

# Outdoor Recreation & Accessible Portable Toilets

## “Bigger” Doesn’t Always Equal ADA Compliance

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) guarantees equal opportunity for individuals with disabilities in all aspects of community life, including outdoor recreation. Nothing ruins a leisure outing like not being able to access a restroom when you need to! Fortunately, the ADA’s guarantee for equal access applies to restrooms, including temporary or portable ones provided outdoors.

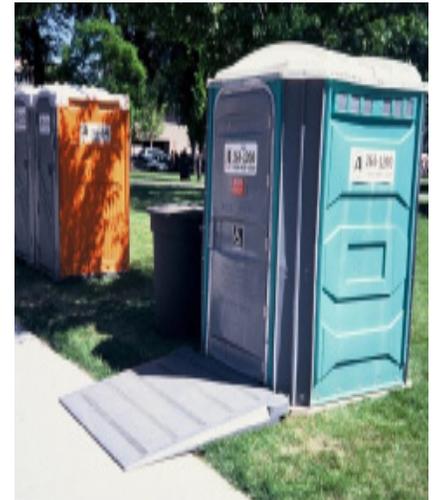
**Below are the key requirements of accessible portable toilet units from the 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design ([www.ada.gov](http://www.ada.gov)).**

### How Many Must be Accessible?

Where multiple single user portable toilet units are clustered in one location, at least 5 percent of the units at each cluster must be accessible and identified with the International Symbol of Accessibility. Where only one portable toilet unit is provided, it must be accessible.

**Accessible Route:** Location, location, location! While many park operators know that they should provide accessible portable toilet units, they don’t always think through how visitors will access

them. Ramping directly up to the door of the unit makes it extremely difficult to pull the door open while positioned on a slope (see photo at the top of the page). Be sure to place portable toilet units on an accessible route. This includes making sure that there is a flush ground surface between the pavement/ground outside and the interior of the unit. If there is an elevation change (i.e., a curb or raised threshold), a ramp may be needed to access the unit. If a ramp is provided, make sure that there is a level landing at least 5 feet long outside of the door to the unit.

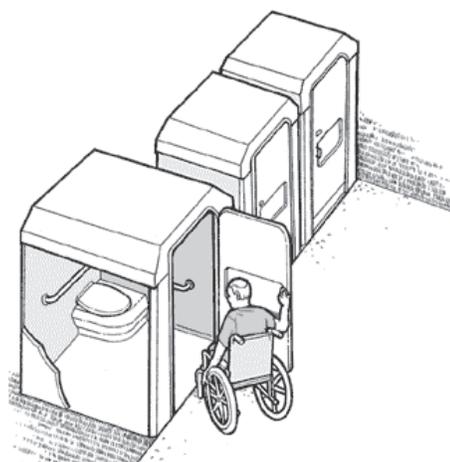


*This accessible toilet unit will be difficult for many people with mobility disabilities to enter because they must open the door while on the slope of the ramp. A level landing should be provided.*

**“To protect the right of people with disabilities to participate in everyday life with family, friends, and colleagues, we must ensure access to buildings, sites and facilities.”**

– Thomas E. Perez,  
Former Assistant Attorney General of the  
Civil Rights Division, U.S. DOJ

**Details & Dimensions:** It is important to confirm that the portable toilet unit advertised as “ADA Compliant” in a catalog actually complies with the ADA Standards for Design. Truly accessible units have a 5 foot turning space. Accessible portable toilets have the same features found in any other accessible toilet stall, including, but not limited to: an accessible door that has at least 32 inches of clear width and accessible hardware, side and rear grab bars that can support at least 250 pounds of force, clear space next to the toilet that is necessary for transferring to/from a mobility device and the toilet, and maneuvering space within the unit. For information about the specific ADA requirements for the design and placement of these features, as well as for shelves, dispensers or coat hooks in toileting units, visit [www.ada.gov/2010ADAstandards\\_index.htm](http://www.ada.gov/2010ADAstandards_index.htm).



*Drawing of an accessible portable toilet with grab bars and a turning space.*

**Want to know more about how the ADA applies to community recreation?**

Contact the Northeast ADA Center at: [www.NortheastADA.org](http://www.NortheastADA.org) | 1.800.949.4232 | [NortheastADA@Cornell.edu](mailto:NortheastADA@Cornell.edu)

This document was developed by the Northeast ADA Center at Cornell University’s Yang-Tan Institute on Employment & Disability with funding from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Hudson River Estuary Program. The Northeast ADA Center is supported by the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR # 90DP0088), a Center within the Administration for Community Living (ACL), Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The contents do not necessarily represent the policies of NIDILRR ACL, HHS, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.