4.2d | Temporary Lodging

Temporary lodging includes hotels, shelters of all types and halfway houses. There are many similarities in applying universal design to all these building types. But because these facilities provide a broad spectrum of services and serve diverse populations, there are obviously some important differences between them.

Building Identification

Temporary lodging facilities should be easily identifiable by people who need to find them, especially those who are at risk. This may include both potential guests and visitors (e.g., social service workers, health care workers). In particular, building signage should be easy to comprehend by all.

Guidelines:

- Incorporate two types of signage: overhead signs for detection at a distance and wall signs for closer detection.
- Signs should have high contrast and effective lighting. If possible, illuminate signs for nighttime use.
- Provide signs with the street address in a conspicuous location.

Figure 4.2d.1. Hotels should provide signage at two different scales - one that is legible from several blocks away and another that is detectable at the pedestrian pathway level.
Building Entrances

Temporary lodging should be easy to access from public transit, parking and pedestrian pathways. Since guests at hotels and some shelters are likely to be carrying baggage, a drop-off zone and temporary parking in close proximity are needed.

Guidelines:

- Locate the main entrance in close proximity to the major points of public access (e.g., transit stop, pedestrian pathway or parking lot).
- Doorbells and intercoms should be within reach of and usable by people with a wide range of statures and abilities.
- Install an intercom, vision panels or audio-video system to facilitate two-way communication and assist those who need access when the entry is locked.
- Provide a drop-off area or temporary parking that is usable by all guests and close to the main entrance.
- Ensure that the area close to the main entrance is well lighted and provides a clear path of travel to the entrance for all guests (e.g., no steep grade changes or steps).

Staff Offices

Welcoming offices for staff should be provided in all temporary lodging.

Guidelines:

- Staff offices should be strategically located for easy access.
- In shelters where residents will stay for a while (e.g., hospice facilities and shelters for abused women and children), access
to staff should be possible without the barrier of a service counter.

Provide an information center near the staff office to keep all guests informed of activities in the building. A staff person should be in charge of the information center and be available to assist people who cannot read.

**Sleeping Rooms**

Sleeping rooms in all temporary lodging should be inviting and facilitate social interaction.

**Guidelines:**

- In hotels, provide accessible rooms in a choice of sizes, locations, views and cost categories.
- All controls for heating and air conditioning, lighting, entertainment systems and communications systems should be located within reach of seated people, be easy to operate and well lighted.
- Provide secure storage for personal goods and valuable belongings that can be accessed by any user. In shelters, include additional storage since some guests may be carrying everything they own.
- Provide locks that can be used easily without great force or tight grasping. Locks should be well illuminated.
- Provide enough clear floor area for convenient access along the full length of the bed and to access all other furniture, storage units, lighting, environmental controls and windows.
- Provide enough space around doorways for all people to enter, turn around and exit the room without being impeded by the door swing.

**Figure 4.2d.4.** This bedroom provides accessible storage which is essential for all types of temporary lodging.

**Figure 4.2d.5.** Showers in temporary lodging should adapt to the needs of the user with adjustable fixture heights and seating.
All operable windows should be easy to open and have all hardware within reach of people who are standing or sitting.

**Bathrooms**

Privacy and independence are critical in bathrooms although some people will need assistance, especially in shelters for people with medical conditions.

**Guidelines:**

- Bathroom design should promote independent use but also accommodate those who require assistance.
- Provide safety features such as grab bars, slip resistant surfaces, non-glare lighting, effective ventilation and an emergency alarm system – particularly for residents who may require assistance.
- Provide some bathrooms with tubs and some with showers, or provide a tub room if only showers are available in bedroom suites.
- Include adequate storage for personal grooming and hygiene items within reach of people who may be standing or sitting. In shelters, provide additional storage space since some guests may be there for an extended stay.
- Consider use of the bathroom by children and infants and provide space for storing children’s bath products and toys.

**Kitchens**

Cooking facilities should be available where residents will stay for relatively long periods of time. Kitchens play an important role in social interaction since people tend to congregate where food is shared.
Guidelines:

1. In shelters and residential hotels, provide a kitchenette so residents and guests can prepare their own meals or snacks. The kitchenette should be equipped with utensils and dishware.

2. Provide enough space for small groups to congregate in kitchens.

3. Provide safety devices such as a fire extinguisher and an emergency alarm and locate them in places that are easy to find and reach.

4. All kitchens should have counter space that can be used in both a standing and seated posture. Consider further levels of adjustability to accommodate differences in stature.

5. When no kitchens are available, provide information for food delivery service in a variety of forms (e.g., written, audiotape, Braille) to ensure communication of essential information to all guests.

Social and Activity Spaces

In temporary lodging, particularly extended stay facilities, social and activity spaces are important to the guests' sense of well being.

Guidelines:

1. In shelters, provide private space for an individual or small group to meet with counselors or support staff when needed.

2. Living rooms, dining rooms and activity rooms in shelters should provide sufficient space for all people to access and use all amenities, including furniture, entertainment systems and storage.
Provide adequate general illumination plus supplementary task lighting to increase light levels for all activities requiring fine handwork, reading and conversation.

All televisions should include captioning features and multiple language options.

If telephones are not provided in rooms, provide a communal phone with adequate privacy and a place to sit while using it.

**Recreation Facilities**

Many forms of temporary lodging provide facilities for their guests' active participation in recreational and fitness activities.

**Guidelines:**

- **All levels in lobbies, recreation and entertainment facilities should be accessible without stairs.**
- **Fitness facilities should provide a clear path of travel for all users to at least one of every type of equipment.**
- **The selection of equipment in fitness facilities should accommodate a range of abilities.**
- **Pools and hot tubs should be usable without having to climb steps or ladders to get in and out.**

*Figure 4.2d.8. Where telephones are not provided in individual rooms, a communal phone usable by everyone in an area that provides at least limited privacy is important.*