



EVERYONE'S INVITED

INCLUDING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

ACCESSIBLE PORTABLE TOILETS

10 TIPS FOR SUCCESS



The portable pathway under this toilet does not seem like it would be an issue but...

Two women with disabilities sat in front of me and told me the gritty truth about their experience in accessible toilets. They told me that they and many other people with disabilities often fall down in toilets. Yes, down onto the disgusting floor. People with disabilities might slip when transferring from their wheelchair to the toilet, their crutch may slide out from under them on the wet floor, they may have difficulty with balance, or any other number of reasons why they might fall down onto the floor. "We're used to it," they said.

I am grateful to these women who gave me this lesson many years ago. As Access Program Managers, we don't always have control over how often the toilets are cleaned but it is our job to educate the producers who contract with the portable toilet companies. Tell them about people with disabilities falling on the floor and about people who have weak immune systems. Tell them that parents will use the larger accessible portable toilets when they have their children with them. Spread the word that accessible portable toilets should be kept as clean as possible, must be properly placed, and be in good working order.

Here are 10 tips to help make your patron's experience much more pleasant.

1. Check all of the accessible toilets to make sure they are in good working order:
 - a. Do the doors swing easily without dragging on the ground?
 - b. Are the door handles and locks in proper working order and usable by someone with little strength in their hands and no ability to grasp, pinch, or twist?
 - c. Are the grab bars well attached and will not come loose when someone puts their full weight on them?
 - d. Is the toilet seat well attached?
 - e. Check for any broken or jagged edges and have them fixed.
2. Place the toilet on level ground.
3. Make sure there is an accessible route to the toilet.
4. Ask the toilet contractor to provide these extras:
 - a. Interior lighting is very helpful, especially when dealing with colostomy bags or managing other medical conditions.
 - b. A coat hook installed no higher than 48" per ADA standards. Most people are carrying a bag or backpack. Don't make them put it on the floor.
 - c. Put a hand sanitizer dispenser or a sink inside the unit or just outside.



...when you measure the height of the rise that the portable pathway creates, you see that it is 2" tall, not accessible at all. Anything over 1/4" needs to be ramped. This toilet should be placed directly at ground level.

5. Because of their larger size, accessible portable toilets are very attractive to people without disabilities and they get more use than standard toilets. Lock some of the accessible toilets in key locations such as near the viewing platforms and the Access Center. This helps to protect these toilets from overuse by people without disabilities. Make sure you have publicized where people can get the code to the lock. It is often distributed out of the Access Center or Info Booth. Not everyone has the ability to open a lock. Is there a staff person or volunteer nearby to open the lock if assistance is needed? If not, place an unlocked accessible toilet next to the locked accessible toilet.
6. Accessible toilets are required to have a sign with a wheelchair symbol affixed to the door. Also post a sign on the door with information about where to find the code to the lock.
7. Place a standard toilet next to the accessible toilet for the companions who do not need to use the accessible toilets. This helps to minimize use and maintain cleanliness.
8. Be sure to have the accessible toilets cleaned and stocked frequently. Make it someone's job to check the condition of the toilets between scheduled cleanings and call for an additional cleaning if needed. Keep extra toilet paper so, if needed, you can stock the toilets between cleanings.
9. There are differently sized accessible portable toilets. The smaller ones have the minimum space required by the regulations but the larger accessible toilets have more room for those who must turn their wheelchair around after entering so that they can transfer to the toilet, or who have a companion in the toilet to assist them. Make sure that your toilet provider brings at least some of the larger toilets to place in key locations.
10. The Americans with Disabilities Act requires that 5% of all toilets that are open to the public on an event's site be accessible and that 5% of the toilets in each cluster of toilets be accessible. If you have 1-20 toilets in a cluster, at least one must be accessible. If you have 21 to 40 toilets in a cluster, at least two must be accessible. And on up from there.

All too often I see accessible portable toilets that are in an inaccessible location, are filthy, are broken, or otherwise unacceptable. Given that this a significant aspect of a fan's experience, let's all endeavor to provide perfection in the porto experience!

Everyone's Invited, LLC, founded by **Laura Grunfeld**, is winner of the gold level "Best Accessibility Program," for the 2018 IFEA/Haas & Wilkerson Pinnacle Awards. Laura writes a regular column helping producers make their events accessible to people with disabilities. She has worked many festivals across the nation and readers can learn more about her event accessibility consulting, training, and production company at www.EveryonesInvited.com and www.linkedin.com/in/lauragrunfeld. Suggest topics or ask questions by writing to Laura@EveryonesInvited.com. © Laura Grunfeld, Everyone's Invited, LLC, January 2019