

CUSTOMER SERVICE



quick tips

Ensuring full access to your business and services is a great way to expand your customer base. There are approximately 56.7 million Americans with disabilities (roughly 18% of the population). In addition, people with disabilities have friends and family members who care about disability and accessibility and are potential customers. Individuals with disabilities have significant money to spend (more than \$200 billion in discretionary income) and so do their companions and friends. An accessible business is also safer and more user-friendly for everyone, including older customers and aging baby boomers.

DISABILITY ETIQUETTE TIPS

- ▶ Use common sense and show common courtesy to everyone.
- ▶ Treat everyone like a valued customer. Don't patronize.
- ▶ Be patient. People with disabilities and seniors might require more time to express themselves or to move about.
- ▶ Speak directly to the person and maintain eye contact; don't speak to a companion, aide or interpreter.
- ▶ Describe and address people with disabilities appropriately. Use "person first" language that emphasizes the person rather than the disability or condition, as in "person who has epilepsy" rather than "epileptic." This also means avoiding terms such as "handicapped," "victim," "afflicted," and "confined."
- ▶ Offer assistance and listen to the response; follow any specific instructions. If the response is "no thank you," this should also be respected.
- ▶ Do not pet, feed or distract service animals. They are working animals, not pets.
- ▶ Do not make assumptions about anyone's abilities or limitations; every person's disability is different. Ask questions if you are not sure what someone needs.

AREAS TO ASSESS FOR ACCESSIBILITY

- ▶ Parking
- ▶ Entrance
- ▶ Lobby
- ▶ Public bathrooms
- ▶ Service counters
- ▶ Outdoor areas, including curb cuts and sidewalks
- ▶ Elevators
- ▶ Hallways
- ▶ Communication and signs (TTY, Braille, etc.)
- ▶ Emergency Exits

All of these areas have specific accessibility requirements. Your regional ADA Center is available to discuss these requirements, provide training and answer your other ADA-related questions. To contact your regional center, call (800) 949-4232 v/tty or go to <http://www.adata.org>.

ADA National Network ■ 1-800-949-4232 V/TTY ■ [adata.org](http://www.adata.org)