

BCMC PUBLIC HEARING
June 6, 1995
Omni Inner Harbor Hotel
Baltimore, Maryland

The CABO Board for the Coordination of the Model Codes held a public hearing as indicated above to receive written and/or verbal comments regarding proposed recommendations to CABO for national uniformity in the model codes. At the conclusion of this hearing, the BCMC approved the transmittal of this report to CABO for approval. On approval by CABO, the recommendations contained in this report will be processed through the code change procedures of the BCMC participating organizations.

ACCESSIBLE UNISEX TOILET AND BATHING ROOMS

1.0 SCOPE

1.1 This document sets minimum requirements for providing toilet and bathing rooms for persons requiring personal assistance in performing toilet and bathing tasks.

1.2 Details, dimensions and construction specifications for items herein shall comply with the requirements set forth in the American National Standards Institute standard CABO/ANSI A117.1-1992 "Accessible and Usable Buildings and Facilities".

1.3 Fixtures provided in unisex toilet rooms and bathing rooms shall be considered as providing toilet and bathing fixtures as required by the model codes.

1.4 The provisions of this report shall apply to new construction and existing buildings as determined by the scoping provisions of Sections 1.0 and 11.0 of the 1993 BCMC Report on Accessibility.

2.0 SCOPING PROVISIONS

2.1 Unisex Toilet Rooms

2.1.1 Where Required: In occupancies of Use Group A or Use Group M an accessible unisex toilet room complying with 2.1.2 and 3.0 shall be provided where an aggregate of 6 or more male and female water closets are required. In buildings of mixed Use Groups, only those water closets required for those portions classified as Use Group A or Use Group M shall be considered when determining the need for accessible unisex toilet rooms.

2.1.2 Location

2.1.2.1 Unisex toilet rooms shall be located on an accessible route and be available to all users of separate sex toilet rooms.

2.1.2.2 Unisex toilet rooms shall be located not more than one story above or below separate sex toilet rooms and the accessible route from any separate sex toilet rooms to the unisex toilet room shall not exceed 500 feet.

2.1.2.2.1 In passenger transportation facilities and airports, the accessible route from separate sex toilet rooms to unisex toilet rooms shall not pass through security checkpoints.

2.2 Unisex Bathing Rooms

2.2.1 Where Required: In occupancies of Use Group A-3, where separate sex bathing rooms are provided, an accessible unisex bathing room complying with 2.2.2 and 3.0 shall be provided.

EXCEPTION: Where each separate sex bathing room has not more than one water closet, lavatory, and shower fixture.

2.2.2 Location

2.2.2.1 Unisex bathing rooms shall be located on an accessible route and be available to all users of separate sex bathing rooms.

3.0 TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

3.1 General: Unisex toilet and bathing rooms required by 2.0 shall comply with 3.0 and with 4.16 of CABO/ANSI A 117.1-1992.

3.2 Doors

3.2.1 Where doors swing into the room, a 30 in. by 48 in. clear floor space shall be provided within the room, beyond the arc of the door swing.

3.2.2 Doors to accessible unisex toilet and bathing rooms shall be securable from within the room.

3.3 Required Elements

3.3.1 Unisex Toilet Rooms

3.3.1.1 Unisex toilet rooms shall include not more than one water closet and one lavatory, complying with 4.17 and 4.20 of CABO/ANSI A117.1-1992, respectively.

Exception: Unisex bathrooms provided with a water closet and lavatory in accordance with 3.3.2.

3.3.1.2 A separate sex toilet room containing not more than two water closets without urinals or one water closet and one urinal shall be considered as complying with the requirement of 2.1.1 provided signage in accordance with 3.4 is provided.

3.3.2 Unisex Bathing Rooms: Unisex bathing rooms shall include not more than one water closet, one lavatory, and one shower complying with 4.17, 4.20 and 4.22 of CABO/ANSI A117.1-1992, respectively. Where storage facilities are provided in separate sex bathing facilities, accessible storage facilities shall be provided for the unisex bathing room.

3.4 Signs

3.4.1 Unisex toilet and bathing rooms: Unisex toilet and bathing rooms shall be designated by accessible signs in accordance with 4.28 of CABO/ANSI A117.1-1992.

3.4.2 Directional signs: Directional signage shall be provided at all separate sex toilet rooms indicating the location of the nearest unisex toilet room.

Discussion

At the request of the United States Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board (ATBCB), BCMC included an agenda item on Unisex Toilet and Bathing Rooms. At BCMC's 73rd Meeting, BCMC established a Unisex Toilet Task Group to review the draft of the initial proposal. Upon review and revision, the task group approved the forwarding of the draft to BCMC as a BCMC Report after their meeting of March 6, 1995.

The primary issue relative to unisex toilet/bathing facilities is that some people with disabilities use the assistance of persons of the opposite sex and therefore require a toilet or bathing facility that accommodates both persons.

1.3: This section identifies that the required unisex facility can also be used to satisfy the minimum fixture requirements in the model plumbing or building code.

2.1.1: Use groups A and M have the following characteristics:

- High occupant loads and high occupant densities
- A minimum length of stay of approximately 1 hour
- Occupants are somewhat transient

The threshold of six water closets is based on the premise that a toilet room with a maximum of two water closets results in a minimal hardship to non-disabled persons when the room is occupied by someone requiring assistance and privacy. It is unreasonable for rooms which contain 3 or more fixtures to be occupied exclusively by someone requiring assistance. The threshold of 6 water closets reflects this consideration based on 3 water closets in each of the separate sex toilet or bathing rooms.

2.1.2.2: The one story/500 feet is currently in model plumbing or building codes. This requirement may effectively increase the total travel to two stories/1000 feet for someone requiring the use of the unisex facility since the distance is measured from the separate sex facility. The increase is viewed as justified based on the premise that persons needing such facilities will be assisted which will reduce travel time in a wheelchair as well as the requirement that such facilities be provided on an accessible route via elevators.

2.1.2.2.1: Security checkpoints in airports and similar facilities represent a potential delay which may cause missed flights/connections.

3.0: CABO/ANSI A117.1-1992 includes most of the necessary design requirements for such facilities. Additional space requirements to accommodate an assistant in the space along with the person utilizing the facility may be warranted but due to the lack of data, the minimum sizes in the standard are to be applied.

3.2.1 Although possibly redundant with CABO/ANSI, this is included due to questions raised relative to interpretations of the standard.

3.2.2: This requirement is not in the CABO/ANSI standard and therefore included in the report. This requirement is applicable only to dedicated unisex facilities provided with a single water closet and single lavatory. Toilet rooms which are provided with two water closets (or a water closet and urinal) and which are identified in 3.3.1 as meeting 2.1.1 are not to be provided with a security device.

3.3.1: Rooms with only two water closets or one water closet and one urinal satisfy the requirement in 2.1.1 as a unisex toilet room (see discussion in 2.1.1). Such limited size rooms can also be used to satisfy the model plumbing or building code fixture requirements.