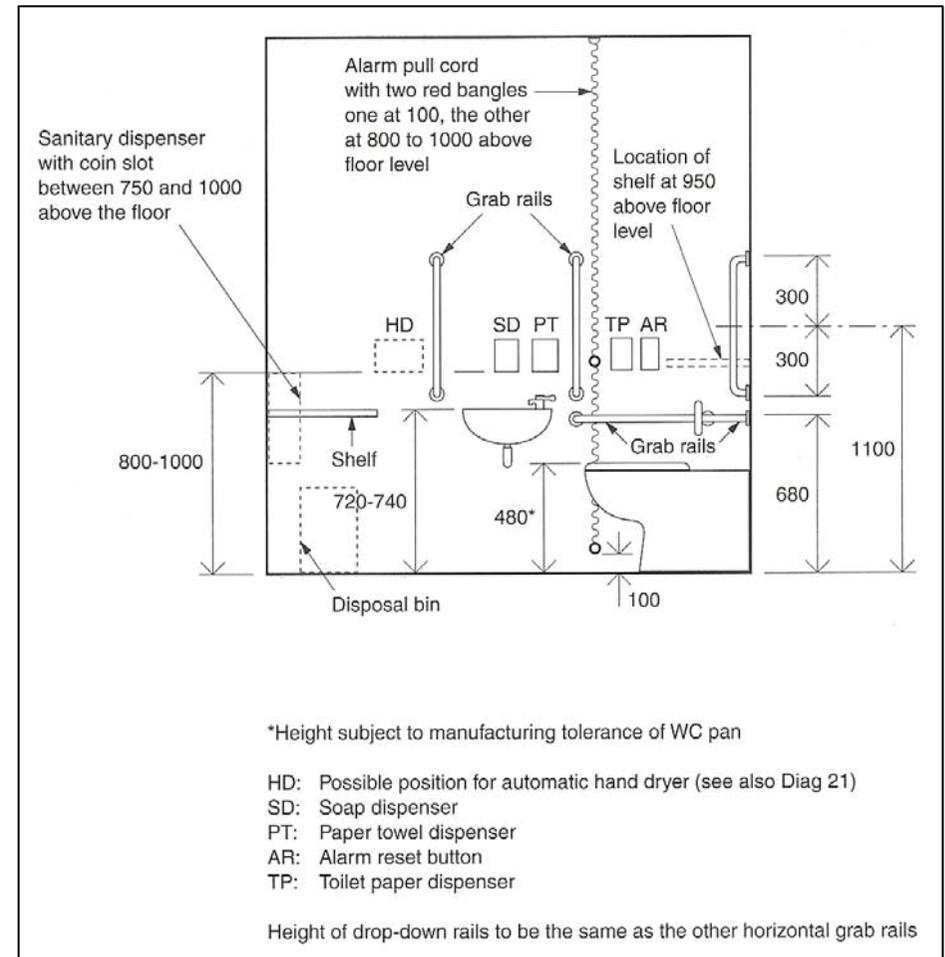


Unisex wheelchair-accessible toilet with corner WC

An important and developing function of Building Control is to foster a more inclusive approach to the design of buildings to accommodate the needs of all people. This applies to all buildings, including dwellings, and guidance on this subject is contained within Approved Document M. These Regulations apply to extensions, alterations and change of use, as well as to new buildings, and as the requirements are so detailed, it is only possible here to give a general introduction.

It is necessary to provide a suitable means of access for people from car parking provided within the building site to the point of entrance to the building. Wheelchair users and ambulant disabled people have difficulty in negotiating changes of levels and people with impaired sight may be unaware of the onset of abrupt changes in level.

It is desirable that the principal access to the building has a level approach. If this is not possible a ramped approach can be used. However, not all ambulant disabled people find it as easy to negotiate a ramp as they do a stair, and therefore a



Heights and arrangement of fittings in a unisex wheelchair-accessible toilet

stepped approach may need to be incorporated. It is important that the entrance door is suitable, and that once inside the building, the design allows convenient access without discomfort to enable use of all the relevant facilities, including WC accommodation.

This requires consideration to be given to the provision of sufficient space for wheelchair manoeuvrability and vertical circulation (lifts).

In addition, it needs to be ensured that all people are able to participate in the proceedings at lecture/ conference centres and at entertainment or leisure and social venues, not only as spectators, but also as participants or staff.

Because the requirements are so in depth, showing compliance on drawings will not always be practical. The recommended method for demonstrating how the regulations will be satisfied is to produce an Access Statement.

The precise form of the statement will vary according to the size, nature and complexity of the proposed development, and further details can be obtained from the Disability Rights Commission.

It should be noted that many of the aims of Part M of the Building Regulations are similar to those of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA).

The DDA imposes, amongst other things, a duty on service providers to make reasonable adjustments to premises to avoid discrimination against people with disabilities. This applies to existing buildings as well as new premises from 1st October 2004, but is not enforceable under Building Control legislation.

Any person who considers that they have been discriminated against can bring a civil action against the persons responsible for the building, and it is important to note that compliance with Approved Document M will not necessarily in itself be an adequate defence.

Further information on the DDA is available from:

Disability Rights Commission
Tel. 08457 622633
Website: www.drc-gb.org

Centre for Accessible Environments
Tel. 02073 578182
Website: www.cae.org.uk

Note:

Persons proposing to carry out building work are reminded that Planning Permission or Listed Building Consent may also be required, and you are advised to contact Development Control for guidance (01983 823552).

Further advice can be obtained from:

Planning Services
Building Control Section
Seaclose Offices
Fairlee Road
NEWPORT
Isle of Wight
PO30 2QS

☎: 01983 823580

E-mail: building.control@iow.gov.uk

Website: www.iwight.com/buildingcontrol

BUILDING CONTROL

ADVISORY NOTE BC6

FACILITIES FOR DISABLED PERSONS & THE DDA



PLANNING SERVICES