

# Accessible Toilets

This is an advisory statement reflecting current statutory and current best practice requirements. It offers guidance on best practice in designing environments not only to meet the needs of disabled people but also of those who may otherwise be restricted by the design of buildings, structures, highways or transportation. Statutory regulations governing the accessibility of the built environment are also provided within the appendices.

Toilets should be no less available for disabled people than for nondisabled people. Toilets should be located to provide disabled people with the shortest, most direct route.

Accessible toilets should be situated at ground level, and/or at the same level as other key facilities, such as main entrances, reception and waiting areas, and refreshment outlets.

A "disabled toilet" is one which is broken. An "accessible toilet" is available for use. Plans and signs should be marked accordingly.

A unisex facility should have its own entrance. It should not be entered from a single sex facility.

The design of WC compartments should enable ease of access and use at any time. The number provided at larger developments should be adequate to avoid queuing.

The toilet cubicle and the route to/from the facility should be accessible, kept free from obstacles, well lit and clearly signed. Corridors and their doors should be to accessible standards.

Cubicle doors in non-automatic units should open outwards, and should allow for opening from outside in an emergency. The locks and door handles must be well maintained and the mechanisms oiled so they can be operated by people who lack strength or are unable to grip.

All-white fittings against all-white walls are invisible to some people. To assist users with impaired vision, there should be a sharp tonal contrast between the main features, equipment and controls inside a cubicle and their background, including door handle and lock, handrails, toilet seat, flush, taps, push buttons and controls.

As well as being clearly distinguishable, main features and controls must be easy to reach and use. All equipment should require a force of no more than 10 Newton to be operated.

Handrails, of the dimensions in the accompanying drawings and check-list, must be strong and firmly fixed. The hinged support rail should not have to be lifted up before it can be folded down. It should not have a leg, and may include a toilet paper bracket. Polished chrome can be hard to see and cold to touch. Matt finishes are available which minimise glare and are better to grip.

It is not acceptable, for reasons of hygiene, to allow baby-feeding in toilets. Preferably, baby care facilities should be provided separately, especially in all major developments, such as large travel terminals and shopping centres. The combined use of toilets for baby-changing is not recommended. It can limit the availability of a toilet for disabled people, who have the same and often more urgent needs to use a toilet as nondisabled people, and litter can compromise the health and safety of disabled users.

Vandalism and misuse of accessible toilets in unsupervised public areas may be avoided with the use of the National Key Scheme promoted by the Royal Association for Disability and Rehabilitation (RADAR). This involves the distribution of keys which fit standard locks on toilets to disabled people through local networks, or obtained directly from RADAR. For users without such keys and where toilets are otherwise locked, clear notices should be displayed explaining how access may be gained.

At major developments where there is adequate space, the provision of penned areas in which assistance dogs can relieve themselves should be considered. These should be distinct from the public walking areas. Guidance on the recommended dimensions and construction of such areas can be obtained from the Guide Dogs for the Blind Association.

## **Visitors and customers**

Provide unisex facilities for visitors and customers who are wheelchair users with approaches separate from single sex toilets. This permits assistance by a companion of either sex. A wheelchair user should not have to travel more than one storey to reach an accessible toilet.

## **Staff**

Toilets for staff who are wheelchair users can be either unisex or integral, i.e. one for each sex. The minimum requirement is provision for both sexes on every other floor, with a maximum horizontal distance of 40m from work-station to toilet.

## **In larger developments**

If there are two or more wheelchair user compartments, the opportunity should be taken to provide both left and right-handed transfer layouts, e.g. to enable someone to get onto the WC from a wheelchair from either side.

## **Internal layout**

The internal layout of the toilet cubicle is critical. See the following diagrams and checklist. If in doubt, seek specialist advice from an Access Officer or Building Control Officer. A unisex facility which complies with all the requirements in this Fact Sheet is entitled to bear the international accessibility symbol.

Facilities for hand washing and drying should be within reach from the WC, prior to transfer back onto the wheelchair. Cubicles should be fitted with an emergency alarm cord, clearly labelled, connected to visual and audible alarms and the door should allow for opening from the outside in an emergency. In addition to a position outside the cubicle, the emergency alarm signal/light must be connected

to a reception point or area which is constantly staffed, where it can be acted upon immediately.

The emergency alarm or call for assistance cord should be red or colour distinguished from its background, and distinct from other controls such as light switches. The cord should be positioned to hang between the WC and wash basin and should reach almost to floor level, passing through wall mounted guides for ease of control. Two large pull handles should be attached to the cord at 950mm and 250mm above floor level, to enable assistance to be called from the seated position or from floor level if someone has fallen. An additional cord may be provided against the opposite wall to facilitate use if someone has fallen. It is recommended that the alarm reset switch be positioned inside the cubicle.

[Dimensions in brackets] are specified in Part M Building Regulations 1991 (1999 Edition). [...] indicates that a reference is made in Part M Building Regulations.

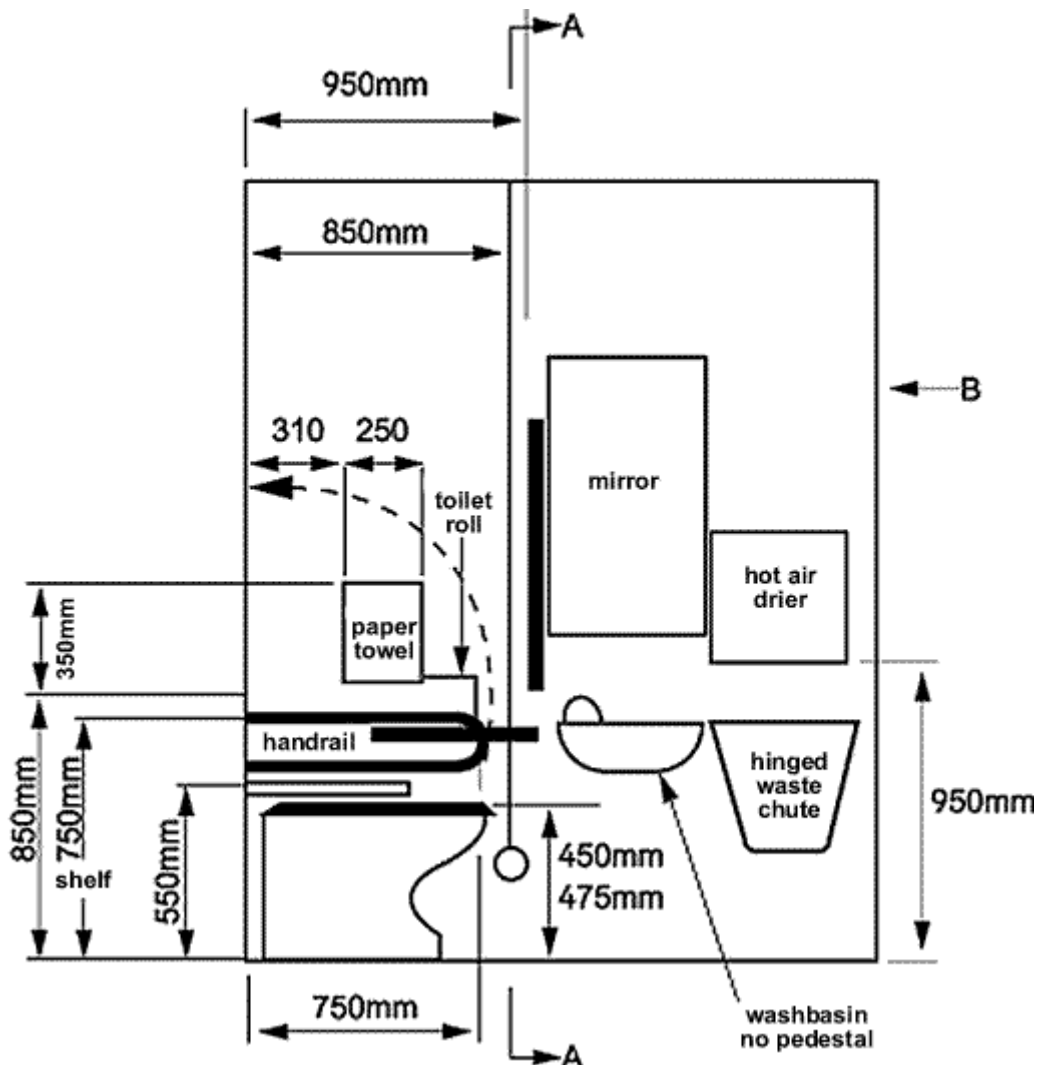
References are to WC compartment unless otherwise stated.

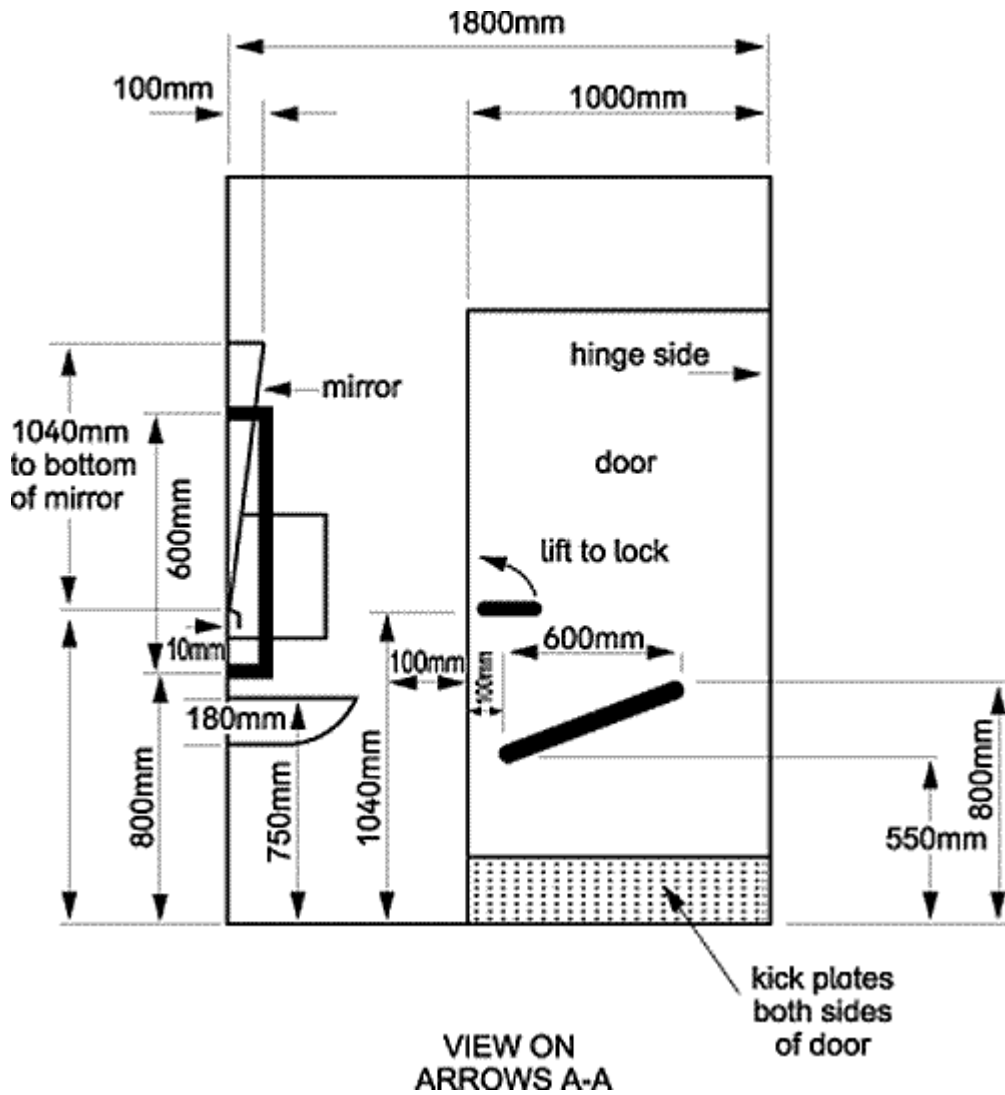
Fixtures and fittings should be positioned so they can be used by a person seated in a wheelchair.

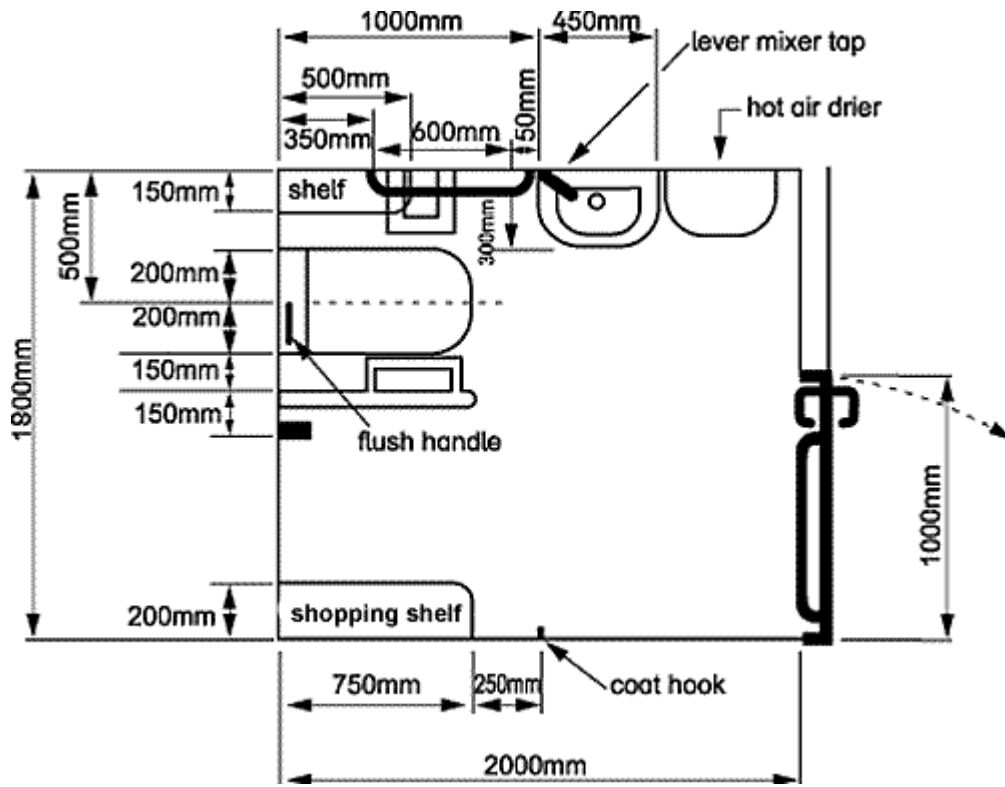
Height and similar dimensions are from finished floor level/wall surfaces and apply to a non-automated compartment.

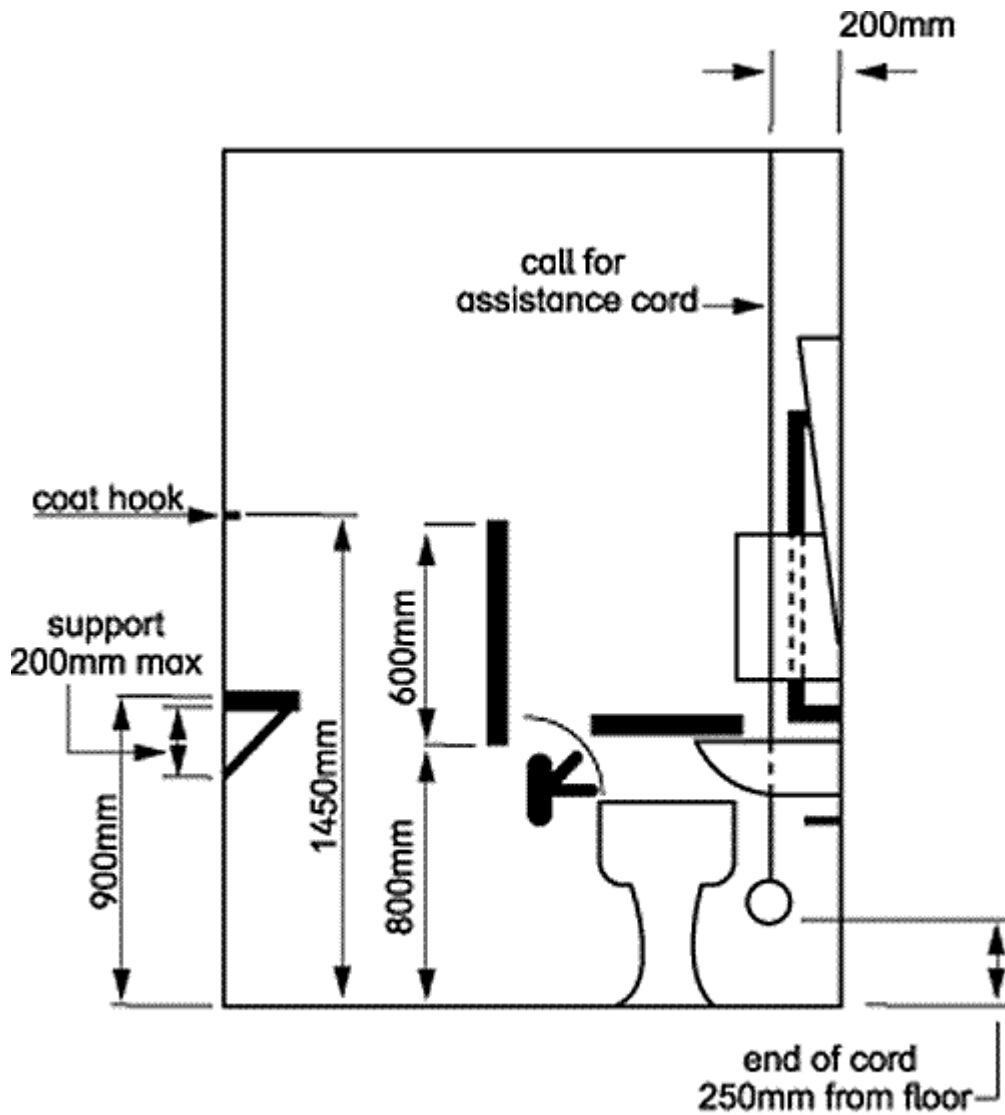
- Door - 925mm minimum clear opening width [1000mm single leaf doorset]
- Sign on door and wheelchair symbol
- Handle on outside of door 1040mm above floor level
- Spring closer on door, but not too strong, e.g. hydraulic delayed action type exerting no more than 10 Newton
- Lock on inside of door, large and easy to operate, 1040mm above floor [...]
- Pull rail [35mm diameter] on inside of door 600mm long, fixed at 30° to horizontal sloping down to doors leading edge [...]
- Light cord/switch, within reach 1040mm above floor level
- Wheelchair turning room/floorspace, minimum floor area 1800mm x 2000mm [minimum floor area 1500mm x 2000mm]
- Area should not be used for storage, should be free from obstructions
- Floor surface level, smooth and skid-resistant
- WC height [450mm to 475mm to top of seat]
- WC distance from side wall [centre-line 500mm from side wall]
- WC distance from back wall [front 750mm from back wall]
- Seat of WC should be correctly fitted. Avoid open-fronted (horseshoe) type
- Flush handle for WC should be on transfer side within reach, no higher than 1000mm
- Twin hinged support rail [35mm dia.] next to WC [150mm from side of WC]
- Hinged support rail - [height 750mm to top rail]
- Horizontal support rail [35mm diameter, 600mm long] at side of WC [350mm from back wall]
- Horizontal support rail - [height 700mm to top of rail]
- Toilet paper holder with toilet paper, within reach to side of WC [...]
- Wash basin on side wall, within reach, preferably with no pedestal protruding from wall [250mm from WC, 750mm height to top]
- Tap(s) with running water, within reach on side nearer to WC, levertype easy to operate (not pressure taps) [...]

- Soap (or single-handed easy to operate soap-dispenser) within reach from WC [..]
- Hand-drier or towel, within reach from WC [..]
- Vertical support rail [35mm diameter, 600mm long] on back wall [300mm from side of WC, height 800mm from bottom of rail]
- Vertical support rail [35mm diameter, 600mm long] on side wall [950mm from back wall, height 800mm from bottom of rail]
- Mirror above wash basin or on opposite side wall 500mm x 900mm [400mm wide x 900mm], fixed 1040mm above floor top wedged by 100mm downside [fixed 900mm above floor]
- Sanitary waste disposal bin
- Coat hook, within reach, 1450mm-1500mm high
- Shelves for bags etc. within reach
- Emergency alarm cord, red/colour distinguished, within reach from floor, large pull handle
- Colour contrast of main features to assist people with impaired vision
- Emergency alarm/light in suitable position(s) outside compartment
- Corridors/approach to compartment level, suitable width to allow wheelchair manoeuvring, including door openings, and free from obstruction
- Adequate lighting and signing to approach



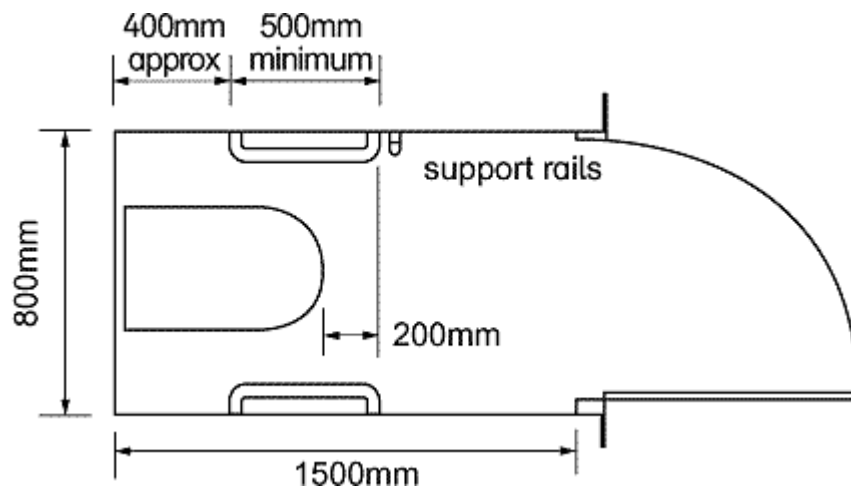
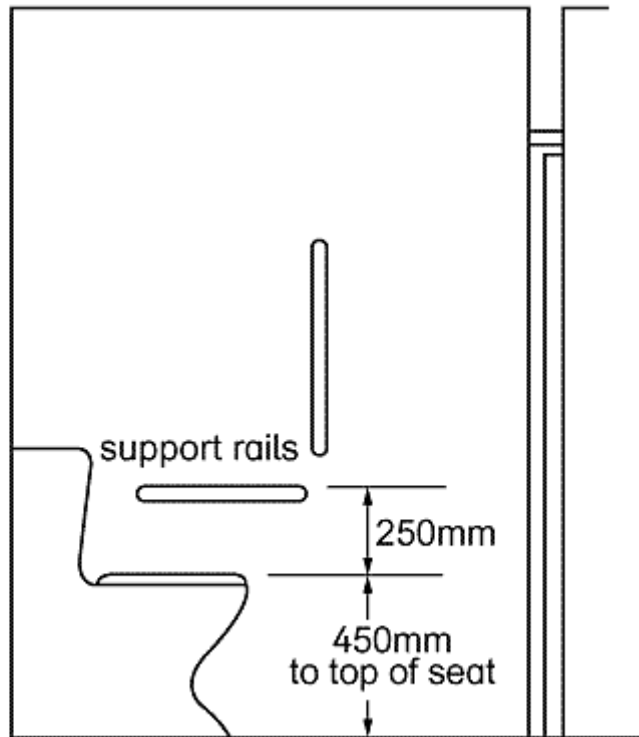






**VIEW IN DIRECTION OF ARROW B**

In storeys inaccessible to wheelchair users, provide at least one toilet accessible to ambulant disabled people within any block of toilets. When not intended to be wheelchair accessible, the toilet cubicle should be at least 1500mm deep and 800mm wide.



This advice comes, with thanks, from the following website:-

<http://www.accesscode.info/introduction/1.htm>