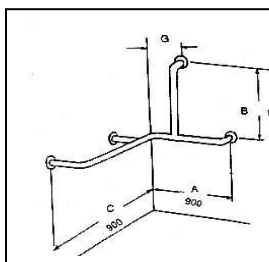


# Building Products And Equipment In Housing

The Australian Standards for Housing Design and the development of building products have long recognised the needs of people with a disability. Manufacturers are producing an increasing range of equipment for people with disabilities, the elderly and carers, to make life easier.

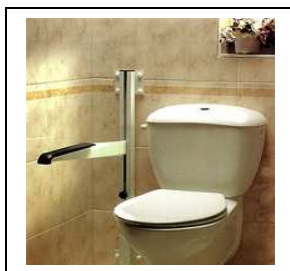
Standards provide guidelines for designing an accessible environment. For example, they illustrate zones for mounting grab rails and provide a range of preferable bench heights. The standards, however, do not provide a simple formula that can be used with any person in any home. Individual solutions require thorough consideration of the person's needs now and in the future. A collaboration between builder and/or architect, occupational therapist, the individual and their carers will lead to a cost effective long term solution to suit all parties.



## RAILS

Grab rails are commonly used to assist individuals to transfer in or out of the shower and bath, on or off the toilet and to stand in the shower.

The Australian Design Standard for Access and Mobility provides guidelines for the suggested placement of grab rails. Ready-made Australian Standard compliant rail systems can be purchased, however these may not be suitable for an individual's particular needs or may not fit an existing shower recess. Alternatively, modular grab rails can be custom made for any location and any length.



Floor mounted grab rails can be used where the wall is too far away from the toilet to provide a position of strength for the person getting on or off the toilet. They are also useful where wall structures will not support grab rails.

## THE SHOWER AND BATH

The Australian Standards recommend installing wall mounted shower seats with support legs to the floor. Freestanding shower seats are another option though. These seats should have non-slip feet and should be adjusted to the correct height for the person.

If the shower is over the bath, a bath board can be used to enable sitting while showering. A raised bath board may enable a person to sit first then lift their legs over the edge of the bath, possibly eliminating the need for rails or non-slip products.



The shower should be screened by a curtain hung on a continuous curtain rail. Using a weighted curtain helps prevent it from getting in the way in the shower.

Slip resistant tiles or vinyl are used on continuous shower floors. If there is a shower tray on a flat slab on the ground it can be less expensive to install a ramped shower tray instead of excavating the slab.

A hand held shower spray is helpful for a person who showers when seated or for a carer to assist. Some come on a grab rail with height adjustable bracket to hang the shower head on.

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### BATHROOM LAYOUT

Consider having a combined bathroom and toilet. The ideal is to have free space beside the toilet with a shower that is open on two sides, continuous and level with the bathroom floor. A 1900mm x 2400mm floor area is sufficient to accommodate a walk-in/wheel-in shower, vanity and toilet with sufficient space to turn a wheelchair, space to get on/off the toilet from the front or side and space for a carer to provide assistance.

### TOILETING

People with very short limbs or those with very limited upper limb function can clean themselves after toileting using a bidet. Fully plumbed bidets which replace the toilet are available along with less expensive removable models.

For those who cannot manage conventional taps, including long lever quarter turn taps, a sensor tap can provide the solution. Water is turned on/off by passing a body part in front of a sensor switch.



### GETTING IN AND AROUND THE HOUSE

Ramps may be required to enable access to or within buildings. AS 1428.1 specifies recommended grades and other features of ramps to improve access for active wheelchair users.

Portable ramps can be used over short grades and/or when renting.

Threshold ramps are used to bridge the change in level between two adjacent floors, usually when a door separates the two floor levels as in a patio or verandah. Ready made adjustable threshold ramps can be purchased or alternatively suitable threshold ramps may be custom made. For larger rises, prefabricated modular AS compliant, ramp systems may be an option.

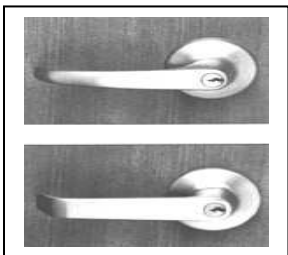


### DOOR FURNITURE

For individuals with limited dexterity, a sliding indicator bolt may prove easier than a conventional turn indicator door latch.

If standard door knobs are troublesome consider replacing them with lever handles or attaching lever handles to the existing knob.

Electric door openers are also available for individuals who are unable to use knobs or lever handles. These can be sensor beam activated as they are in shops, or activated by pushing a simple large switch with any body part.



### NEED TO KNOW MORE?

Telephone, fax or email your enquiry to obtain further information from one of the therapists about products. Alternatively, you can make an appointment to trial the equipment at our display centres or through our outreach service. Please phone LifeTec Queensland for further details.

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