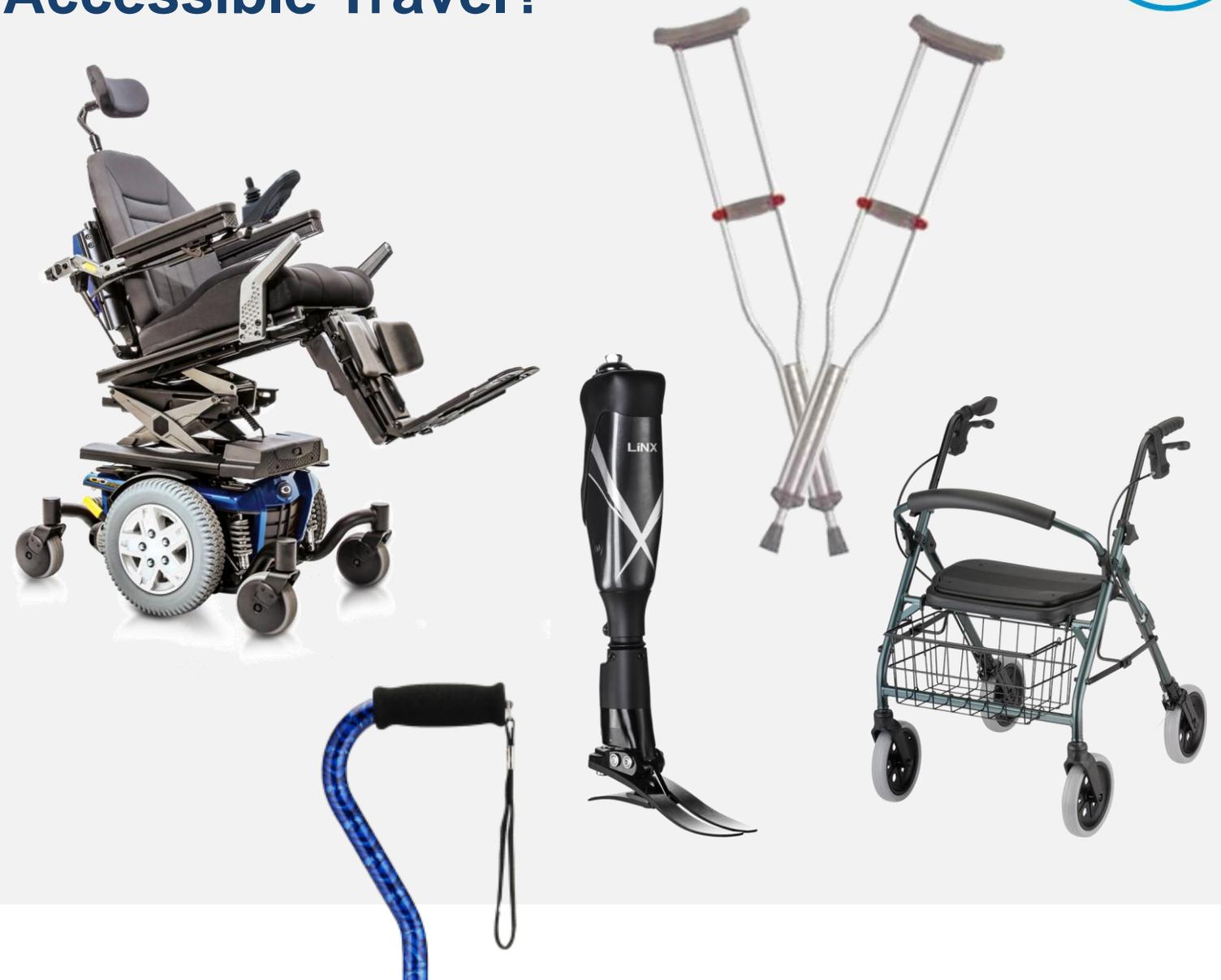


AGE: 31



Who Benefits From Accessible Travel?

Accessibility & universal design opens the world to people with a wide range of physical & intellectual disabilities.





John



Ed



Stephen



Adolf

5 Travelers Who Require Accessibility



Ashley



Six Types of Disability

1. Mobility (serious difficulty walking or climbing stairs)
2. Cognition (serious difficulty concentrating, remembering, or making decisions)
3. Independent living (difficulty doing errands alone)
4. Hearing (serious difficulty hearing)
5. Vision (serious difficulty seeing)
6. Self-care (difficulty dressing or bathing)

Section 3



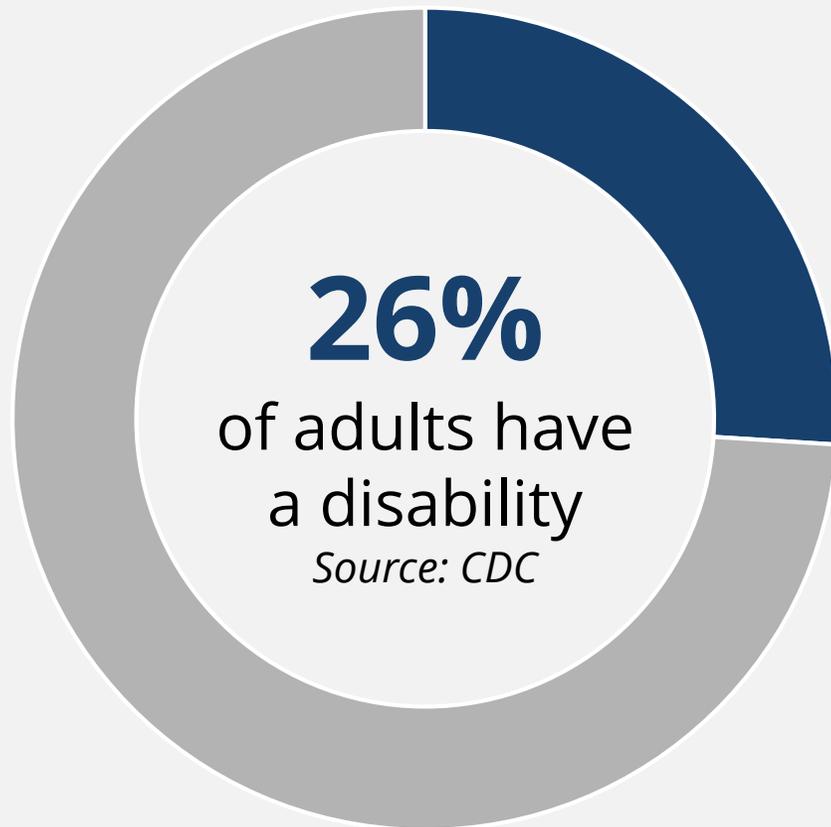
Marketing accessible travel products & services



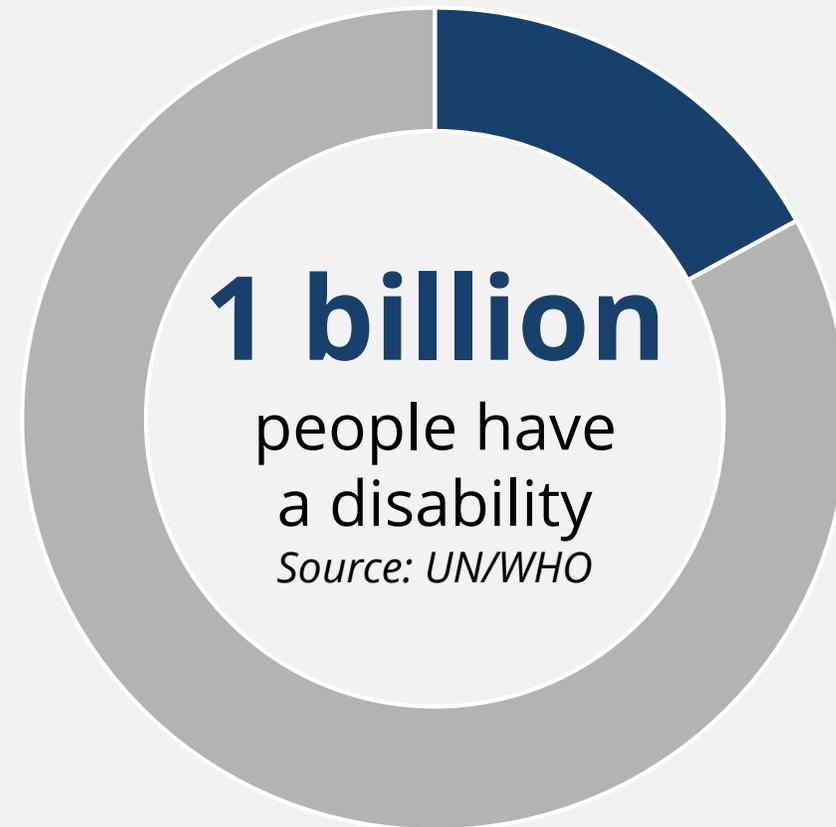


Prevalence of Disability

United States



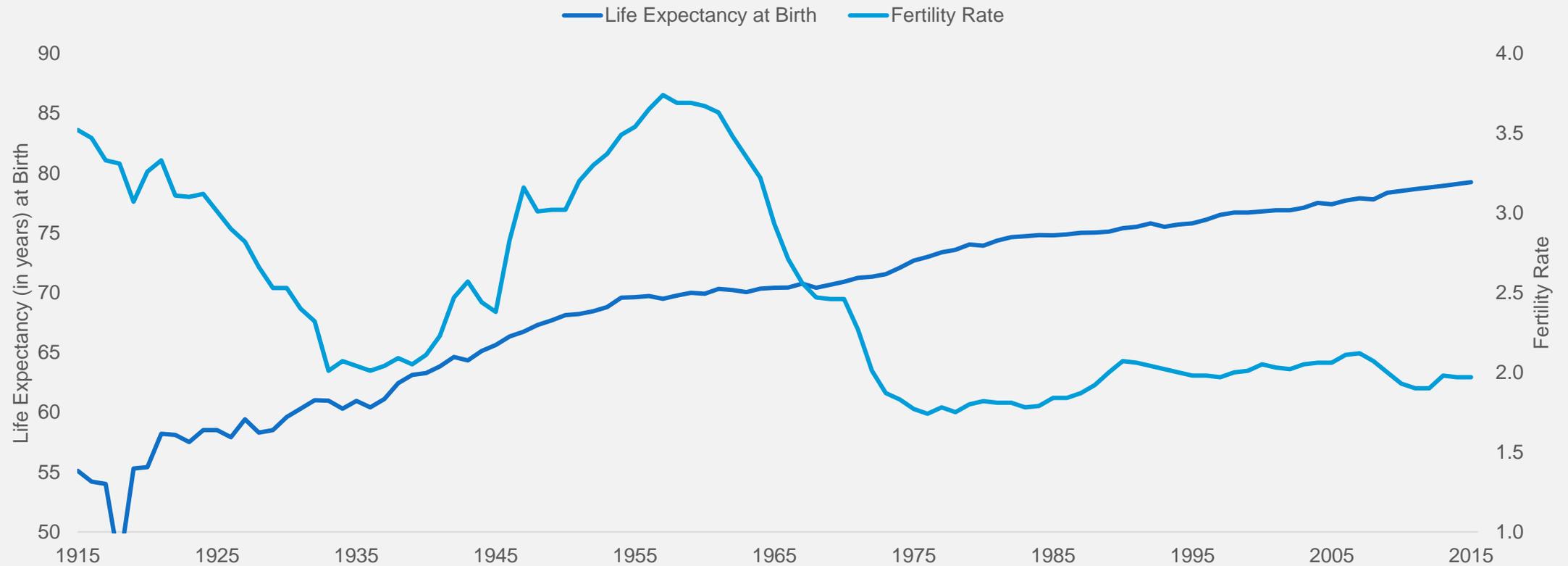
The World





Signs of an Aging Population

United States

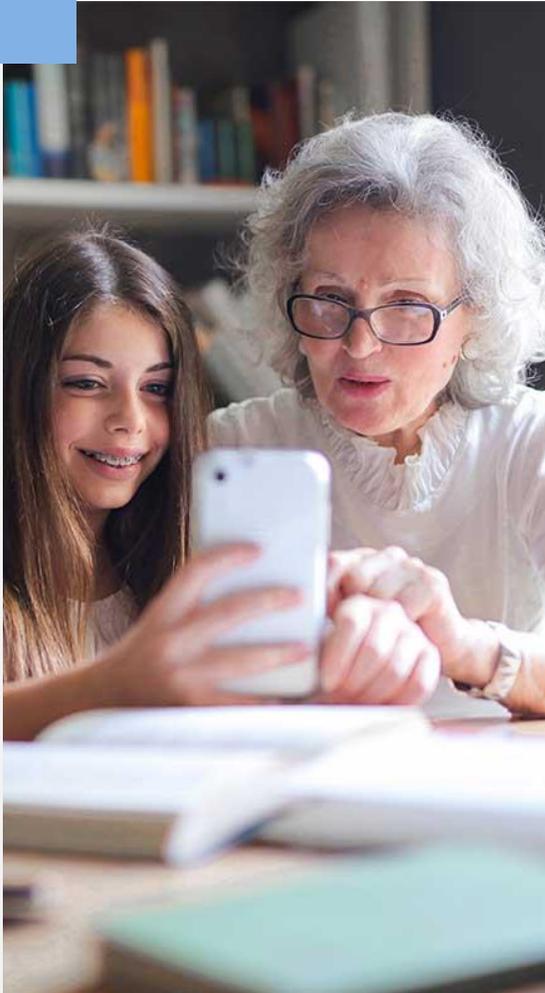


Source: World Population Prospects, June 2019



“Found Money” as Travel Allowance? Research on Accessible Travel Spending

- Baby Boomers stand to inherit \$11 trillion USD through 2030.
- David Baxter (Agewave): Spending on “vacations with their adult kids or with their grandchildren.”
- Open Doors Organization: Disabled travelers from U.S. spend \$29.35 billion USD annually on accessible travel.





Frequency of Disabled Travel (WheelchairTravel.org Accessible Travel Study 2020)

- 90% take at least one leisure trip per year; 39% travel 3 or more times per year.
- Of those who travel at least once a year, they spend an average of 12.4 nights in hotels.
- 87% of disabled people travel with at least one other person.
- Once disabled people travel, they continue!





Key Points About the Accessible Travel Market

- There are more than 1 BILLION disabled people on Earth.
- As we grow older, live longer and have fewer children – a greater share of population will require accessibility.
- Disabled people want to travel, have the money to pay for it, and prefer to travel with friends & family.
- Accessible travel demand is expected to grow substantially in the post-COVID environment.
- The world is not yet as accessible as it needs to be, but we can adapt it to better serve our changing populations.

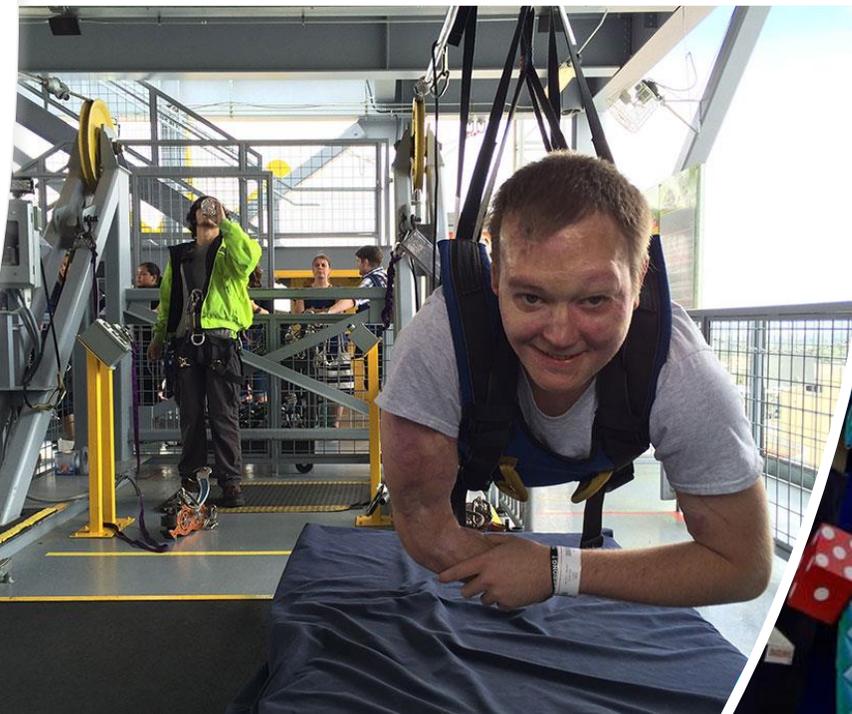


“If you build it, they will come”



Trending Towards Accessibility, Even in Unexpected Places

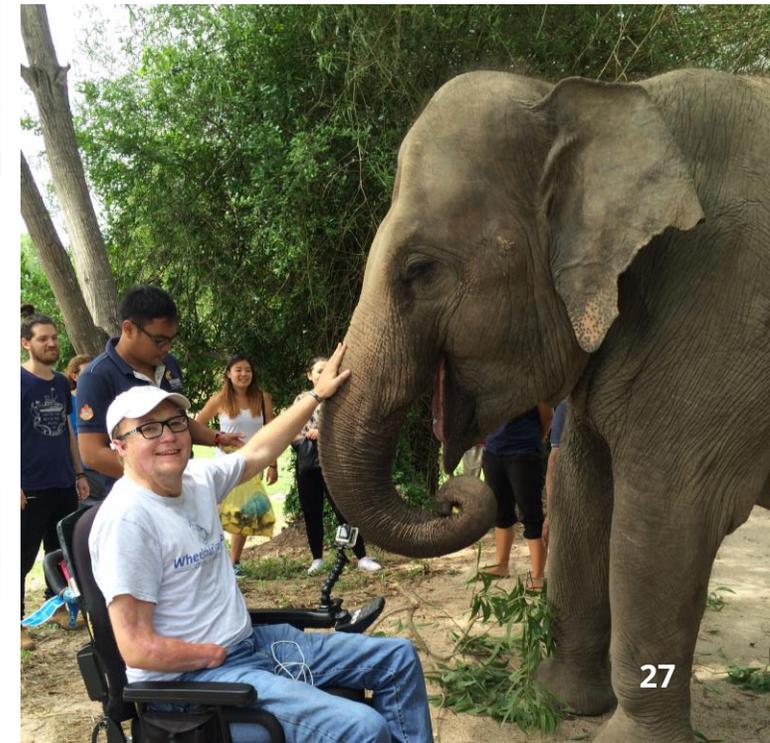
SlotZilla ZOOM Line
Las Vegas



Trending Towards Accessibility, Even in Unexpected Places

Mobilituk
Phnom Penh, Cambodia

Property of JOHN MORRIS/WheelchairTravel.org.



Trending Towards Accessibility, Even in Unexpected Places

GoAfrica Safaris
Kenya





LAKE NAKURU NP, KENYA

Trending Towards Accessibility, Even in Unexpected Places

Rio2Fly
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil





The 7 P's – Principles of (Accessible) Marketing

1. **Product** – Is the product or service attractive to disabled people? Does it meet their needs?
2. **Price** – What is the true cost of accessibility?
3. **Place** – Is the sales channel accessible?
4. **Promotion** – How is the product advertised and to whom?
5. **People** – Are team members prepared to answer questions about accessibility?
6. **Process** – Is the sales & delivery process efficient or cumbersome?
7. **Physical Evidence** – How do we reassure customers of accessibility?



1. Product

- Will disabled people enjoy the same benefits of the product or service as nondisabled people?
- Has the product been designed to be accessible & inclusive to the extent feasible?
- Are competing products or services more accessible?





2. Price

- For disabled people, the “price” is more than the cost in dollars
- What additional costs in time, convenience or money will disabled customers face?
- Do customers feel as though the product’s value is equal to what they paid?
- What did disabled customers sacrifice relative to nondisabled peers?





3. Place

- Are disabled people able to make purchases in the same manner as nondisabled customers?
- Is the company website compliant with the WCAG and accessible to screen reader users?
- Does the business provide relevant information about physical accessibility (i.e. hotel rooms, restaurants, transportation providers)





4. Promotion

- Do advertisements provide disabled customers with relevant information about the product or service?
- Are ads, pamphlets, marketing materials inclusive of disabled people?
- Does the company have a strategy for reaching out to disabled customers?





5. People

- Do employees know anything about the accessibility of the product or service?
- Can the company's representatives provide answers to customer questions throughout the journey?
- Are employees sensitive to the needs of disabled people and respectful?
- Are the people trustworthy?





6. Process

- Is it easy for disabled customers to transact with the business, or was the process a struggle?
- How quickly was the company able to convert the sale?
- What is the customer's level of confidence in the accessibility of what they have purchased?





7. Physical Evidence

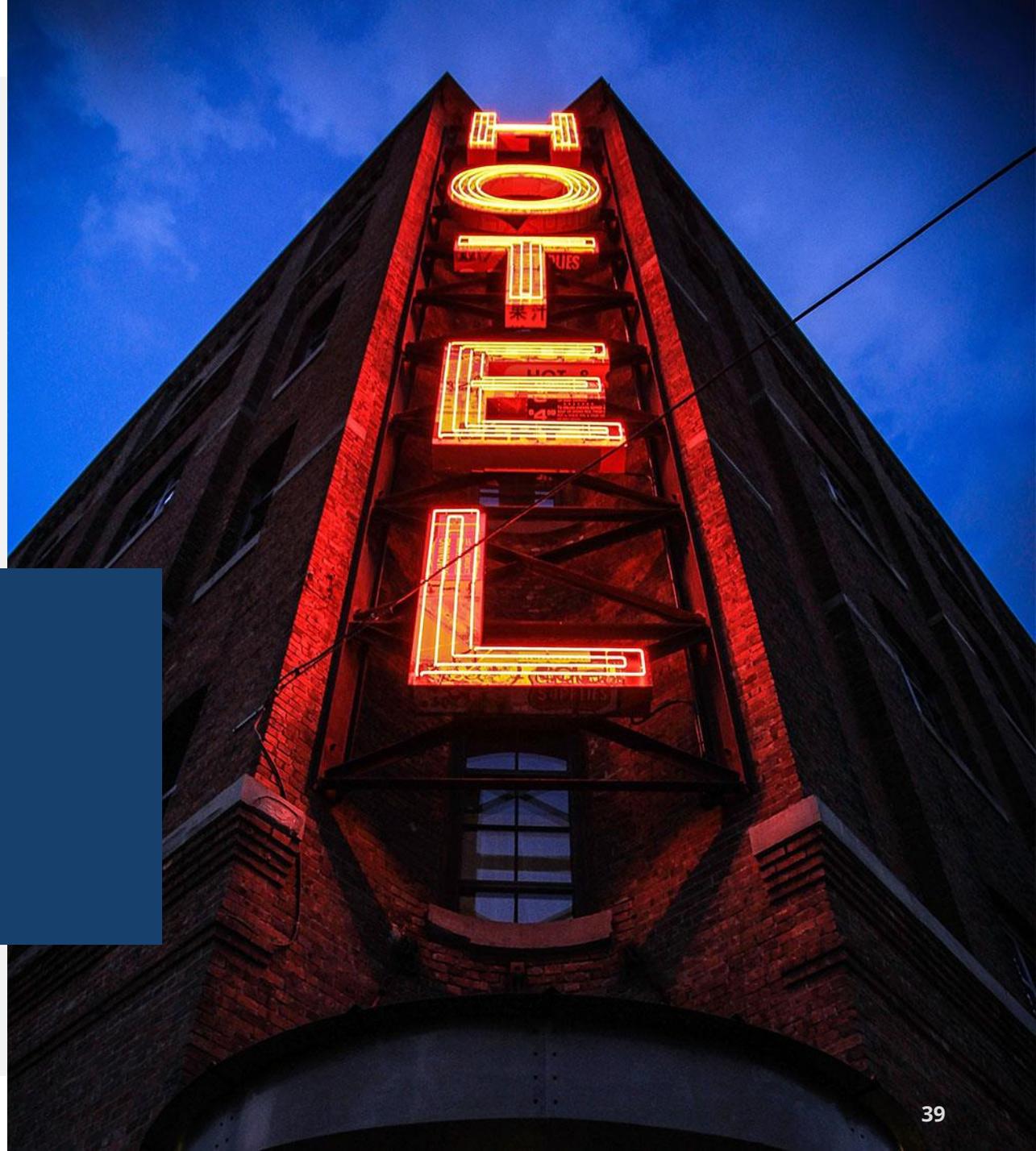
- Have disabled people been provided with enough information to make a decision?
- What is the company's (or industry's) reputation in serving disabled customers?
- Claims like "100% ADA Compliant" are a red flag for many disabled people



Section 4



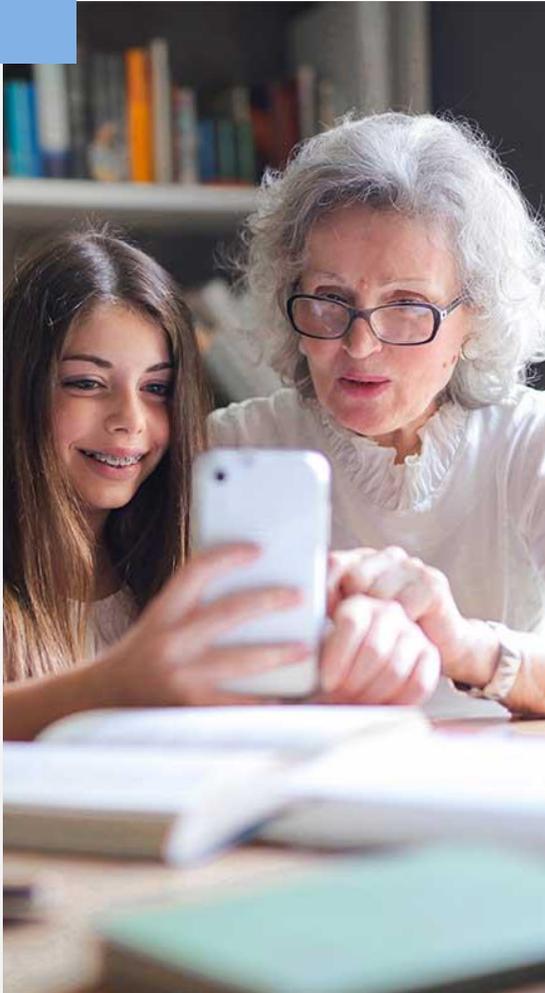
Key concepts of accessibility in hotels & accommodations





Blueprint for Hotel Accessibility (in the United States)

- Types & Distribution of ADA Guest Rooms
- ADA Accessible Bathrooms
- Accessibility of Guest Room Features
- Hotel Transportation & Shuttle Services
- “Reasonable Accommodations”
- ADA Room Reservations
- Quiz: Common ADA Compliance Issues





Types & Distribution of ADA Guest Rooms

- A hotel's size dictates the number and types of accessible guest rooms that are required, based on the following chart:

Hotel Size (Rooms)	ADA Tubs	Roll-in Showers	Rooms w/ Communication Features
1	1	0	0
2 to 25	1	0	2
26 to 50	2	0	4
51 to 75	3	1	7
76 to 100	4	1	9
101 to 150	5	2	12
151 to 200	6	2	14
201 to 300	7	3	17
301 to 400	8	4	20
401 to 500	9	4	22
501 to 1,000	2% of total	1% of total	5% of total
1,001 and over	20, plus 1 per 100	10, plus 1 per 100	50, plus 3 per 100



Dispersion of ADA Guest Rooms

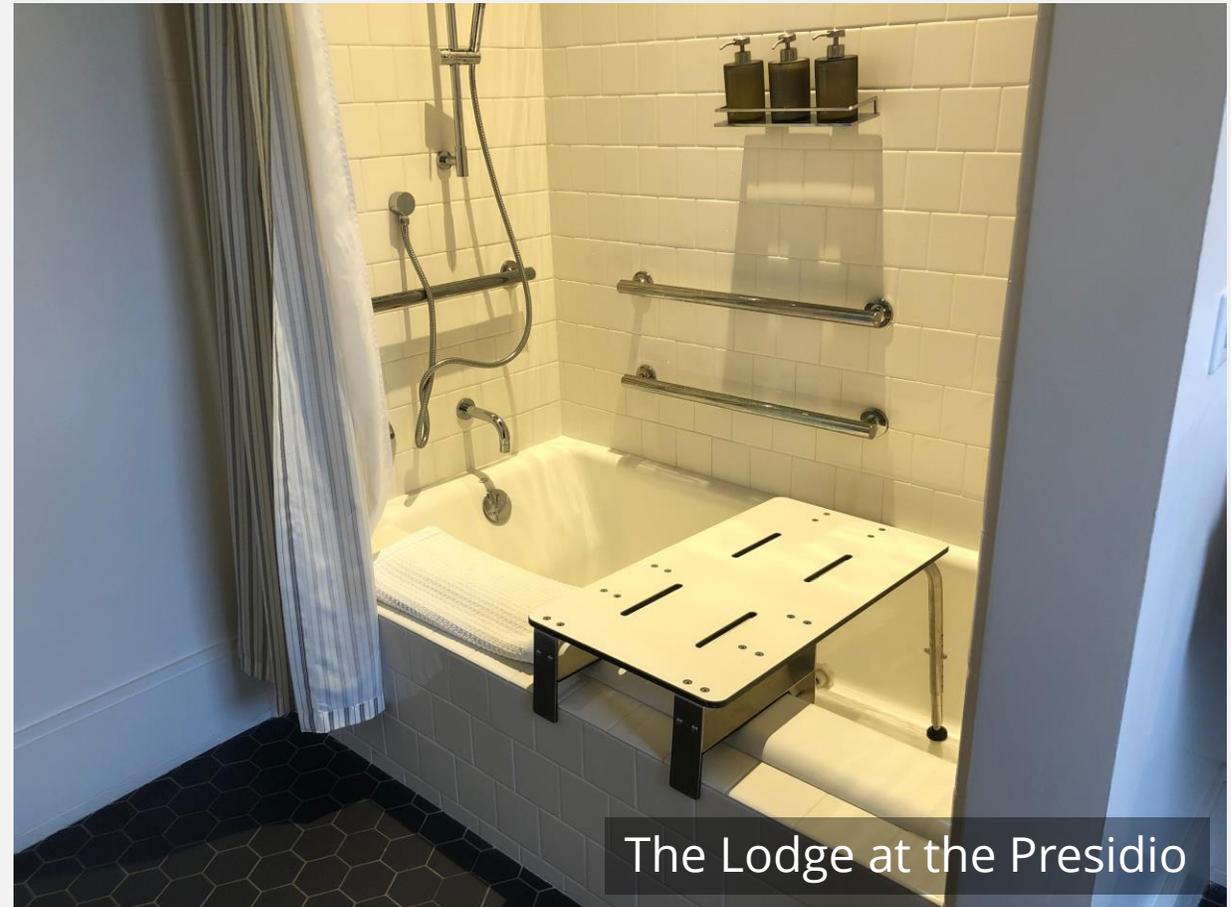
- Guest rooms must be spread across various classes of rooms to offer adequate choice
- If complete dispersion is not possible, ADA mandates the following priority:
 1. Guest room type (standard, junior suite, presidential suite)
 2. Number of beds
 3. Amenities





ADA Bathtubs

- Height-adjustable handheld showerhead & grab bar at foot of tub (control wall)
- Parallel grab bars on back wall (length of tub)
- Grab bar at head of tub
- In-tub seat or seat at head end of tub that “shall be mounted securely and shall not slip during use.”



The Lodge at the Presidio



ADA Roll-in Showers

- Roll-in showers in ADA hotel rooms must comply with Fig. 57(a) or (b)
- Folding shower seat mounted to side wall
- Grab bars on back (long) and side wall
- Height-adjustable handheld shower spray unit & water controls adjacent to (and within reach of) the seat
- Level entry

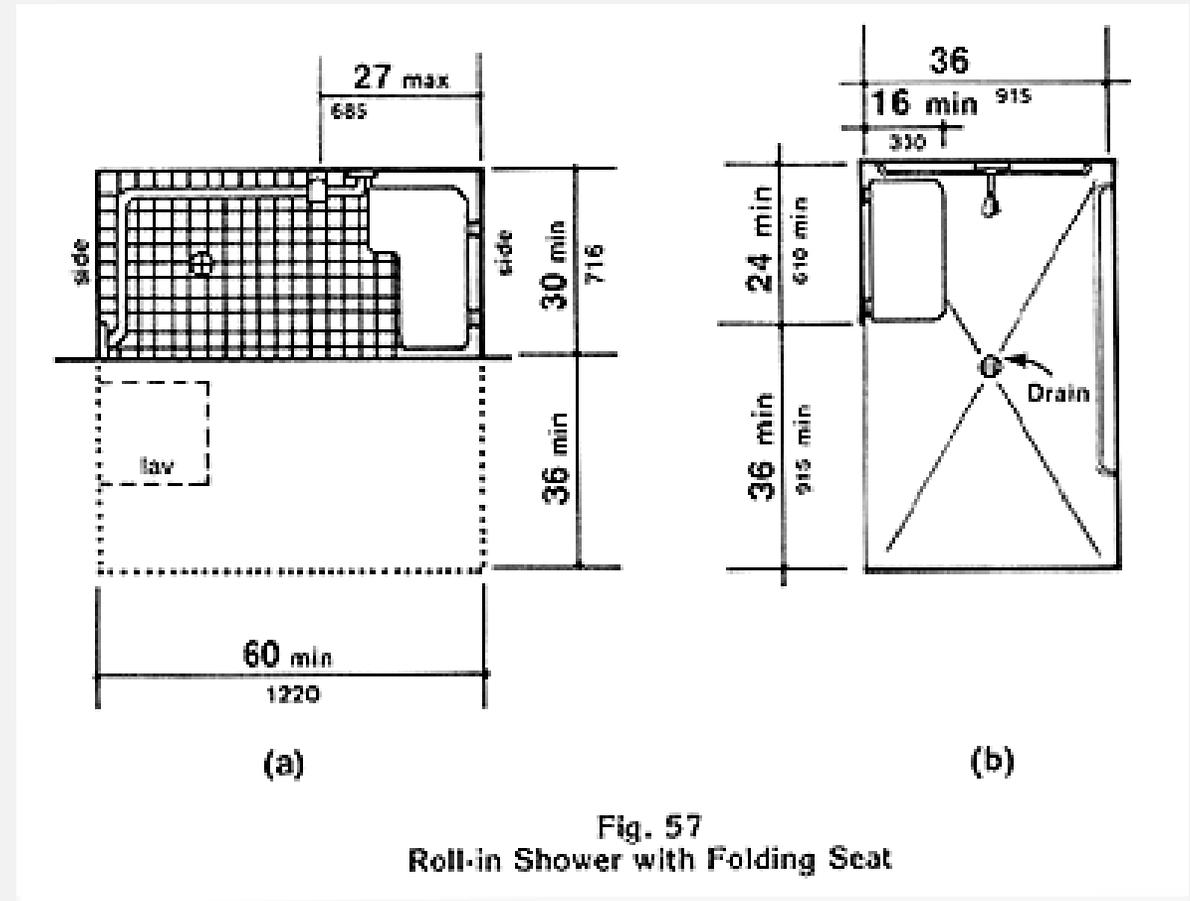
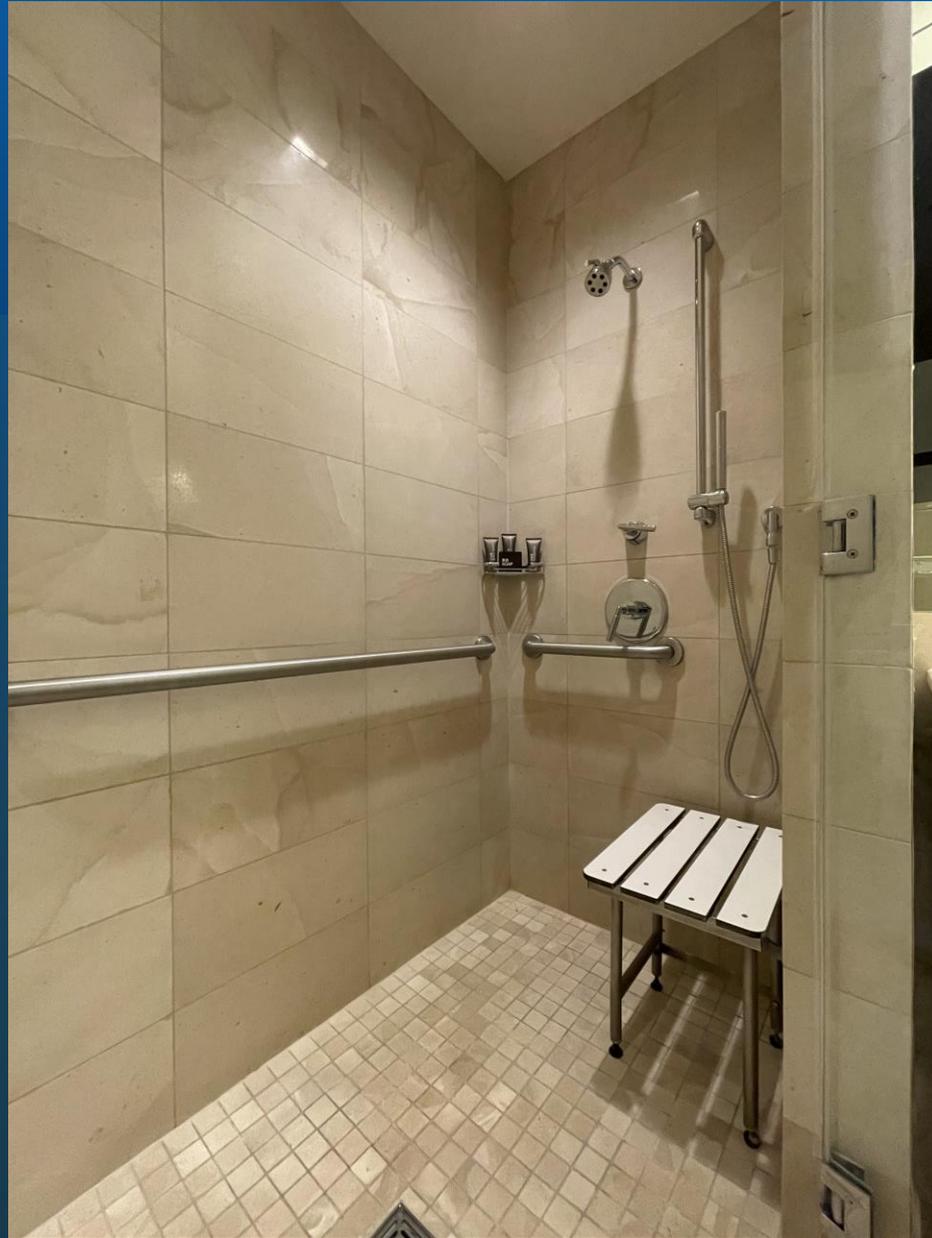


Fig. 57
Roll-in Shower with Folding Seat



SLC Marriott City Center Downtown



Encore at Wynn Las Vegas



Transfer Showers

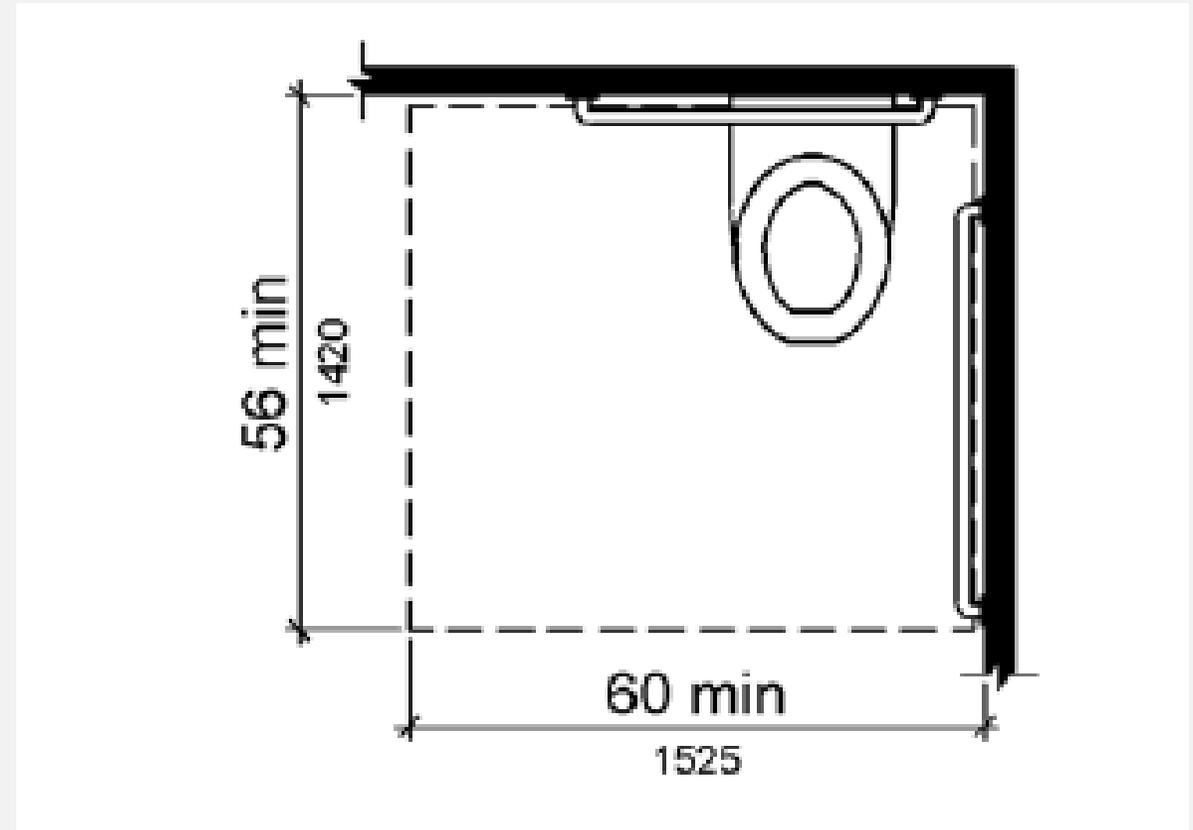
- 36 inches square
- Wall-mounted, folding shower seat required
- Grab bars and handheld shower spray unit
- NOT a replacement for the roll-in showers required by the ADA, but an offering to set your hotel apart
- My preferred ADA shower type





ADA Toilets

- 2010 Standards (604) require additional clearance next to toilets.
- Toilet seat height: 17 to 19 inches from bathroom floor
- Grab bars on walls adjacent to and behind toilet
- 1991 Standards permit sink to be located directly alongside toilet





Bed Accessibility & Bed Height

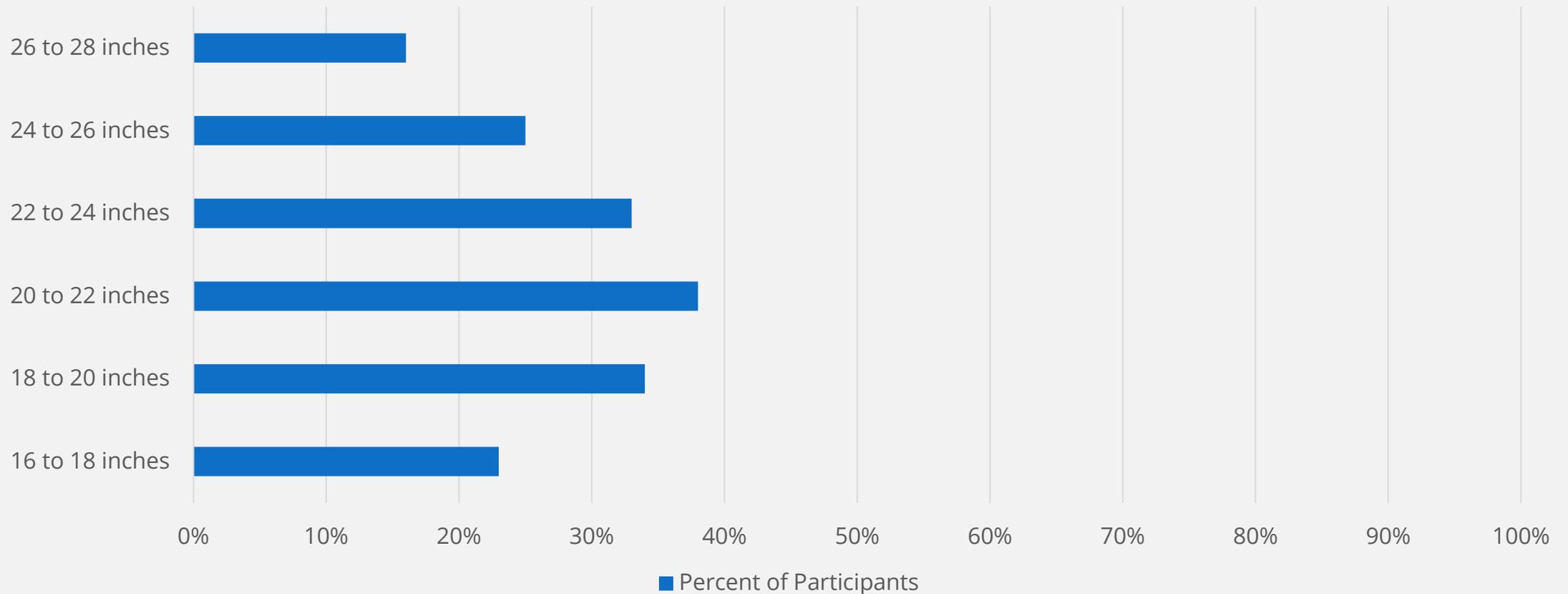
- 30" of clear floor space on both sides of a single bed or between two beds is required
- Platform beds with a solid base (no clear space under bed) prevent use of transfer hoists
- No ADA standard for bed height
- Hotel industry trending toward higher beds, even in ADA rooms
- No single ideal bed height due to differences in disability



Marriott Orlando Airport



In the 2020 Wheelchair Travel Accessible Travel Study, participants were asked to identify all bed heights that would be accessible to them...





Accessibility Features in Guest Rooms

- Door pressure – Force of 5 pounds per less to open
- Access to light switches, thermostat, window shades should not not be blocked by furniture, etc.
- Features should be checked regularly to ensure they are in working order, including communications features
- Lowered peephole
- Bedside master switch for lighting
- Electric curtains



Hotel Shuttles

“Reaching Out to Customers With Disabilities” (DOJ)

Some businesses provide transportation for their customers as a convenience that supports their primary business. Examples include hotels that provide courtesy shuttle vans for guests going to or from an airport or other local destinations...Companies that provide services like these must offer transportation to people with disabilities.

Companies that provide transportation services on demand (such as a hotel that sends a van to an airport to pick up a customer when the customer calls the hotel) can acquire vehicles that are equipped with a lift or can contract with another company to provide accessible service for the customers who need it.



Hotels are required to provide “equivalent service”

- Measures of equivalence: fares, schedules, response times, hours of operation, pick-up and drop-off locations, etc.
- If contracting service out to a third-party, service “must be as convenient as the services offered to other people.”
- Standard for equivalence is high, and it can rarely be met (i.e. “on-demand” services)





Strategies used to achieve hotel shuttle equivalence

- Accessible shuttles shared by multiple hotels, often within a single ownership group
- Airport hotels contract with ADA accessible off-airport parking shuttles (example: Los Angeles Airport hotels)
- Ordering a taxi cab in cities where wheelchair accessible taxis are readily available (New York City)
- Equivalence standard is exceedingly high



“Reasonable Accommodations”

- A reasonable accommodation is an adjustment made in a system to accommodate or make fair the same system for an individual based on a proven need.
- Examples of reasonable accommodation requests in hotels:
 - Lower bed height by removing bed frame, box spring, or platform
 - Remove furniture from guest room to provide additional clear floor space, or to promote access for wheelchair users
 - Provide information in accessible formats (braille, large print, written form or verbally) so that it is accessible to blind/low vision or deaf customers

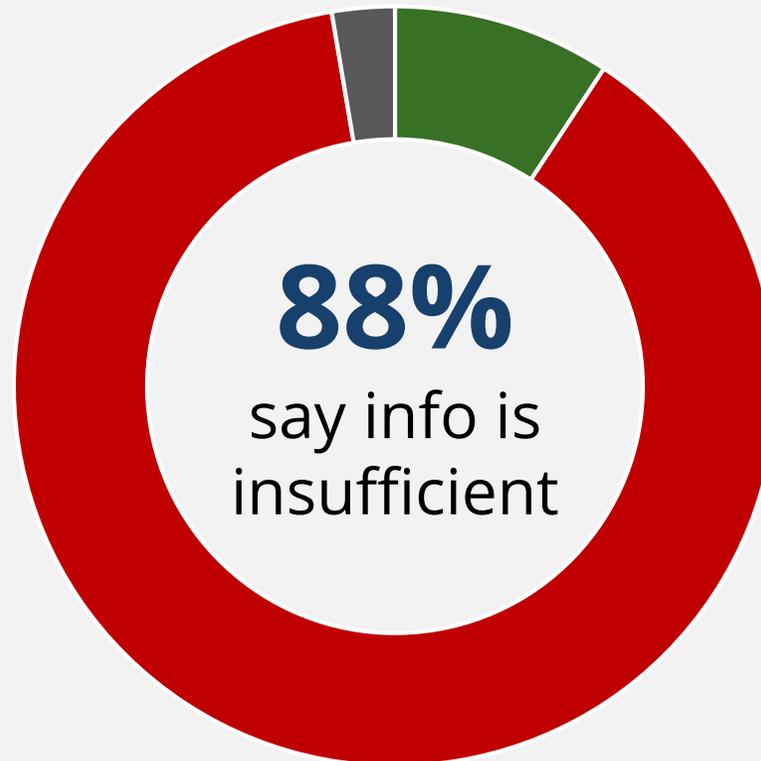


ADA Room Reservations

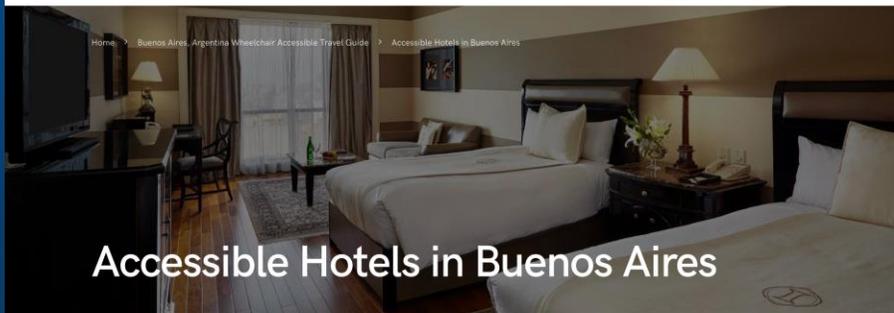
- Allow disabled people to make accessible room reservations in the same way as nondisabled guests (online, over the phone, etc.)
- **Describe the features of a guest room in enough detail so that people can determine if the room will meet their individual accessibility needs**
- Remove an accessible room from inventory as soon as it has been reserved; overbooking of ADA rooms is prohibited
- Guarantee that the customer receives the specific accessible guest room or guest room type he/she reserved. This covers bed type, number of beds, bathroom fixtures, etc.



Do hotels provide enough information about accessibility?



WheelchairTravel.org 2020 Accessible Travel Study



Accessible Hotels in Buenos Aires

For travelers with disabilities visiting Argentina, there are a number of **wheelchair accessible hotel rooms in Buenos Aires**.

I have stayed in five Buenos Aires hotels, but only found four of them to be accessible. Information and pictures of these accessible hotels have been shared below. Please note that this is not a complete list of accessible hotels in the city, only those which I have stayed in and verified.

Sheraton Buenos Aires Hotel & Convention Center

The [Sheraton Buenos Aires Hotel & Convention Center](#) is located only a short walk/roll away from Torre Monumental and General San Martin Plaza in the city's Retiro neighborhood.



Accessible guest rooms have a roll-in shower with grab bars, an accessible toilet and plenty of space to move a wheelchair around in the room. All together, the Sheraton Convention Center is one of the nicest hotels in Buenos Aires.

Here are some measurements of the room:

- Bed height to top of mattress — 25 inches.
- Clear space under bed — 6.5 inches
- Sink height; free space under sink — 34 inches; 28 inches, but not extending beneath the entire sink.
- Toilet bowl height — 20 inches
- Toilet grab bar height — 33.5 inches
- Shower seat height — 20 inches
- Shower grab bar height — 36 inches

To read my complete review of the Sheraton Buenos Aires, [click here](#).



BUENOS AIRES

BUENOS AIRES TRAVEL GUIDE

Attractions & Sights

Airport Accessibility

Hotels & Accommodations

Public Transportation

Sidewalk Accessibility

Wheelchair Taxis

Visa Requirements & Safety

LISTEN TO MY PODCAST



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- Shower seat height — 20 inches
- Shower grab bar height — 36 inches

To read my complete review of the Sheraton Buenos Aires, [click here](#).



Common ADA Compliance Issues in Hotels

The Ritz-Carlton



Common ADA Compliance Issues in Hotels

DoubleTree by Hilton



Common ADA Compliance Issues in Hotels

Hilton



Common ADA Compliance Issues in Hotels

Hotel



Common ADA Compliance Issues in Hotels

Days Inn



Common ADA Compliance Issues in Hotels

SpringHill Suites



Common ADA Compliance Issues in Hotels

Courtyard by Marriott

The ADA Standards were designed to meet the needs of the majority of disabled people.





Take a deep breath

- Newly constructed buildings are subject to multiple safety & compliance inspections before opening to the public, but ADA accessibility isn't one of them
- Noncompliance is common – 80 to 90% of hotels have significant accessibility barriers & most new hotels have major ADA compliance challenges
- Not all architects are experts on accessible/universal design or the requirements of the ADA



Don't be too hard on yourself...

seat in roll-in shower

External



Hello John,

I just came across your website and am finding many very helpful articles and resources. I'm sure it's a wonderful resource to many who have disabilities. As an architect, I take adherence to ADA very seriously.

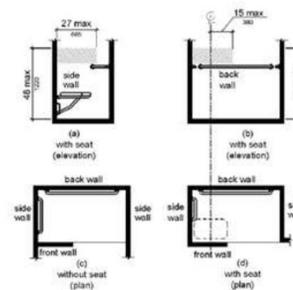
I do have a question for you and hope you don't mind me contacting you. You mention that shower seats are required in all accessible rooms with a roll-in shower.

<https://wheelchairtravel.org/hotels/ada-design-requirements/>

In reviewing the 2010 ADA, 608.5.3 Alternate Roll-In Type Shower Compartments, it seems that a seat is optional. Please see image below. I agree that a seat is a good idea. However, if a client doesn't want to install a wall mounted seat due to liability concerns, is that against the law? Could you please help me get clarification regarding this?

Many thanks in advance!

608.5.3 Alternate Roll-In Type Shower Compartments. In alternate roll-in type shower compartments, the controls, faucets, and shower spray unit shall be located above the grab bar, but no higher than 48 inches (1220 mm) above the shower floor. Where a seat is provided, the controls, faucets, and shower spray unit shall be located on the side wall adjacent to the seat 27 inches (685 mm) maximum from the side wall behind the seat or shall be located on the back wall opposite the seat 15 inches (380 mm) maximum, left or right, of the centerline of the seat. Where a seat is not provided, the controls, faucets, and shower spray unit shall be installed on the side wall farthest from the compartment entry.





Recommendations from disabled travelers

- “Have somebody who actually has a disability look at your ‘disabled’-accessible rooms to find out what works - and what doesn't. And what needs to be in DETAILED descriptions online.”
- “Treat me like a person, not an inconvenience.”
- “I, as a disabled person, am a paying customer that deserves the same respect as non disabled persons. I shouldn't be treated differently, have to pay more, or take the worst rooms because I am disabled.”
- “Hotels need to understand that ‘wheelchair accessible’ means from the time you approach the hotel, go through the front door, visit the lobby and/or restaurant and finally your room.”



Helping Businesses Reach New Customers with Disabilities

The ADA Hotels eCourse will position your business, its managers and associates to take advantage of the \$17.3 billion accessible travel market.

LEARN MORE

The first eCourse designed to meet the needs of hotels

Accessible Development Group's first eCourse provides hotels with the tools to reach disabled customers, develop accessible products and keep up with the latest regulations. Also included is a first-of-its-kind D&I training module tailored to fit the needs of your business, with a focus on recruiting and retaining diverse talent. We'll help your hotel achieve success and reduce liability.

Accessibility in Hotels 101

LIMITED-TIME OFFER

\$695

One-year membership.
Single hotel license.

SIGN-UP TODAY

- ✓ 50+ Core Lessons
- ✓ Access to Case Studies
- ✓ ADA Resource Library
- ✓ Accessibility Checklist
- ✓ Scalable D&I Training
- ✓ Latest Industry News

Section 5



Accessibility beyond the ADA's minimum standards





Adult Changing Tables

Chicago O'Hare International Airport





Photo source: Bridges Library System



Family / Gender- Neutral Restrooms

Bridges Library System, Wisconsin



Emergency Alert Pull Cords

Common feature in European bathrooms





Portable Patient Transfer Lifts

Used to transfer to/from bed, wheelchair, etc.



Multi-sensory rooms

Miami International Airport





Beach wheelchairs

Miami Beach, Florida

A photograph of a hotel room. In the foreground, a bed with white linens is visible. To the right, there is a desk with a chair, a lamp, and a television mounted on the wall. A window with curtains is in the background. The floor is made of light-colored wood. A black bag is on the floor in the bottom right corner.

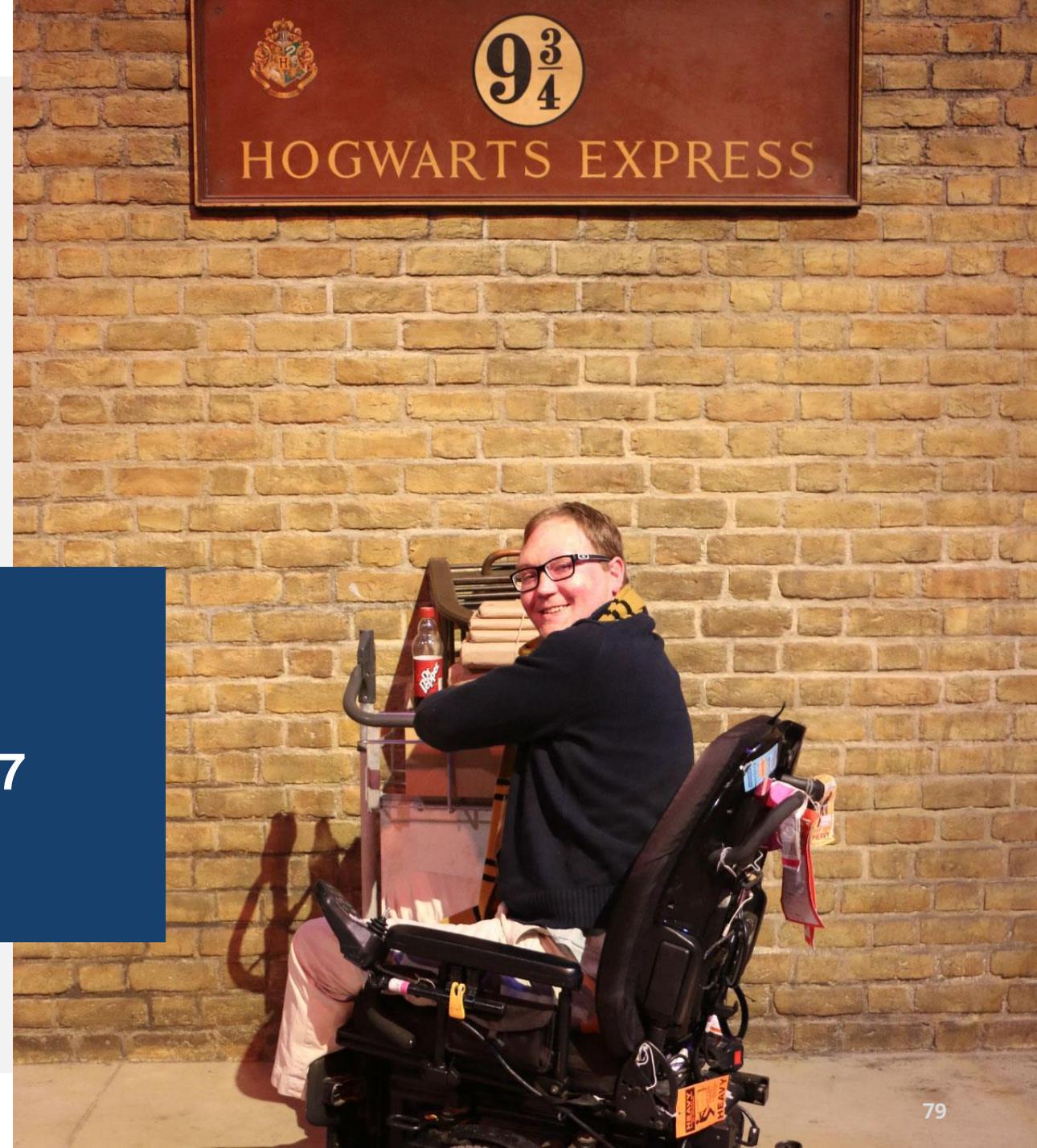
Hard floors & low-pile carpet

Novotel Rio de Janeiro Santos Dumont

Section 6



Laying out the welcome mat to disabled people: 7 imperatives





1

LAY OUT THE WELCOME MAT

Businesses, including hotels, restaurants and attractions should describe accessibility through pictures, measurements, relevant details, etc.

Destinations should produce travel guides tailored to disabled visitors

Transportation networks should provide detailed instructions about the accessibility of services.





2

MARKETING TO DISABLED PEOPLE REQUIRES DISABLED PEOPLE

Representation matters!

Only 7% of disabled people said they had seen disabled people in advertisements or marketing materials from travel industry brands or destinations.

Lack of representation perpetuates belief that disabled people are unwanted and unwelcome.





3

CREATE A WELCOMING ENVIRONMENT

Equitable representation does not yet exist in public spaces, but disabled people are emerging from seclusion.

Disability awareness training prepares employees to provide equivalent service to disabled people.

Delighted (and empowered) to serve should be a core component of business culture.





4

INCLUDE DISABLED PEOPLE IN DESIGN & DECISION-MAKING

Barriers to employment have caused disabled people to be underrepresented in the workforce and in leadership roles.

Disability Advisory Boards can be a tool to gain expert insight from the disability community. Organizations without one rarely achieve their full potential in the accessible travel market.





5

ENCOURAGE FEEDBACK, LISTEN & BE MINDFUL

Customer feedback can reveal access barriers that were overlooked in design & development.

Listening with intent provides customers with evidence of engagement.

Take action in response to customer concerns and feedback, where appropriate.

Mindfulness: *“Paying attention on purpose, to the present moment, and non-judgmentally.”* – Jon Kabat-Zinn





6

PROMOTE INDEPENDENCE WHEREVER POSSIBLE

Eliminating the need to ask for help is important in permitting disabled people to be as independent as possible, a key priority among the community.

Accessibility features that promote independence and ease of use benefit everyone, including nondisabled people!



Conclusion



Creating an accessible world can make dreams a reality



“If I am an advocate for anything, it is to move. As far as you can, as much as you can. Across the ocean, or simply across the river. Walk in someone else’s shoes or at least eat their food. It’s a plus for everybody.”

Anthony Bourdain
(1956-2018)



Questions?



LET'S CONNECT



JOHN MORRIS

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WheelchairTravel.org



WheelchairTravel.org
— OPEN YOUR WORLD —

accessible
development
group

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