

## A GUIDE TO ADA TUB BENCH AND SHOWER SEAT REQUIREMENTS

For those who travel and require a tub or shower bench while staying at hotels – you have most likely experienced the following scenario. When booking a hotel reservation, you might verify a brief accessibility check list with the reservationists to confirm that the room meets the basic requirements such as proper door widths, grab bars in the bathroom, elevated commode, and whether there is a tub or roll-in shower.

One thing that many forget to ask is whether the hotel will provide a transfer bench which meets the ADA's specifications. As a result, often upon checking into your room, you find a tiny, cinchy, wobbly plastic stool with no backrest.

It is most likely so narrow that the seat doesn't extend outside the tub to help ensure a safe transfer surface. That might be sufficient for an able-bodied individual with the capability to step into the tub and sit directly on the seat. However, as is the case with most of us with spinal cord injuries, we typically have limited trunk balance.

Transferring several feet to reach an unstable narrow seat without a back support not only requires Flying Wallenda like acrobatic skills, but is down right unsafe. It can be an easy way to break a limb or in some cases much worse- especially when you and/or the seating surface are wet.

Some individuals choose to travel with their own transfer bench, however this can not only be cumbersome, but it is also expensive to ship or check on the airline as additional baggage. Another option is to call the hotel directly (not the toll-free reservation center) and ask to speak to the manager (be sure to jot down their name and the date and time of your call). Let them know when you will be arriving at their hotel and that you will require a ADA compliant tub bench. They likely won't know what that means and it is often difficult to explain the specifications over the phone.



To assist in this process, the Spinal Cord Injury Association of Virginia has developed this one page informational sheet which specifies what is a correct tub bench and what is

not. You can then offer to fax the manager a copy or direct them to: [www.sciava.org](http://www.sciava.org) where they can view the information online and print a copy if needed.

Ask the manager for his or her assurance that a ADA compliant tub bench will be available in your room upon check-in. It never hurts to make a follow-up call to the hotel several days prior to arrival to verify your accessible room reservation and to be sure that they have the proper tub bench.

This extra bit of effort will help ensure that your hotel stay is both safe and enjoyable!  
For more information on lodging facilities contact Mike at 804-389-2479 or [accessus@adahospitality.com](mailto:accessus@adahospitality.com)