

Taken to Access

Question of the month:

Q. Why do head clearance dimensions differ from 80" AFF in some instances to 98" AFF and 114" AFF in others?

R. These vertical clearances are established for different purposes and are not one in the same. The 80" vertical clearance is a head clearance requirement specific to circulation paths which are provided for pedestrian travel. Reference 11B-307. The 98" vertical clearance dimension was established based on typical height of accessible vans and is required for parking spaces and vehicular routes serving them. Reference 11B-502.5. The 114" vertical clearance requirement is based on typical height of shuttles and buses and is specific to Passenger Drop off and Loading Zones. Reference 11B-503.5.

CLEAR YOUR HEAD

"If a tree falls in the forest and no one is around to hear it, does it make a sound?" My answer has always been "of course" since by the simple laws of physics we know that the tree will create compressions in the air while falling and those disturbances/ vibrations is what we know as sound. But here is another question where the answer is not always so clear: "Is an object exceeding 4" in horizontal depth always considered a protruding object regardless of where it is installed?"

Per scoping requirements under 11B-204 protruding objects on circulation paths must comply with protrusion limits as established in 11B-307. See figure below. Per 11B-106.5 a circulation path is defined as: *An exterior or interior way of passage provided for pedestrian travel, including but not limited to, walks, hallways, courtyards, elevators, platform lifts, ramps, stairways, and landings.* So when is a circulation path not limited to walks, hallways, courtyards etc?

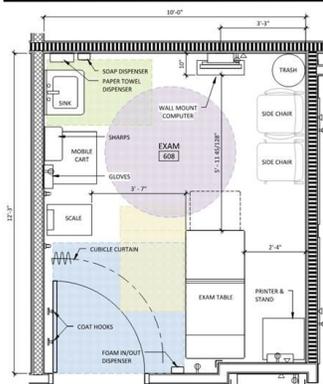
Consider the exam room layout shown below. The wall mounted computer protrudes 10" from the wall. During plan review, the access specialist flagged it as a protruding object as it was considered to be located along the path between the guest seating and the hand washing fixture.

In the second example, a pipe was located 74" AFF in a parking garage. During a survey, the access specialist noted it as a barrier. The team argued that the parking area is by definition a vehicular zone, not a pedestrian zone, that there is no path leading to or from an accessible element and therefore the object would not be considered a protruding object.

In an effort to increase clarity and consistency in reviews, we have submitted to the US Access Board a request for clarification in defining a circulation path. We expect the topic to be addressed this Thursday October 2, 2014 during the Accessibility on Line "Building Blocks—A Refresher" webinar. To participate, go to <http://www.accessibilityonline.org/Schedule/> and register in advance. Upon completing research and discussions, FPS PAC will issue guidance through a BIN. In the meantime, please continue to direct your case by case inquiries to any member of the FPS PAC team.

Announcements:

In April of this year, the US Access Board launched new online guides on the first 3 chapters of the ADA and ABA Accessibility Standards. The guides help explain and clarify requirements, answers common questions and provides animations on various topics. To review go to <http://www.access-board.gov/guidelines-and-standards/buildings-and-sites/about-the-ada-standards/guide-to-the-ada-standards>



Example 1

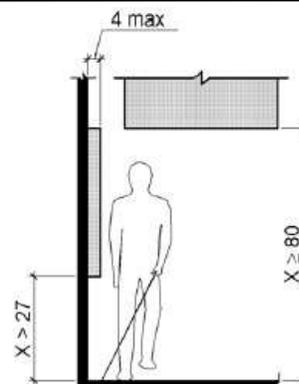


Figure 11B-307



Example 2