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Volume 16 No.6

November/ December 2010

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Public Provides Input on Updated Vehicle Guidelines

The Board is reviewing public comments it received on a proposal to update its ADA guidelines for buses and vans. The proposed updates, which the Board released for comment in July, address new types of vehicles, such as bus rapid transit and low floor buses, and advances in technology, including automation of announcements. They also include revised specifications for vehicle ramp slopes, onboard circulation routes, wheelchair spaces, and securement systems.

The Board received comments on its proposed rule from vehicle manufacturers, transit providers and authorities, advocacy groups, trade associations, researchers, and others during the comment period, which closed November 23. Comments addressed a range of topics, including requirements for ramps, boarding issues encountered by people using wheeled mobility aids, wheelchair securement, bus rapid transit, automated stop announcements, access for people with multiple chemical sensitivities, and other subjects. Comments were also received at two public hearings on the proposal held in Chicago (September 30) and Washington, D.C. (November 8). The Board will finalize the updated guidelines based on its analysis of the comments which can be viewed online at www.regulations.gov. Additional information on this rulemaking is available on the Board's website at www.access-board.gov/transit/.

DOJ Posts Online Editions of its 2010 ADA Standards

The Department of Justice (DOJ) has posted official editions of its new 2010 ADA standards and companion guidance on its [ADA website](#). The new publications include provisions from DOJ's regulations that implement the standards and set effective dates in order to bring together in one source all relevant information on using the standards in new construction and alterations. Additional design requirements that supplement the standards are also integrated into this edition. The standards are available in both HTML and PDF formats. A 170-page companion guide further explains requirements in the standards and regulations and provides commentary on specific provisions.

The 2010 standards, which can be used at this time as an alternative to the original standards, become mandatory March 15, 2012. Technical assistance on the standards is available from the Access Board at (800) 872-2253 (v), (800) 993-2822 (TTY), or ta@access-board.gov. Questions on use of the standards or other topics covered in DOJ's regulations should be directed to DOJ at (800) 514-0301 (v) or (800) 514-0383 (TTY).

DOJ Holds Public Hearings on Rulemaking Initiatives

The Department of Justice (DOJ) is holding public hearings on potential ADA rulemaking to address access to websites, movie captioning and video description, next generation 911 emergency services, and equipment and furniture. The hearings will focus on these topics as outlined in separate notices DOJ published and made available for public comment on July 26.

The hearings provide an opportunity for the public to provide input on these subjects. The first hearing took place November 18 in Chicago and will be followed by additional hearings on:

- December 16 (9:30 – 4:00) in Washington, D.C. at the Board's conference center, 1331 F Street, NW, Suite 800
- January 10 (9:30 – 4:00) in San Francisco at the Marriott Marquis, 55 Fourth Street

Further information on the hearings and notices is available on [DOJ's website](#). Comments on the notices are due by January 24.

Section 508 Listening Session to be Held at IDEAS Conference

This year's Interagency Disability Educational Awareness Showcase (IDEAS), the federal government's premier conference on Section 508 compliance and accessible workplace technology, will be held December 13 and 14 at George Washington University's Marvin Center in Washington, D.C. The conference, which is sponsored by the General Services Administration (GSA) with support from the Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy, will feature sessions on the President's Executive Order to increase the hiring of people with disabilities, agency compliance with Section 508, streamlining procurement, policy updates from lead 508 agencies, technology innovations, and other topics.

The agenda also includes a public listening session on ways to improve access to information technology in the Federal sector on December 14 from 2:00 to 5:00. This is the second in a series of such forums organized by the Federal CIO Council in collaboration with the Chief Acquisition Officers Council, GSA, and the Access Board, to engage citizens and employees in expressing concerns and proposing ideas on ways to improve access and compliance with Section 508 as part of a new administration [initiative](#). Specifically, input is sought on how the federal government can use technology in new and better ways and influence technology accessibility, what technology can do to improve access and opportunities for people with disabilities and enhance their interaction with the federal government, emerging technologies and access barriers, and other topics. Representatives from the Access Board, the Social Security Administration, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and AbilityOne will conduct the session. An earlier session organized by the Board took place in Chicago in September.

Members of the public are invited to attend the session to offer their ideas for improving IT accessibility or to share access concerns. Feedback from this session and future ones will be shared with responsible agencies to implement improvements. For more information, visit the [IDEAS website](#). Those who wish to provide comments at the listening session can sign-up in advance by contacting Emily Koo at (410) 965-4472 or innovative.accessibility@ssa.gov.

Upcoming Board Webinars

The next webinar in the Board's free monthly series will cover access to residential facilities and take place January 6 from 2:30 – 4:00 (ET). This session will review design requirements for dwelling units in standards issued under the ADA and the Architectural Barriers Act and explain their coverage. A webinar scheduled for February 3 will address accessible transient lodging. Board webinars are made available in cooperation with the national network of ADA centers known as the Disability and Business Technical Assistance Centers (DBTACs). 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.

FEMA Issues Guidance on Emergency Shelter Planning

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has released a new guide for state and federal governments and local communities on integrating accessibility and support services into emergency shelter planning and response. The 166-page document, "Guidance on Planning for Integration of Functional Needs Support Services in General Population Shelters," provides

planning guidance to emergency managers and shelter planners to ensure equal access for people with disabilities to sheltering services and facilities. The guide can be used to supplement existing sheltering plans so that they sufficiently serve all populations. The guide is available on FEMA's website at www.fema.gov/pdf/about/odc/fnss_guidance.pdf.

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.
