

Washroom Design and the Disability Discrimination Act

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) required that reasonable adjustments be made, if possible, to the physical features of premises in certain circumstances in order that disabled people can gain access and make use of the building. From 1st October 2004, any exemptions for employers have ceased to apply. Consequently, all buildings must now comply with the Act, including washroom and WC areas.

All Tenon Washroom System ranges can now be supplied to meet the requirements of the legislation. This document is designed to give you a brief guide as to how the legislation applies to washrooms and WC's and details of how further information can be obtained.

Building Regulations

In England & Wales, building design and construction is governed by the Building Regulations. Part M of this document sets minimum legal standards for access and use of buildings by all of its occupants, including the disabled.

The regulation avoids specific reference to, or a definition of, disabled people. This inclusive approach means that buildings and their facilities should be accessible to all people who use the building. This includes parents with children, older people, the visually impaired and the disabled.

Approved Document M

Building Regulations are supported by "Approved Documents" which offer practical guidance with respect to the Regulations. These documents are used as a benchmark by the Local Authority Building Control Departments.

The latest Approved Document M was published in November 2003 and currently applies to new buildings and those undergoing modification. Section 5 covers Sanitary Accommodation in buildings other than dwellings and offers a more comprehensive guide to the minimum requirements e.g. overall sizes of rooms and facilities, plus the location of equipment within them.



Disability Discrimination Act 1995

The DDA introduced new measures aimed at ending discrimination which many disabled people face. The main thrust of the legislation is to improve access for the disabled to employment, education and services.

As of 1st October 2004 all employers, including now those that have less than 15 employees, plus all those that provide a service to the public must ensure that access to the workplace, or the facilities or public service offered, must not be impossible or unreasonably difficult for disabled people. Disability is defined as a "physical or mental impairment".

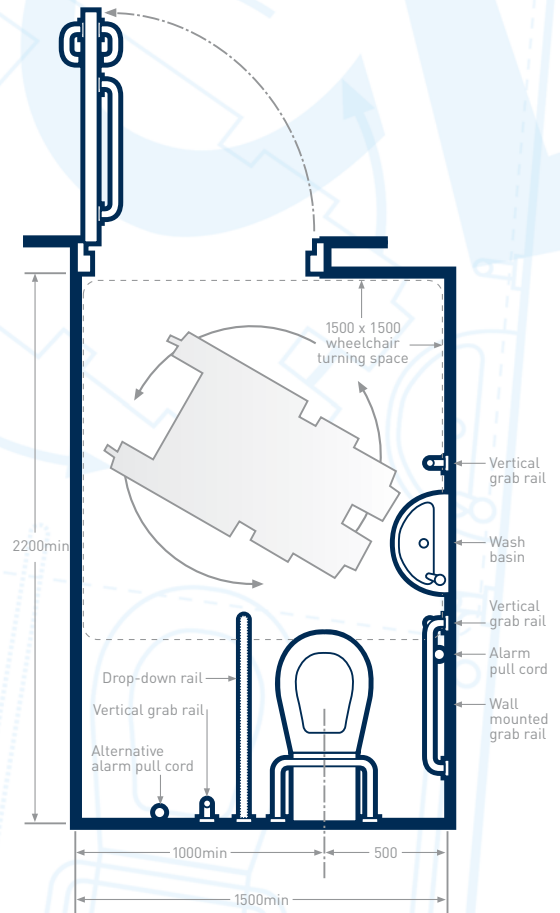
Designers should consider carefully the implications of the Act, in terms of the ability of the building user to both employ and offer services to disabled people on an equal basis and therefore not discriminate against these rights.

Washrooms and the DDA

Washroom, WC and changing areas are all included in the Building Regulations and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. A typical WC cubicle layout is shown here with minimum recommended dimensions. However, consideration of all disabilities, such as visual impairment, must also be taken into account. To guide you through the maze of legislation, there is listed below a number of reference documents for further reading. Tenon Washroom System specialists are also on hand to provide experienced and helpful advice for designers and installers.

Points of Reference

- ▶ **The Building Regulations Approved Document M**
Office of the Deputy Prime Minister - www.odpm.gov.uk
- ▶ **Disability Discrimination Act 1995**
HMSO - www.disability.gov.uk/dda
- ▶ **Good Loo Design Guide**
Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) - www.riba.org



Clean functional washroom solutions

Contact Tenon Washrooms for advice or assistance with design, product selection or colour swatches.



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