



A Project of the Burton Blatt Institute at Syracuse University

1-800-949-4232 (v/tty)
ADAsoutheast.org

Small Business and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Getting It Right!

In 2009, the U.S. Small Business Administration's Office of Advocacy estimated that there were 27.5 million small businesses in the United States making up more than 99% of the total businesses in the nation. Small businesses are defined as those with fewer than 500 employees. (Source: <http://web.sba.gov/faqs/faqIndexAll.cfm?areaid=24>)

All businesses, including small businesses, that provide goods or services to the public are covered under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and are called "public accommodations." There are 12 categories of public accommodations including stores, restaurants, bars, service establishments, theaters, hotels, recreational facilities, private museums and schools, doctors' and dentists' offices, shopping malls, and many others. Nearly all types of businesses that serve the public are included in the 12 categories, regardless of the size of the business or the age of their buildings.

So, what are small businesses that comply with the ADA doing to get it right?

Accessible parking spaces are well marked, sized correctly, and free of clutter.

Individuals with disabilities who need accessible parking feel welcome right from the start when the accessible parking is in place, is well marked, is the right size, and free of things that just don't belong there. Accessible parking allows a customer with a disability to move safely from his vehicle to the business. Accessible parking spaces are eight feet wide; van-accessible spaces are 11 feet wide. Access aisles for either type of space are five (5) feet wide. For parking facilities with 1-25 spaces, there must be one accessible space; for facilities with 25-50 spaces, there must be two accessible spaces, etc. Furthermore, there must be at least 1 van accessible space for every 6 accessible parking spaces, or fraction thereof. For example, this means that for parking areas with 25 or fewer parking spaces, the single required accessible space must be van-accessible.

[Accessible Parking](http://adata.org/parking)

<http://adata.org/parking>

Information, Guidance and Training on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

1419 Mayson Street, Atlanta, GA 30324

404-541-9001 (v/tty) • 1-800-949-4232 (v/tty) • 404-541-9002 (Fax)

ADAsoutheast@law.syr.edu • www.ADAsoutheast.org

Ensure that individuals with disabilities can enter and move through the business easily.

Businesses that get it right ensure that individuals with disabilities can enter the place of business and navigate easily via an accessible route. The accessible route is at least three feet wide and remains clear. Businesses make a conscious effort to make sure that these routes are not blocked by items such as furniture, filing cabinets, display racks, potted plants, or boxes.

[Accessible Entrances and Accessible Route to Goods and Services](http://ada.gov/regs2010/smallbusiness/smallbusprimer2010.htm#entrances)

<http://ada.gov/regs2010/smallbusiness/smallbusprimer2010.htm#entrances>

Allow individuals with disability to enter the business with their service animals.

Small businesses that are getting it right welcome individuals with a disability and their service animals. A clear policy permitting service animals can help ensure that staff is aware of their obligation to allow access to customers using service animals. Under the ADA's 2010 revised regulations, the definition of "service animal" is limited to a dog (and in some instances, a miniature horse) that is individually trained to do work or perform specific tasks for an individual with a disability.

[ADA Update: A Primer for Small Business - Service Animals](http://ada.gov/regs2010/smallbusiness/smallbusprimer2010.htm#serviceanimals)

<http://ada.gov/regs2010/smallbusiness/smallbusprimer2010.htm#serviceanimals>

[Service Animals Fact Sheet](http://adata.org/animals)

<http://adata.org/animals>

Communicates with customers who have vision, hearing, or speech disabilities.

Communicating with customers is essential to the success of a small business. Small businesses that have procedures in place for communicating with customers who have vision, hearing, or speech disabilities are getting it right. Business owners or managers must decide what assistance is appropriate, depending on the nature of the communication and the customer's normal method of communication.

[Effective Communication Fact Sheet](http://adata.org/communication)

<http://adata.org/communication>

[ADA Update: A Primer for Small Business - Communicating with Customers](http://ada.gov/regs2010/smallbusiness/smallbusprimer2010.htm#communicating)

<http://ada.gov/regs2010/smallbusiness/smallbusprimer2010.htm#communicating>

Provide staff training.

Small businesses that provide ongoing staff training about ADA policies and procedures and effective implementation are getting it right. Policies and procedures are only as good as the front line staff who implement them.

[ADA Update: A Primer for Small Business – Staff Training](http://ada.gov/regs2010/smallbusiness/smallbusprimer2010.htm#facilityassessmnt)

<http://ada.gov/regs2010/smallbusiness/smallbusprimer2010.htm#facilityassessmnt>

Know who to call when you need help.

Small businesses that need help in understanding the Americans with Disabilities Act call the ADA National Network at 1-800-949-4232 (voice/tty). All calls are free and confidential!

DISCLAIMER

The Southeast ADA Center is funded by the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR) of the U.S. Department of Education (Grant #H133A110021) to provide information, materials, training and technical assistance on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). However, you should be aware that NIDRR is not responsible for enforcement of the ADA. For more information or assistance, please contact the Southeast ADA Center via its website at www.adasoutheast.org or by calling 1-800-949-4232 (v/tty) [AL, FL, GA, KY, MS, NC, SC, TN] or 404-541-9001 (v/tty).

The information, materials, and/or technical assistance provided are intended solely as informal guidance, and are neither a determination of your legal rights or responsibilities under the ADA, nor binding on any agency with enforcement responsibility under the ADA. The Southeast ADA Center does not warrant the accuracy of any information contained herein. Any links to non-Southeast ADA Center information are provided as a courtesy and are not intended to nor do they constitute an endorsement of the linked materials.