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Major Study Completed on People Who Use Wheeled Mobility Aids

The results are in from a major study of people who use wheelchairs and other mobility aids. The study was conducted by the Center for Inclusive Design and Environmental Access (IDEA Center) with support from the Access Board and the Department of Education. Under this project, researchers collected detailed measurements of people using a variety of wheeled mobility devices. Almost 500 people at three locations participated in the study, making it one of the largest of its kind ever conducted.

IDEA Center researchers used 3-D imaging software and other technologies to capture static and functional measures from a diverse sample of 495 subjects using different types of mobility aids, including motorized devices such as power chairs and scooters. The results were entered into a database and can be analyzed in multiple ways. Extensive planning went into the design of the study and the measurement protocols used to collect data, including input received from two international conferences of invited experts and focus groups involving people with disabilities.

"The population of people with disabilities and the range of mobility aids on the market have become increasingly diverse and complex over the years," notes Marsha Mazz, the Board's Director of Technical and Information Services. "The results from this ground-breaking research give us a much better understanding of today's population and the wheeled mobility devices aids now in use."

Results from the Anthropometry of Wheeled Mobility Project confirm significant differences in measurements and functional abilities between users of manual chairs, power chairs, and scooters, as well as between men and women. Researchers compared the data to existing design specifications for accessibility. Key findings from this analysis include:

- Clear floor space requirements, especially the length, and knee and toe clearances do not accommodate many wheeled mobility aid users
- Some mobility aids, particularly scooters, require greater clearances for maneuvering and turning
- Points at the low end of recognized reach ranges are more problematic than those at the high end of the range

These and other findings are detailed in the [final report](#) which is available on the IDEA Center's website. Related information, including an on-line continuing education course, is also available on this website.

Project Directors Dr. Ed Steinfeld, Arch.D. and Victor Paquet, Sc.D. will provide a presentation on the study's findings at a meeting of the Access Board on March 7 from 10:00 to noon. This event is open to the public and will take place at the Board's conference space at 1331 F Street, N.W., Suite 800, Washington, D.C.

Guidance Issued on Dimensional Tolerances for Accessible Surfaces

Accessibility guidelines and standards, including those issued under the ADA, generally recognize construction tolerances, but they do not identify acceptable tolerances for specific dimensions. Tolerances must be based on the construction methods and materials used. Most guidance on tolerances available from industry and other sources does not specifically address requirements in accessibility requirements such as the ADA standards.

The Access Board undertook an initiative to encourage stakeholders in the construction industry to develop information on specific tolerances, as well as dimensioning and measurement conventions. This effort focused on specifications for the surface of exterior and interior routes, including ramps. The project, which was conducted by David Ballast, FAIA, CSI of Architectural Research Consulting, offered a forum for collaboration among representatives from industry, trade groups, professional organizations such as the American Institute of Architects and the Construction Specifications Institute, design professionals, contractors, code officials, and others.

A [report](#) on this effort, "Dimensional Tolerances for Surface Accessibility," that summarizes the information collected is now available on the Board's website. The report offers suggested tolerances for the running slopes and cross slopes of routes and ramps and for surface uniformity or flatness. It also provides design recommendations to accommodate tolerances and construction variations. For example, the report notes that designing ramps with a more gradual slope (7.5% instead of the 8.33% maximum) will accommodate tolerances for common methods of constructing ramps with concrete, asphalt, and pavers. The report also provides guidance on protocols and available tools for measuring running and cross slopes, flatness, gaps, and surface variations.

Several trade groups involved in the project have issued guidance on tolerances for certain materials and methods. This includes information on ceramic tile from the Tile Council of North America and on concrete pavers from the Interlocking Concrete Pavement Institute. The Brick Industry Association is also developing guidance on tolerances.

For further information on this Board project, contact Marsha Mazz at mazz@access-board.gov, (202) 272-0020 (v), or (202) 272-0076 (TTY).

Forum on Improving Access to Federal Sector IT to be Held at CSUN Conference

The Access Board and members of the Chief Information Officers Council will conduct a public forum and listening session on ways to improve access to information technology in the Federal sector under Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act in San Diego on March 17. The event, which is open to the general public, will take place at the annual International Technology and Persons with Disabilities Conference organized by the California State University at Northridge (CSUN). Discussion will focus on recommendations from the public on how the federal government can use technology to improve access and public interaction with the government, as well as information on emerging technologies that pose barriers to access. People with disabilities, advocates, technology companies, government employees and other interested parties are invited to participate. The session, the third in a planned series, is part of an administration initiative to promote access to electronic and information technologies in the Federal sector. Similar sessions were held in Chicago in September and Washington, D.C. in December.

A published [notice](#) provides additional details on the upcoming session. For further information, visit the [conference website](#) or contact Tim Creagan of the Access Board at creagan@access-board.gov, (202) 272-0016 (v), or (202) 272-0074 (TTY).

Listening Session & Public Forum on Information Technology in the Federal Sector
March 17th 1:50 - 5:20
Manchester Grand Hyatt Hotel
One Market Place
San Diego, CA

Upcoming Access Board Webinars

The next scheduled webinars in the Board's free monthly series will be devoted to accessible swimming pools and spas (March 3), enforcement of the Architectural Barriers Act (April 7), and an open question-and-answer session with Board accessibility specialists (May 5). The webinars, which are scheduled from 2:30 - 4:00 (ET), are made available in cooperation with the national network of ADA Centers. Registration is free, but a modest fee is charged by the DBTACs to process continuing education credits. For more information, including registration instructions, visit www.accessibilityonline.org. Archived copies of previous webinars can be accessed on this site.

Next Meeting of the Access Board: March 7 - 9

The next meeting of the Access Board will be held March 7 - 9 in Washington, D.C. Public events on the agenda include presentations by:

- IDEA Center researchers on findings from the Anthropometry of Wheeled Mobility Project (March 7, 10:00 - Noon)
- the Bureau of Engraving and Printing on accessible currency (March 7, 3:15 - 4:00)
- a panel presentation on implementation of Section 508 (March 9, 9:30 - 11:00)

The full meeting of the Board is scheduled for March 9 from 1:30 - 3:00. Sessions on March 8 are closed to the public. All events will take place at the Board's conference space at 1331 F Street, N.W., Suite 800, in downtown Washington.

Additional details on the agenda are provided in a published [notice](#). For further information, contact Rose Bunales at bunales@access-board.gov, (202) 272-0006 , or (202) 272-0057 (TTY). The Board requests that meeting attendees refrain from wearing perfume, cologne and other fragrances, and use unscented personal care products in order to promote a fragrance-free environment.

New Provisions in DOJ's Revised ADA Regulations Soon Take Effect

Key requirements in updated ADA regulations issued by the Department of Justice last September will take effect March 15. These include new provisions concerning service animals, ticketing, coverage of powered mobility aids, effective communication, and examinations and courses. The revised regulations also implement new ADA standards (2010) for the construction and alteration of facilities. However, compliance with the 2010 standards will not be required for another year (by March 15, 2012) to allow more time for the public to transition to the new design requirements. The 2010 standards can be used at this time as an alternative to the original ADA standards under DOJ's regulations. New requirements governing hotel reservation policies also share the March 2012 effective date.

DOJ recently posted [guidance](#) on these effective dates on its website. This information clarifies which standards can be used at this time and when the 2010 standards become mandatory for new construction and alterations, as well as for program access by public entities and barrier removal by public accommodations. Copies of DOJ's updated regulations and standards and supplementary materials are also available on its [website](#).

Access Currents is a free newsletter issued by the Access Board every other month by mail and e-mail. Send questions or comments to news@access-board.gov or call (800) 872-2253 ext. 0026 (voice) or (800) 993-2822 (TTY). Mailing address: 1331 F Street, N.W., Suite 1000; Washington, D.C. 20004-1111.
