

A117 Task Group on Special Needs of the Aging Population

Report of the meeting of the A117

Access Board Conference Room, Washington, DC

September 27, 2001

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 am by Chairman George McAllister. Those in attendance were:

George McAllister, consultant, Task Force Chairman
Marsha Mazz, ATBCB
Larry B. Fleming, architect, USDA
Andrew Kochera, (Alternate to Leon Harper), AARP
Bob Mackie, DoJ Disability Rights Office
Bob Lynch, Lynch and Associates, Architects, UCPA
Gus Estrella, National Cerebral Palsy Association
Patrick J. Higgins, P. J. Higgins & Associates, Inc.

Chairman McAllister thanked the attendees for their presence at this meeting and he read the scope of the Task Group's focus. The scope currently reads: "To re-examine the plumbing provisions of the standard with the intent on improving aging population accessibility, including criteria for children; prisons and jails; assisted living; and special needs for those of extreme stature. We also plan to examine the expanded criteria for commercial fixtures; closet seats and assisted use products with respect to chapters 3, 6 and 10". Mr. Lynch proffered that the scope of the Task Group should not be limited to plumbing. The Task Group advised that they would address Mr. Lynch's concerns other than plumbing after review of the plumbing specifications.

A brief discussion related to the scope of the A117.1 standard was conducted. Ms. Mazz advised that the ANSI A117.1 currently addresses Type A (2% of Fair Housing) and Type B housing units but not residential housing. The Task Group indicated that there may be a series of proposals to the International Residential Code that may be desirable to be submitted by the A117.1 Committee. However, due to the time frame that requires code change submissions by November 1, 2001, the specific changes in question may have to be submitted by the individual member, with support later provided by the A117.1 Committee.

Marsha Mazz advised that the release of the latest ADAAG regulations should not be expected before the end of the second quarter of 2002.

Chairman McAllister advised that recommendation from all Task Groups must be finalized and submitted to the International Codes Council by Friday, September 28th. He advised that he had recently been appointed the chairman of this Task Group and that the Task Group only had this meeting to develop and agree to specific proposals. With these announcements completed, he asked the Task Group for their specific recommendations.

The first issue of discussion related to a study entitled “Best Practices in the Design of Toileting and Bathing Facilities for Assisted Transfer”. This report reflects an analysis of assisted living facilities and contains recommendations for amendments to the accessibility requirements based upon this analysis. One of the first items of discussion related to this study addresses the inclusion of a specification for installation of swing away grab bars. Marsha Mazz suggested that swing away bars could be allowable, but they should only be used in a highly monitored facility with assisted care.

Following the review of this report, the following recommendations for specific changes were made:

RECOMMENDATION #1

603.2.2 Overlap. Clear floor or ground spaces, clearance at fixtures, and wheelchair turning space shall be permitted to overlap except at showers and bathtubs. .

607.2 Clear Floor Space. Clearance in front of bathtubs shall extend the length of the tub and shall be 30 inches (760 mm) wide minimum. ~~A lavatory complying with 606 shall be permitted at the foot end of the clearance.~~ Where a permanent seat is provided at the head end of the bathtub, the clear floor space shall extend a minimum of 12 inches (305 mm) beyond the wall at the end of the bathtub.

608.2.2 Standard Roll-In-Type Shower Compartment. Roll-in-type shower compartments shall be 30 inches (760 mm) wide minimum by 60 inches (1525 mm) deep minimum, clear inside dimension, measured at the center-point of opposing sides and shall have a minimum 60 inches (1220 mm) wide entry on the face of the shower. A 30 inches (760 mm) wide minimum by 60 inches (1525 mm) long minimum clearance shall be provided adjacent to the open face of the shower compartment. ~~A lavatory complying with Section 606 shall be permitted at the end of the clear space, opposite the shower compartment side where shower controls are positioned.~~

Delete the lavatory figure from Fig. 607.2 (a) and (b) and Fig. 608.2.2.

Rationale: The introduction of a lavatory in the clear floor space adjacent to a bathtub or shower fixture restricts the user from easily accessing the fixture controls.

RECOMMENDATION #2

604.5 Grab Bars. Grab bars for water closets shall comply with 609. Grab bars shall be provided on the rear wall and on the side wall closest to the water closet.

EXCEPTION: In toilet room facilities where assisted service is provided, swing-up type grab bars shall be permitted to be installed in lieu of the rear wall and side wall grab bars. The two bars shall be installed with centerlines 12 inches on both sides of the centerline of the water closet. A minimum of 24 inches clearance to each side of the water closet shall be provided when swing-up grab bars are used. Swing-up grab bars shall comply with 609.9.

609.9 (new) Swing-up Grab Bars. Swing-up grab bars shall be not less than 28 inches in length measured from the finished wall. The size of the swing-up bar shall comply with 609.2. The structural strength of the swing-up bar shall comply with 609.8.

Rationale: This proposal reflects the recommendations found in “Best Practices in the Design of Toileting and Bathing Facilities for Assisted Transfer”. This study indicates that a swing-up grab bar is a more useful tool for support of the fixture user in an assisted-care facility.

RECOMMENDATION #3

606.7 (new) Temperature control in lavatories. The maximum hot water temperature discharge from a lavatory fixture fitting shall be 120⁰F.*

Rationale: The model plumbing codes have initiated temperature control in lavatories. There a variety of methods to address this provision, from add-on temperature controls to integral handle position stops in fixture fittings that prevent delivery of water over a specific temperature.

RECOMMENDATION #4

607.8 (new) Surface finish. Bathtub bases shall be provided with a slip resisting surface.*

608.9. (new) Surface finish. Shower bases shall be provided with a slip resisting surface.*

Rationale: Data related to slips and falls in bathing fixtures reflects that the vast majority of injuries are incurred by the young and the elderly. Slip resisting bathing surfaces that are fabricated of porcelain enameled steel or enameled cast iron are required to be treated with slip resisting surfaces. The ANSI Z124 Committee for plastic plumbing fixtures is finalizing a recommendation for plastic bathing fixtures to be so treated. This treatment will improve the overall safe use of the bathing fixture.

RECOMMENDATION #5

607.4.3 (new) Egress bar. A vertical grab bar, a minimum of 24 inches in length shall be provided at the point of entry, mounted on the foot end of the tub. The bar shall be located not more than 9 inches (230 mm) maximum from the front edge of the fixture and shall extend vertically from the minimum height of 36 inches.*

608.3.3 (new) Egress bar. A vertical grab bar, a minimum of 24 inches in length shall be provided at the point of entry, mounted on the door opening opposite of the seat. The bar shall be located not more than 9 inches (230 mm) maximum from the front edge of the fixture and shall extend vertically from the minimum height of 34 inches.*

Rationale: A significant number of injuries are incurred annually during the transfer to and from bathing fixtures. The transfer hazard is exacerbated by wet surfaces or damp feet. Further, some fixture and bathing floor surfaces are not at the same elevation, thereby confusing the user and complicating the transfer. The placement of this egress bar will create a safer environment for fixture use.

RECOMMENDATION #6

Request the A117.1 Main Committee to support the recommendation for installation of the 7-11 stair geometry into the *International Residential Code*.

Rationale: There has been a significant amount of research by Jake Pauls and other research agencies related to the obvious safety associated with 7-11 stair dimensions. With the focus of this Task Group to address the concerns for improving conditions for the elderly, it is imperative to recommend the promotion of this concept within the model residential codes.

RECOMMENDATION #7

Retain the Task Group on Special Needs of the Aging Population*

The Aging Task Group requests the A117.1 Main Committee retain this group to continue their efforts to revise the standard commensurate with concerns related to our aging population. Further study issues include the following subjects:

1. Alternate dimensions for plumbing fixtures to address special needs.
2. Permitted use of single grab bars for bathtubs of higher surfaces.
3. Uniformly stable heights of accessible routes to eliminate tripping hazards.
4. If you provide a slab-on-grade home, no step shall be provided at entrances.
5. Bathtubs with doors.

Chairman McAllister has asked the members of the Task Group to consider another Task Group meeting on October 23rd, 2001 in New Orleans. The purpose of the meeting will be to refine our Main Committee recommendations.

There being no additional business, the Task Group thanked Marsha Mazz for her hospitality and approved a motion for adjournment.

(*Note: The Committee Secretary has editorially modified the text of the Task Group's original report to show recommended changes to the ICC/ANSI A117.1 Standard by underlining proposed new text, correcting current A117.1 text, revising the proposed new Section numbers, and provide the correct title of this Task Group.)